



# Quarterly Quest

January 2011 Vol.19



East London & Essex Section

News Letter

## **Section Dinner at the Toot Hill Golf Club 27-11-2010**

Some fifty plus of our section members and invited guests attended this year's section dinner, less than usual this year as some of our regulars were unable to attend this time due to health reasons or prior family commitments. Fortunately the snow which had been forecast held off until after the event so the fact that the club was on a minor road did not cause the problems that it might have. There was a minor panic when Roy, after wondering why he had so little to carry into the building this time, realised that he had left the all important awards back at home. However, after some frantic phoning around they were delivered in time by his son Josh.



Although I can't speak for everyone else I can say that both Pam and I enjoyed our meals and we thought that the service was very good this year in that everyone was able to be eating at the same time, which has not always been the case in some of the past years. After the dinner the raffle was drawn and something very strange happened – three of my tickets actually got drawn. This is very unusual as I have rarely had a ticket drawn in any raffle that I have ever entered. Perhaps now is the time to dash out and buy my very first lottery ticket, in case my luck is still holding.

Then it was time for the awards to be presented and the feared “Piston Broke” award this year went to Pat Gill for the amount of breakdowns that he ADMITTED to having had on a new restoration. This was a surprise to some, including me, who had seen many more VISIBLE breakdowns this year, such as blocked fuel feeds, headlights dropping out and clutches disintegrating, but there you are, Pat is obviously too honest about his breakdowns and has paid the penalty this year. The “Clubman of the Year” award this year went to Dave Kewell, which surprised him a lot, but as was pointed out, Dave has supported most of the section events throughout the years, right from the earliest days of the section and was therefore a worthy winner for this year. After the awards presentation was over the Section presented a tankard to Roy and a bouquet of flowers to Karen on behalf of us all in appreciation for all their hard work on behalf of both our section and the Club in general. In my view (and everyone else's I should think) very much deserved. The dinner brings to an end another year in our section history and we now look forward to 2011.

***Colin***

## **Mods and Rockers Go South 1957 Dave Kewell**

It was early spring '57 when one of my cycling club friends made a suggestion to have a motorcycle holiday to Spain. With winter over the southern sunshine was something to look forward to. Six of us agreed to a two week trip during August. It was time now to organise routes.

On the appointed Friday afternoon in August Bill and I on my G80 drove down to Southampton for the overnight ship to St. Malo. The others Jimmy P. Jimmy D., John and Peter had made their way to Lydd Friday morning for the trip to Le Tourquet by the air ferry.

The bike was unloaded from the ship (BR. 'Falaise') and having had a good breakfast on board, Bill and I loaded up and started on our way south. We began with an easy ride down through Rennes and on to Chateaubriant where we had arranged to meet the others. At this early point the plan began to go wrong – they never arrived. Never mind a second meeting point had been arranged just in case!

Bill and I then proceeded down to Nantes for an overnight stop at a small pension. Here my school French came into use as Bill had only some German knowledge. A goodnight's rest and breakfast then further south through Saintes and Bordeaux to reach our next overnight stop at Biarritz in a pretty scruffy youth hostel. This was an absolutely dreadful place with nothing to commend it.

Next morning we continued to the Spanish border and a short ride to San Sebastian where our second meeting point had been arranged at the Thomas Cook office. No contact note from the others so we left a note for them to meet and the time next day. We then drove on along the coast to a small fishing village, totally unspoilt by tourism where accommodation was found in a pub/hotel. At this point a phrase book was obtained as we had no Spanish language between us. Our first meal in Spain was mainly fish soup with large lumps of bread floating in it – not too bad and we had fun being taught how to say beer in Spanish. I can remember the word, but can't spell it. When preparing next morning to leave the hotel we were surprised and happy to meet the rest of our group riding past from the next village along the coast where they had stayed overnight.

Now as a complete group with Jimmy P. and Peter on a 250 BSA, Jimmy D. and John on Lambrettas and Bill and myself on the G80, we made our way back to San Sebastian.

We then drove on through to Pamplona, Tudela, along the river Ebro valley to Zaragoza and north to Huesca for our overnight stop. Huesca was a very dusty little town, inexpensive, and our first chance to sample the local wines etc., an excellent evening for about 5 shillings each.

The morning found us on the road again to Lerida and on to the Mediterranean coast at Tarragona. Driving a further 25 miles north along the coast we arrived at Sitges where a hotel was found for the next few days. Sitges was a holiday town popular with the Spanish but with few foreign tourists and little development at that time. A very nice beach and warm sunshine made a welcome break from the bike. The hotel also had a German group staying with whom we made friends. An evening visit to a bull fight was made which I did not think very pleasant. All too soon we continued our journey, on to Barcelona where a tour of the Bull Ring was a must. The city was impressive but shortage of time meant continuing further north for our next stop at Tossa, another very unspoilt fishing village. Accommodation was in a private house where the hostess insisted we parked the bikes in the reception hall. (Wives and partners please take note.) The food and accommodation were excellent. The morning found us driving through the cork tree lined hills to Gerona and back to the French border town of Borge Madame and on to Axles Thermes with a stop in Andorra for lunch. At Ax we came across a cable car station beside the main road and couldn't resist a trip to the mountain top. A terrific experience but spoiled by low cloud eliminating any view at the top.

Now the journey began back across France, past Toulouse and on to an overnight stay in a small village further north. It was here that I saw the most enormous frogs or perhaps toads (at least 4 inches across the shoulder) a good stop. Next morning we continued north past Limoges and on to Tours where our last stop was at a village close to Le Mans. The following morning Bill and I said our farewells to the others who made their way back to Le Touquet while we returned to the harbour at St. Malo. As we had some time to spare before our departure, we visited Le Mont St. Michel, and took a tour around the walled town of St. Malo before boarding the ship.

Some observations which stay in my memory – the long straight highways around Bordeaux- the hot dusty roads below the Pyrenees where travelling at 50-60 mph had no cooling affect from the heat- the civil guards walking about in pairs with machine guns slung over their shoulders- and being stopped by one near Sitges when out riding by myself having left my passport at the hotel. Fortunately the GB plate on the bike made him wave me on. Phew! One or two of our group getting the inevitable 'runs', the frogs of course and lastly Jimmy P dropping and smashing his just purchased inexpensive bottle of Benedictine while trying to fit it into his pannier bag.

The bikes all performed well. My only problem was a split rubber connection on the oil feed pipe to the rocker cover which was cured with a cotton bandage and tight knot. Due to some of the poor roads through the Pyrenees of northern Spain and the combined weight of riders and luggage, my rear wheel had to be rebuilt having become loose in the spokes by the time I reached home.



The Bike being loaded at Southampton



Spain 1957



## Perhaps Just A Little Too Extreme!

Well, I did remark at our AGM, that if more people didn't send articles for the Quest to Roy then I would have run out of all things AJS and Matchless to write about and that I would have to again look for something else to produce an article for him. So, being that Roy has not been inundated with articles to print and as I never won the raffle bike (as if I ever expected to) and therefore cannot write about my new found experience with AMC twins, I thought I would write about something I gave a mention to in my last "missive" where I mentioned the Megola marque in the title – then thought afterwards that perhaps quite a few of you might never have heard of the make before and wondered what on earth I was on about.

Well, The Megola was a German make of 1922, an unusual design to say the least, it had swooping steel bodywork and an armchair type seat rather on the lines of that fitted to the English made Wilkinson make that can be seen in the National Motorcycle Museum. The Megola also had rear wheel springing in the form of leaf springs. However, it was the power unit which really made it so unusual – and perhaps rather daunting, as it consisted of a five cylinder radial engine fitted within the spokes of the front wheel. Now this 640cc side valve engine was of the rotary radial type (on the lines of the early aero engines such as that which powered the famous Sopwith Camel) where the crankshaft stays still and the cylinders fly round instead. The weight of the complete wheel alone (around 160lbs) was bad enough for a front wheel but as the gearing was 5:1 and the cylinders were flying around at about 3000rpm in the centre of the wheel I should think that the flywheel effect on the steering was considerable, even though the manufacturer said that as the cylinders were in fact revolving in the opposite direction to the wheel the forces cancelled each other out (oh really!!). As well as coping with all that there was the fact that it was all fixed gear and direct drive with no clutch to allow stopping or easy starting, so although the flexible engine might allow for a smooth and comfortable cruising on a straight and traffic free road, without any bumps or potholes of course, I should think that they would have been quite a handful in any sort of town situation. It seems that the buying public might have thought so too because production only lasted for four years and only around 2000 were made. There were two models made, the touring one, which was good for 50mph, and the sports version which had a higher spec' engine and could run at 62mph. I have read somewhere that for a while there was some enthusiasm for actually racing the things, with tuned versions of the engine capable of some 90mph. I reckon it must have needed nerves of steel and a race circuit more like the banked curves of Brooklands rather than the Isle of Mann TT circuit though. Apparently the Megola has now become quite a collectors item and surviving models change hands for a small fortune.

So much for the Megola, but the story doesn't quite end there though. I also mentioned in that last article that I quite like "specials" where various individuals with an engineering or technical "bent" construct the motorcycle of their dreams (or nightmares perhaps) from whatever they have to hand. However there is no doubt that some "special" builders do go a bit over the top with their creations. In a 1937 edition of Motor Cycling magazine there was an interesting description of a special built by a German enthusiast Christian Christophe, who managed to fit the front forks and power unit wheel from a Megola to his 1929 3 speed 600cc twin two stroke Scott.

When I originally glanced at the article I had assumed that he had in mind the idea that as the Megola was direct drive and the engine had to stop when the bike was stationary, then the bike could be driven off in the normal way by using the Scott's own engine to drive the Megola wheel forward and then when that engine had "chimed in" as well then he could balance the two power units out and have quite a powerful (if somewhat complicated and cumbersome) touring bike. However the article also mentioned that it could take up to a mile before the Megola engine actually fired though, during which time the Scott engine was working hard. I assumed that this meant that the Scott's throttle was wide open during that period then, so when the Megola fired as well and with the Scott still on full throttle and the load suddenly released by the other engine firing there must have been quite a hectic period until the controls could be juggled in order to get things something like under control. I assumed that these starting attempts were only carried out on clear roads with no bends or possible obstructions. Certainly not something for the faint hearted then and not exactly a "stress free" tourer either.

Mr Christophe was certainly not the faint hearted type though as my initial assumptions as to the reason for his creation were wrong. It seems that his idea was to get two wheeled traction for TRIALS work. Being that the Megola engine wheel, with its fixed gearing was only really happy around 50mph or so and weighing (unsprung and pivoting around the headstock) 160lbs, the vision conjured up of Mr Christophe hurtling through flora and fauna (and probably anything else which got in the way) while frantically juggling with two throttles, two ignition levers, one clutch and a three speed hand change gearbox (but only one brake – the rear) is truly wondrous. I wouldn't have thought that he "cleaned" many trials sections on it, though he may well have eliminated a few rival riders and observers who were foolish enough to get caught in his path. It is quite possible that Mr Christophe was one of the very few people whose lives might have been actually saved by the coming of the Second World War – because it was probably that which put an end to his experiments with the fearsome Scott-Megola.

We know that he did survive the experimental experiences and the war though because in 1962 he turns up again (now a grandfather and living in Paris) in a Motor Cycle magazine sponsored “specials” competition. His creation this time was using a 1929 Scott engine in his own designed and manufactured lightweight frame. So I guess that is where the Scott engine of the Scott-Megola ended up. I wonder what happened to the original frame though and if the Scott engine was all that remained useable after some sort of serious “incident” with the original special. I wouldn’t be at all surprised – especially as this new special used his own water cooling system and not the Scott radiator (usually the first thing to get damaged in an accident).

The Scott-Megola was certainly one special that I would not even want to ride let alone own. I should think that trying to register something like that with the DVLA would be quite a daunting prospect also (as if dealing with them normally is not bad enough). Ok, you could add the capacities of the two engines up and register it as a 1240cc, but how on earth would you ever be able to convince them that you need a space on the log book for two engine numbers?

***Colin Atkinson***



## ***ONE DAY TRIALS***

Trials events began in the early days called Reliability trials, but as bikes progressed and various forms of competition evolved, such as road or track racing, sprinting, Scrambles etc it became shortened to just Trials. However, even though trials events were mainly run on a one day basis, there were multi day events such as the Scottish Six Days Trial, International Six Days Trial etc. As my experience mostly involved one day trials with clubs around the country and various military championships, those are what I will describe here.

As explained in the last Quest, being a Royal Signals dispatch rider enabled me to be active on a bike many weekends, training or competing in these events and sometimes on my “beat up” old rigid Matchless G80C as a “civvy” instead of an Army Matchless G3L. There was so much more freedom in the 1950s and 60s as most landowners were relaxed and gave permission for the use of their land and with no present day restrictions on the use of farm tracks (nowadays called green lanes) these were used to link the various separate groups of competition areas, each with a number of hazards called “sections” dotted around a route of several miles, sometimes quite lengthy and tiring.

For the uninitiated I will explain that these events were run over a variety of terrain, which often depended on which part of the countryside the trial was being run. If this was hilly, wooded, or sandy ground then you incurred less damage to your bike. However, in rocky, stony, hilly areas with long uphill climbs and descents things could be very different and not only in the sections. Following another rider too closely between sections could result in some teeth being knocked out and other injuries from flying stones!! All good fun in open face helmets or a cap as most civvy riders used.! In low lying ground where river crossings, muddy ditches to climb in and out of within a copse of trees, different problems occurred due to magnetos flooding and wheel bearings affected by muddy water etc, not to mention disappearing brakes.! We all disliked this last type as it meant long wet and muddy “slots” to endure before we even got to the sections.

Once you arrived at the sections there was always a queue as previous riders inspected the section to decide how to ride it and if possible watch and learn from someone else mistake!

Every section had a group of marshals, one being the Observer, who conferred with the marshals to decide how well you had performed and when agreed marked you down accordingly.

The marking was no marks lost for a clean run through the section with no footing. One mark lost for putting one foot down (known as a “dab”) with three marks lost for more than once but not stopping (known as “paddling”). A stop or not attempting a section cost you five marks. Obviously the rider with the least marks lost was the winner.

To decide any tie that might ensue there was always a “Special Test” which consisted of a dash over broken ground with some obstacles en route to a stop within a small “box” marked out, which was rigidly enforced. The fastest time deciding the winner



In those days most people rode their bikes to and from the event so machine breakdowns during the competition could be a problem at days end., causing some

“interesting” towed rides home etc! Some people had sidecars adapted to carry their bike, but the only people using vans or pickups were the factory riders and dealers supported riders.

There was great camaraderie between riders whether civvy or army and you got know and respect their various skills in different types of terrain and sections. You could learn so much by watching their style and methods and then “try” to employ them yourself!!

These trials had different classes to compete for ie. Capacities: 250cc/350cc/500cc and sidecars. These were for proper competition bikes of course. There were Individual awards for each of these as well as Best Novice (once you won this award you were thereafter ineligible) and Individual Best Army and Team awards for standard army bikes. I am proud to say that I and my comrades were quite successful in these categories.

The club riders were always interested to see how standard bikes performed in their sport (and the riders) and were often surprised at what could be achieved. We seldom failed to finish even the toughest events and often with an award or two. As the only army machine of that time to possess teledraulic forks Matchless bikes predominated in these trials and thus began my long association with the marque and my respect for their durability



I had a great time in these events and made some good lifelong friends, we still share memories and I still have some pots and awards in the garage to remind me of those days.

***Dennis***

***First Run of 2011.***

Our first section run of the year took place on a chilly 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan, when 14 of us on 13 bikes met up at Kelvedon Hatch for a short run to the High Beach tea hut. Steve Webb took the opportunity to road test his new (Christmas present?) wax cotton jacket,

pristine and still to acquire the usual patina of impacted dead insects. The day's run leader Roy led us off on a circuitous route via his old home (no blue plaque on the wall though) while we all wondered just how many of the road humps and chicanes we would be negotiating around the Harold Hill housing estate. On this cold day a cup of hot tea and a bacon roll was very welcome when we reached the tea hut, where we met up with Mike Handy, on his fine looking Norton Commando. Not a very adventurous run perhaps, but a good start to the new year with the added bonus that there were no breakdowns and no-one got lost. ***Colin***

## ***For Sale 1985***

**FOR SALE:** 1962 Matchless G3. The bike, in good order and at present in Brittany, 30km from St Malo where it can be seen in July and August by members taking their summer holidays in the region. Otherwise I am intending to bring it to England (Dorset) in September. The asking price is £600 (ono). *Contact:* David Morgan-Smith, 15 Rue des Chevremonts, 92000 Nanterre, France. 12 (1) 204 27 05

**FOR SALE:** 1968 G15 Mk2 750cc. 12 months MOT. Reg no. MVA 55F. £750 or offer. 1962 G12 650cc. Reg KHM 369D. !650 or offer. (*Misprint last month - Ed.*) 1966 G15 CSR 112596 750cc. 12 months MOT. Reg no. EVG 54D. £900 or offer. These all have new type log book with old one as reference. *Contact:* Mr. C. S. F. Spooner, 107

**FOR SALE:** Matchless 1957 model G11. *Very* original, current MOT, used regularly in summer months. Photos available along with a few spares and a set of WD (I think) forks - £750. *Contact:* Mike Curtis, 34 Broadley Park, North Bradley, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 OSS. (02214) 64219

**A Must Date for the diary Friday the  
29th September-Sunday 2nd October  
The Alternative Rally at North Weald.  
All Section Members will be Needed to  
HELP On the Friday & Saturday runs.**



## *2011 Events*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Time</b>
13th January	Thursday	<b>Club Night.</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
27th January	Thursday	<b>Club Night.</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
10th February	Thursday	<b>Club Night.</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
24th February	Thursday	<b>Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
27th February	Sunday	Section Run TBA	Crown C	10.00AM
10th March	Thursday	<b>Club Night.</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
16th March	Wednesday	Mid Week Run	Crown C	11.00AM
20th March	Sunday	Run To Ardingly	J28 M25	9.00AM
24th March	Thursday	<b>Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
6th April	Wednesday	Mid Week Run	TBA	11.00AM
14th April	Thursday	Club Night Eastern counties meet	Squadron	10.00AM
17th April	Sunday	Drive it Day <b>Club Night. Fish &amp;</b>	Suffolk	10.30AM
28th April	Thursday	<b>Chips</b> Jericho Cottage Bike	Squadron	7.0 PM
8th May	Sunday	Meet	Crown C	10.00AM
12th May	Thursday	<b>Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
18th May	Wednesday	Mid Week Run	Crown C	11.00AM
26th May	Thursday	<b>Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
9th June	Thursday	<b>Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
10-13th June	Fri- Mon	2011 International Jam- pot Italy 12th Classic bike show	Switzerland	
19th June	Sunday	Knebworth	Crown C	9.00AM
23rd June	Thursday	<b>Club Night BBQ</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
26th June	Sunday	Section Run TBA	Crown C	10.00AM
29th June	Wednesday	Mid Week Run	Crown C	11.00AM

3rd July	Sunday Section Run Battlesbridge Bike Show	Crown C	10.00AM
14th July	<b>Thursday Section</b>		7.00PM
10th July	Sunday leighton buzzard	Crown C	9.00AM
27th July	Wednesday Mid week Run	Crown C	11.00AM
28th July	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
29th July- 1st Aug	Jampot Rally Section attendance Bishop Auckland		10.00AM
7th August	Sunday British Owners Club Meeting Takeley	Crown C	10.00AM
11th August	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00 PM
14th August	Sunday Classic bike Festival North Weald	North	9.30AM
15th August	Monday Section Visit to the Kent Section	TBA	6.00PM
21st August	Sunday 13th Classice Bike Show Knebworth	Crown C	9.00AM
25th August	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00 PM
8th September	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00 PM
11th September	Sunday	Crown C	10.00AM
14th September	Wednesday	TBA	11.00AM
22nd September	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
25th September	Section Run To Battlesbridge	Crown C	10.00AM
30th Sep-2nd Oct	Fri-Sun Alternative Rally North Weald	TBA	9.00AM
13th October	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.0 PM
23rd October	Sunday section run To Ardingly	J28M25	9.00AM
27th October	<b>Thursday Clib Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
10th November	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00 PM
13th November	Remembrance Sunday	Squadron	10.00AM
24th November	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
26th November	Saturday End of Season Dinner	TBA	7.00PM
8th December	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM
22nd December	<b>Thursday Club Night</b>	Squadron	7.00PM

# *The Next Quarter*

## **Jan 2011**

**13th Club Night.**

**27th Club night**

## **Feb 2011**

**10th Thursday Club Night**

**24th Thursday Club Night**

## **March 2011**

**10th Thursday Club Night**

**16th Wednesday Mid week run**

**20th Sunday Section Run to Ardingly**

**24th Thursday Club Night**

## **Section Committee**

Chairman: Dennis Fox 0208 554 7608 [denjune@btinternet.com](mailto:denjune@btinternet.com)

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