



Quarterly Quest

April 2008 Vol.7



East London & Essex Section
News Letter

Section News

After a brief absence I am back to continue the notes for East London & Essex; thanks Roy for standing in. However in Roy's other capacity as section secretary he has the onerous task of awarding the "Piston Broke Trophy". This year due to his numerous mishaps & breakdowns he was easily the leading contender. But, according to Roy, he could not award the trophy to himself; even though the lists of incidents includes: - bike falling & sustaining damage at the International, breaking down on way back from Kettering open day, Graham having fuel line problems on run to Kent Section (Roy's Bike), jammed speedometer drive at Jampot rally, and of course the bike that Roy lent journalist Steve Wilson to ride at the Jampot suffered a fuel blockage. This last event was even reported in Real Classic magazine. But despite all this according to Roy he could not possibly award the trophy to himself, as none of the above count. He therefore stitched up poor old Colin, who was most surprised to be awarded the Piston Broke for nothing more than mislaying his wallet at the Jampot. Oh the abuse of power!!!

The award was made at our end of season dinner, which this year was held at a new venue in Toot Hill Golf Club. Once the 60+ members and guests had mastered the gate security system we were able to enjoy a very good meal; thankfully without the normal loud music which often inhibits conversation. Glad to see that the many members & their wives who have been unwell during the year were able to attend the dinner. Just shows what a wonderful restorative motorcycling can be. The major award presented at the dinner was of course "The Clubman of the Year" which went to a very deserving David Slater. Despite being well past 70, Dave attended most of the club runs and shows including both the International & Jampot rallies on his competition based special. He also helps many members with his welding skills and advice. Congratulations Dave.

And finally when Roy guest wrote these notes last month he mentioned the number of G15/33 models owned by section members. Although he has by far the most, he still managed to get the total wrong: it's not 10 but a grand total of 11. Can any other section match or even, however unlikely, beat that. Squadron was not open during the Christmas break. However on Sunday 30th December 10 riders assembled at the Green Man, on a very cold but sunny morning, for an end of year run. Unusually run leader Dave Nicholls was on his Japanese bike, not his AJS; but all was not lost as the other riders were all on bikes of the marque. The run covered some 36 miles around the highways and byways, before ending at the High Beech tea hut for a warming cuppa. Over the break Roy embarked on yet another project: this time to build a bike for almost nothing from his stock of accumulated spares. This has not gone to well as many of the parts have had to be replaced or repaired before they could be fitted. Roy only embarked on this project to get away from the turkey and mince pies but perhaps he should have stayed in the warm.

Section News

Dudley is also building a 350 in green lane trim, which he hopes to have ready for the International in Poland. Watch this space. I have also been busy, with Dave S's help, to fit a small rack on my late G80CS so that I can carry a few tools. There is no room on these to even fit the trials type cylindrical toolbox. When the Yanks ventured out into the California hinterland on these so-called "Desert Sleds" they must have had a pickup following. Sad to hear that Dave Pratt is not too well. Lets hope is not as serious as it initially seems. Alex is recovering well from his health scare,

The last month has been educational and informative. Firstly we had a talk from Alf Hagon on his exploits in various forms of motorcycle sport (see separate article): then a very informative and entertaining illustrated lecture about the Titanic disaster of 1912. I met our guest Terry White admiring our bikes when parked outside The Fox; he once owned a Matchless along with other bikes. Although not connected to motorcycles in any way it was interesting from the social history point of view. For example many of the crew were from Eastern Europe working their passage to America. He also gave details of the vastly differing prices between First Class & Steerage. Most of the survivors came from the first and second class decks; leaving in partly full lifeboats. Terry has been giving this lecture for several years and donates the fee to several local charities including the Essex Stoke Trust; for whom we raised £70 plus. Continuing on the education theme I have been acquiring information about another motorcycle, apart from Greeves, that was built in Essex. During the 1920's the R.W. Scout was manufactured near Billericay. The proprietor Reginald Weatherell competed at Brooklands and in the first Sidecar T.T. The various projects mentioned last month are coming to fruition and may well be seen on the roads in the near future. Congratulations to Pat Gill for the fine feature by Roy Poynting in The Classic Motorcycle. The article ran to some six pages featuring one of Pat's award winning and much travelled Model X. Finally don't forget our riding season begins at the end of March with a visit to Coal House Fort.

Alan Jennings.

The Telescope Of Time

Part 1 (of 2)

People often say, as they get older, that they do not like the speed at which things change in the present day times of which they are speaking. Yet in reality, if we look back through our living memory, or even our grandparents living memory and take a “slice” of 10 years or so from anywhere within that time and compare what things were like at the start of that period with the end, it can be seen that things have always changed quickly during the last century or so. It’s just that when we are younger we accept changes without question and even welcome them, whereas with age comes more uncertainty and a desire to “hang on” to what we enjoy but perhaps see slipping away from us. These thoughts were prompted by a couple of articles and books that I re-read recently.

The first was a letter which I printed in another club magazine some years ago where a member was bemoaning the fact that new bikes were so easy to ride and non-involving that it took a lot of the interest away and also that motorcycle trials were now dominated by specialised lightweight machines to which the courses offered no real challenge. Does that sentiment sound familiar to you? probably. However, that letter did not appear in a recent magazine, I got it from the letters pages of a mid-fifties copy of a motorcycle magazine and the machines he was talking about are the very ones which we now so lovingly care for as classics. He though was thinking about an earlier era entirely, which was obviously his own favoured period

The second thing was a book, first published in the 1920s, called “Reminiscences Of Motorcycling” by Ixion, the well known writer for the Motor Cycle magazine for many years. “In” right at the start of motor cycling, he tells of what it was like in the pioneer days and how much things had changed since then and the “modern day”(ie 1920s) “with our reliable and useable machines”. Interestingly, even in the 1920s he was bemoaning the worsening state of some of the country’s roads, so some things do not change in that respect. However, what got me really thinking was that the period covered by those reminiscences was only just over twenty years. This would be the same as us looking back to about 1985 and yet when I do that (by looking at magazines of the 1985 period) I actually see very little overall change in the motorcycles being sold then to now, just a logical development in certain areas and changes for the sake of fashion in others. This is totally different to the vast differences and changes which took place during Ixion’s first twenty years, where there was no comparison whatsoever between what was available at the end and at the start. The speed of change then was enormous and motorcycle replacement every few years almost a necessity, which was no doubt why they were the “playthings” of the comparatively rich back then. Being that in more recent years development has been fairly slow, possibly because motorcyclists are notoriously reluctant to accept anything completely new especially if it has not appeared to be a success on the racetrack.

This is probably why we are mostly still having to put up with filthy exposed drive chains on most bikes after all these years, not that there is anything wrong with a chain as such but now we do not even have the choice of an enclosed chaincase which would make a chain so much more “civilised”. It got me to thinking (always a dubious benefit, as it can lead to articles like this!) about the various stages of development in the motorcycle and how they seemed to have been influenced, perhaps not always for the better, by the riding population’s changes of emphasis over the years.

It seems to me that development of the motorcycle can really be looked at as four main periods between the start and the present day, these being distinctly fashioned by the purpose the new buyers intended to use their motorcycles for. After all, it is the new buyers that the factories and marketing men cater for, not for those such as myself who buy them when they are years old and very much secondhand.

I feel that the first period probably runs from the start of the pioneer manufacturer’s production up to the end of 1930. It was a time when most development took place, which is possibly why that date was chosen to denote the end of the Vintage period. During that time the motorcycle went from being a rich man’s plaything, where every journey was an adventure and challenge and when it could in no way be considered reliable transport, to a useful vehicle which was becoming affordable and practical for the average person with a reasonable income to use as an everyday means of getting from A to B. The designs available at the end reflected the overall appeal, from light and stripped down sports jobs for the young, to large V twin sidecar haulers with fully enclosed drive chains, large protective mudguards and built with as much comfort as possible for the family man, with choices for all those in between including specialised ladies models with open frames for the large skirts worn at that time. During this period manufacturers still thought that they could compete with the offerings of the car producers and to some extent they could. My second period runs from the early 1930s to around the end of the 1950s and is the period with which I have the most empathy. By this time the motorcycle had “come of age” in that nearly all the necessary items which we desire for good control were either already fitted or in the course of development. Although motorcycle manufacturers had by now realised that they could only compete with the lower end of the car market they also realised that the majority of buyers were after good reliable personal transport and even if the majority probably wished for a car they were content with a motorcycle provided it gave them freedom of travel.

During this period, as the country came out of recession, manufacturers, while still catering for their important “young” market with sports models, also developed their other models to suit the general desires of “ordinary” people who needed reliable transport to get to and from work and possibly to even fit to a sidecar at weekends for family leisure use. Mudguards got deeper and more efficient while tending to lose the huge splash guards previously needed, as most roads had now become “metalled”. Enclosed drive chains were now offered as an option to many models, while larger fuel tanks, more comfortable seats and suspension as well as the ability to easily fit luggage carrying equipment made them about as practical as a motorcycle could get. For those who desired every mechanical part hidden away there was the alternative of motor scooters, which had become very popular in the post WW2 period and models such as the Ariel Leader. In my view the practical motorcycle probably reached its zenith by the end of the 1950s – but things were already changing.



Ian Testro with his immaculate AJS, showing how increasingly bikes were being styled for recreation, especially for the USA, rather than for practical daily transport. I really do not think the manufacturers got their market wrong and given a much larger wallet than I had in those days I would no doubt have chosen a bike with a sporting look for myself instead of being content with fitting alloy guards and straight bars to a 12 year old plunger framed BSA twin. *Colin*

Our Section Invades The National Motorcycle Museum

“Eight O clock and don’t be late”, said Roy. “Even if you are coming through the gate as the coach is leaving we will not wait for you”. Well that seemed definite enough and so it was that 29 of us were stood shivering in the morning sunshine at eight fifteen and still no sign of any coach. At twenty past we see it being chaperoned around the airfield by Roy and we all climbed aboard. It seems that the regular driver had gone sick and we had an emergency replacement (who apparently turned out to be a coach mechanic in usual employment) who was from Eastern Europe and who had no idea of where he was supposed to be going. Nevertheless we got underway and with only one wrong diversion off the M25 we eventually found the M1 north and we were on our way. It was probably as well that the driver didn’t speak much English because all the comments about whatever various routes Individuals would have taken for themselves would no doubt have confused him even more. However, as we got further up the M1 the hero of the day was Bob Russell, who guided him up the A45 and to the museum’s door and we actually arrived at our intended time of 11 o clock.

Straight into the restaurant for most of us, and for me (and a few others) a fortifying English breakfast (the healthy eating option of course!!). Then it was round the museum. The five halls were all packed with bikes and if you never knew about the disastrous fire they had there you would never have known because it had all been rebuilt so well, with only a small display in the foyer to inform people of just how bad it had been. From the earliest pioneers to the last gasps of the British industry, as well as examples of the now successful Hinkley Triumph marque, all the exhibits were beautifully restored, including one bike that I recognised from the old Murray’s Museum on the Isle of Man, which had been in quite a sorry state when I last saw it.

I can spend absolutely hours studying the workings of different bikes (and indeed did so on my last visit), but by half past two most of our group had looked around everything they wanted to and so it was decided to leave early and miss the crowd leaving the Crufts show at the NEC. We had quite a good run back and so reached the “Squadron” well before 6. I think that we all had a good day out and Pam was quite surprised to see me home so early, knowing how long I usually spend at these sort of places. *Colin*

Vic Rides Again

In July 2006, Gloria and I went by coach for a scenic tour of the Tirol region of Austria. Apart from odd bits of information gleaned from other visitors to the region, and articles in magazines and travel brochures, mostly referring to the beauty and cleanliness of the place, we could not have envisaged just how beautiful and clean and fresh it would be. Nothing is tatty or scruffy, all the houses and buildings are so well maintained, they all look like they have just been built, roads are perfect, gardens well kept, farms all tidy and organised, and so on.

As you will probably have noticed, we were impressed! We arrived at our hotel to find the view from our third floor window was breathtaking. The hotel was situated in the village of Zell am Ziller in the Zillertal valley, east of Innsbruck. The tour took us to the Schlegeis Dam and Reservoir, Mayerhofen, Hintertux, where there is year round skiing, from Jenbach on the rack and pinion railway up to Achensee Lake, the Gerlos Pass to the Krimmler Waterfalls, and a multitude of beautiful towns and villages en route.

Now you have a rough idea of what's on offer, you will understand why three riders, Brian Vizard, Jim Frith and myself, who incidentally have been riding together for about 38 years, had to go to the Tirol on our motorbikes (07 Honda Deauville, 76 B.M.W R750/6 and my 99 Suzuki Bandit 600), to ride those roads.

The trip was about 6 months in the planning, on and off, to make sure we all had what we would need without doubling up on things like stoves, etc. Of course the bikes would get a thorough pre- trip service. We would be ready to leave early on the morning of 6th June 2007, to board the Seafrance Dover / Calais ferry at 0800 for the 90 minute crossing.

Our chosen route would take us through (or round) Dunkerque, Gent, Brussels, Luik, Leuven, Liege, Aachen, Koln, and Koblenz to our first overnight stop at Diez on the river Lahn. A good relaxed days ride of 442 miles, on good roads, (except the Belgium bit). The weather today has been dry, sunny, and very warm. Pitched the tents right by the river bank, cooked up some ravioli for dinner , analysed our days ride, and slept like logs.

DAY 2. Thursday 7th.

Dawned fine and dry, so after a bowl of soggies and fruit, and several cups of coffee, we packed up and left at 10 a.m. We will go via Frankfurt, Wursburg, Aalen, Ulm, Kempten, Nesselwang, Reutte, Lermoos and the Fern Pass to Innsbruck, where we were directed to a campsite at Vols, a village on the southwest corner of Innsbruck. The site had all the normal facilities, plus an added bonus of a restaurant / pub run by the owners. Snow capped mountains formed the backdrop for our tents, and the Innsbruck airport runway passed between us and the mountains, which was quite entertaining. Quite a bit of today's 422 miles was through hilly countryside and a mountain pass, (our first taste of what was to come).

DAY 3. Friday 8th.

Now we have no load to carry, the riding will be more fun. Into Innsbruck first to have a look around, and Brian & I managed to loose Jim! No worries, we all have mobiles, we'll phone him and tell him where we are. After several calls and no response, we text him with directions to where we will be waiting. Brian and I sat at a table at a pavement cafe and enjoyed a long, cool beer and a massive apple strudel, wonderful. Still no Jim, so ride back to the site and find a note from Jim stating that he had gone for lunch a swim at the local pool. Turns out Jim's phone was in Brian's pannier with his waterproofs, so he never would have got the message. All three of us then went up the 2334 metre Hungerburg mountain in two cable cars, incredible views of Innsbruck and the Inns valley. Dinner this evening is the biggest, thickest, most delicious home made pizza in the world, a pils, (and a Schnapps courtesy of the landlord), this is the life.

DAY 4. Saturday 9th.

Today brings our first spot of bike trouble – as Jim has to change the condenser on the B.M.W, not too serious and we are soon on our way to the Swarovski Crystal factory to buy the promised Austrian prezzies for our wives and partners. Having chosen some very nice pieces from the Wattens factory, we head off to the Krimmler waterfalls via Zell am Ziller, (last years base) and the Gerlos Pass, which is arguably one of the top ten rides in the Tirol. Parked the bikes at the base of the falls, and climbed the 1200 feet to the top of the falls on the paths provided, well worth the effort as the falls are spectacular. Went back to the campsite by a different route, a little easier than the ride there, and finished off the day with another one of those superb pizzas.

DAY 5. Sunday 10th.

Walk the 250 metres to the Vols swimming pool. Bear in mind Vols is a little village, and this outdoor swimming and leisure complex is as good as I have seen anywhere, and that includes America. Three pools, terraced sun bed gardens, restaurant, cafe, spotless changing rooms, etc. (The main pool is made entirely of stainless steel, all of it.) Next we rode into Innsbruck to tour the town on foot, had traditional "wiener schnitzel" and beer for lunch. Had a good look around this beautiful town and then back on the bikes for this afternoons ride over the Benner Pass into Italy. The weather turned wet at the border, so came back to camp on the A 13 autobahn, got back just before the deluge, thunder & lightening, but still hot. The storm passed over to leave everything steaming in the sun.

A Norwegian biker staying on the site overnight, introduced himself to us and told us he had been down to San Marino, and was now making his way home on his Honda Blackbird 1100.

DAY 6. Monday 11th.

We pack up and leave today to begin our journey back, via the Fern Pass to Friedrickhafen – the home of the Zeppelin. Found a really nice site with excellent facilities on the bank of Lake Constance. We just managed to get the tents up and all the gear inside when the heavens opened, another big storm. The restaurant on the site was beckoning, and we didn't need much encouragement to go and sample the buffet dinner, and other gastronomical goodies that were on offer, in fact we spent the whole evening there. Today's mileage totalled 147.

DAY 7. Tuesday 12th.

Pack up all our gear except the tent, (leave it up to dry off in the sun). Go over to the restaurant for a very nice buffet breakfast followed by a stroll into town, and into the Zeppelin Museum. Exhibits included a full size section of the airship with crew and passenger quarters, galley, aluminium framework and outer skin, several different engines, and all kinds of ancillary parts and equipment, well worth the visit, specially as they have cheaper rates for pensioners. Back to the site, load the bikes and leave about 12.30. Via Ulm, Wurzburg, Frankfurt and back to the same site at Diez. The weather en route was worse than bad, and included THREE storms with hailstones thrown in. But we arrive at the Diez site to find it bone dry, sunny and warm. Put up the tents in the tranquil stillness of a balmy June evening, a walk along the river bank, and excellent meal in camp restaurant , perfect. Today's mileage 309.

DAY 8. Wednesday 13th.

A lovely sunny morning once again, so went to the nearby old town of Limburg, with its classic old buildings and cobbled streets, a fountain in the square and a spired church. Loads of fascinating tiny shops and houses, and all in beautifully maintained condition. Found a good motorbike shop and had a good old poke around, then on to Lidl's for food and fruit, (and a set of Stanley metric combination spanners 6 – 20 mm for a mere 10 Euros). Back at camp , prepared our recently purchased Lidl lunch and sat under a tree by the river to enjoy it. The weather was perfect so had a lazy, relaxed afternoon, made minor adjustments to the bikes, you know – change main bearings, fit new rings, stuff like that.

DAY 9. Thursday 14th.

Up very early, pack up and load the bikes and away at 8 am. Koblenz, A256 to Liege via Mayen, Nurburgring, Schleiden, Eupen. On the A3 (E40)Leuven, Brussels, Gent, Brugge and Calais. Arrived at the ferry terminal two hours early for our booked 7pm sailing, but were able to get on the 5pm instead. Dock at Dover around 6.30pm. Up the A2 to Brian's for a cuppa and download our photos on to his computer. Then on home to Dagenham for me as Jim was staying on at Brian's overnight and would finish his journey to Northampton tomorrow. Mileage today (to Dagenham) 438. Total mileage for the whole trip was 2,047.

I can totally recommend this two – wheeled Austria therapy to anyone who likes to ride roads that were designed for motorbikes, in breathtaking surroundings. We all enjoyed it so much that as you read this, our next trip will be in the advanced planning stage, and if all goes well, us three plus two others will be riding the Pyrenees this June.



Photos of the Quarter



The Three 1947s at St Cathrines Dock on a Breakfast stop 18th March 2008

Photos of the Quarter



Dave Kewell & Graham Eaton's Bikes on display at Horse Guards Parade Ground
18th March 2008

| <u>January—June 2008</u> | Venue | Time |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 6th January | Sunday North weald Fly in | North Weald 10.00 AM |
| 10th January | Thursday Club Night. | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 13th January | Sunday Jumble Witham | 10.00 AM |
| 24th January | Thursday Club Night. Alf Hagon | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 14th February | Thursday Club Night. Titanic Talk? | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 28th February | Thursday Club Night | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 13th March | Thursday Club Night. | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 22nd March | Thursday Club Night | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 30th March | Sunday Coalhouse Fort Tilbury | TBA 10.00 AM |
| 6th April | Sunday Club Run To Ardingly West Sussex | TBA 9.00 AM |
| 10th April | Thursday Club Night | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 20th April | Sunday Eastern Counties Meet Finchingfield | TBA 10.00 AM |
| 24th April | Thursday Club Night. Fish & Chips | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 8-12 May | Thurs- Mon 2007 International Jampot | Poland |
| 8th May | Thursday Club Night | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 11th May | Sunday Jericho Cottage Bike Meet | TBA 10.00AM |
| 17th May | Saturday Open Day Kettering | TBA 9.00 AM |
| 22nd May | Thursday Club Night | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 1st June | Sunday 8th Classic bike show Knebworth | TBA 9.00 AM |
| 4th June | Wednesday Evening Section Run to North Essex Section | TBA 6.30 PM |
| 12th June | Thursday Club Night | Squadron 7.30 PM |
| 21/22 June | Sunday North weald Air Britain | TBA 10.00 AM |
| 26th June | Thursday Club Night | Squadron 7.30 PM |

| July-August 2008 | | Venue | Time |
|-------------------------|---|--------------|-------------|
| 6th July | Sunday Club Run To Battlesbridge | TBA | 10.00AM |
| 10th July | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 20th July | Sunday British Owners Jumble | TBA | 10.00 AM |
| 24th July | Thursday Club Night BAR B Q | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 27th July | Sunday Classic bike Festival North Weald | TBA | 9.00 AM |
| 1st-4th August | Fri - Mon Jampot Cornwall | | |
| 14th August | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 18th August | Monday Evening Run To Kent Section | TBA | 6.30 PM |
| 28th August | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 31st August | Sun/Mon Countess of Warwick Show | TBA | 10.30AM |
| 11th September | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 21st September | Sunday Run TBA | | |
| 25th September | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 12th October | Sunday Run TBA | TBA | 10.00 AM |
| 9th October | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 23rd October | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 26th October | Sunday Change of Clocks Run | TBA | 10.00 AM |
| 9th November | Sunday Remembrance Sunday | Squadron | 10.00 AM |
| 13th November | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 27th November | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 29th November | Saturday End of Season Dinner | TBA | 7.00 PM |
| 11th December | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 25th December | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |

The Next Quarter

April 2008

Sun 6th Ardingly Show

Thu 10th Club Night

Sun 20th Eastern Counties meet Finchingfield

Thu 24th Club Night Fish & Chips

May 2008

8-12 Thurs-Mon 2007 International Jampot Poland

Thu 8th Club Night

Sun 11th Jericho Cottage Bike Meet

Sat 17th Open day Kettering

Thu 22nd Club Night

June 2008

Sun 1st Classic bike show Knebworth

Wed 4th Evening Run to North Essex Section

Sun 8th Ride out & Bar B Q Pat & Mary.

Thu 12th Club Night

Sat 21North Weald Air Britan

Thu 26th Club Night

Section Committee

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