



Quarterly Quest

July 2007 Vol.4



East London & Essex Section
News Letter

Section News

On Sunday 25th March 11 we set off from the former Little Chef, adjacent to the M25, to attend the Ardingly Classic Bike show. We had forgotten to wait for Pat Gill, who was delayed by fuel problems: mishap no 1! Once over the Dartford Crossing we met up with 6 guys from the Kent section who were to act as pathfinders. (Essex lads & lasses get lost south of the Thames). Alex Burnett had already returned through the tunnel with a slight misfire and lack of full revs: mishap no 2! Pat's fuel problems worsened, and he ran out of petrol due to a leaking joint: mishap no 3! Eventually we arrived at the show and exhibited the bikes in the main hall. On the return journey, the speedo drive on Chairman Dennis' bike seized resulting in the inevitable snapped cable: mishap no 4! And finally the handlebar mounted mirror fell off Roy's bike and destroyed itself under a truck on the M25, even though he struggled to hold it on for 10 miles: mishap no 5! It seems that the accursed "Bridge to Far" has struck again.

The following weekend was the annual Eastern Counties meeting, once again at the Red Lion, Finchingfield. A large contingent met at the Green Man to follow Dave Nicholls on one of his mystery tours along the byways of Essex. It soon transpired that much of the route followed the Sunday run from the 2004 Jampot Rally; arriving at the Red Lion by late morning. We were joined by members from all of the local sections; including Kent, East Suffolk, Fenrunners, Hertfordshire, as well as our own members who had made their own way. It was a beautiful spring morning, ideal weather for riding, which explained the larger turnout; there were at least 70 – 80 bikes in the car park, most being AJS or Matchless. Many thanks to mine host and staff who ensured everyone was well fed & watered. I understand the landlord is moving to a new venture in the village. We all wish him the very best and thank him for his many years of help and service let's hope the new landlord is a keen biker or just a good business man and will want our trade.

Section News

We supported the FBHVC ride/drive it day on the 22nd April with a run, led as usual by Dave Nicholls, through more byways of Essex. The eleven who attended finally arrived at the White Horse, Margretting Tye, where they met with members of the British Owners Club for refreshments. Club night on the 26th was, what has become our annual, Fish & Chips Night. In all some 68 members, wives & guests partook (see Photo on Page 13) of some excellent fare, supplemented by the usual beverages from the bar. John took the opportunity of the large attendance to hand out the special 25-year section badge. To celebrate our *Silver Jubilee* the section are holding a barbeque on club night 26th July at the Squadron. All past and present members are welcome, as are members from local sections: but please call Roy Bellett on 01277 636500 (daytime), so that we can arrange sufficient catering requirements. Talking of local sections: may I remind *East Suffolk* of the commandment “Thou shall not covert thy neighbours wife”. Especially so when he is a big strong b.....(issue 658).

Dave Nicholls once again took some 16 members on a magical mystery tour on the 6th May. This time the destination was Burnham-on-Sea where refreshments were taken at the local café, frequented by many bikers every weekend; thus ensuring a long wait for a bacon sarnie. The following Sunday was the usual Jericho Cottage meeting on Blackmore village green, organised by local resident & old bike stalwart Peter Wood of the British Owners Club. Sunday the 9th June saw Dennis and Roy set of for the open day at Kettering using the A roads the 93 miles took just 2 hours 15 minuets. Well worth the trip as Roy won best bike of the Day. They meet Colin Atkinson (on his Honda) he piloted them home on a different route. All in all a good trip (don't ask Roy What happened on the way home) Ps or Dennis when he got home.

Hope to see many of you at our Bar-B-Q on 26th July.

Alan Jennings.

International Rally 2007

7 Members, 2 complete with families, made the journey to Germany. In fact one 'family' went to some considerable length, using as many forms of 'public' transport as possible to be there! Highlight of the journey out by the 'road' posse being the clash of Sat. Nav. in one vehicle and good old maps in the other. At one point entry was made into a service area from a 'No entry' minor road after the 'Technology' method decided it knew a better route. The return journey was more about the tortoise and the hare, although both parties arrived back at Calais about the same time and that's another story.

Still all the trials of the journey were worth the effort as the food and wine was excellent, ordering being made more the easier by adept usage of the local 'lingo' by one (Dudley). One thing that caused some concern was our local 'lingo' man lost his passport and he was convinced the Pat Gill had something to do with it only to find when he got home it was in his shopping bag where he had made a purchase in the town on the first day.

The run out on the Saturday to the NSU museum was a fairly short affair, hot, but interesting.

Sunday dawned with the threat of rain for the Main Run. Following a couple of little niggles experienced by one or two early on, the band of brothers became somewhat spread amongst the field, so on arrival at the ferry to cross the Necker River, the main contingent now languished nearer the rear. When all were safely aboard the heavens opened.

Despite the minor adversities, including the travelling I believe we can safely say a good time was had by all. Good hospitality, food and accommodation. Now how do you get to Poland?

Daphne



<u>January—June 2007</u>		Venue	Time
11th January	Thursday Club Night.	Squadron	7.30 PM
14th January	Sunday North weald Jumble	North Weald	10.00 AM
25th January	Thursday Club Night. Ron West Talk	Squadron	7.30 PM
8th February	Thursday Club Night.	Squadron	7.30 PM
18th February	Sunday North Weald Jumble	North Weald	10.00 AM
22nd February	Thursday Club Night Alan Jennings Talk	Squadron	7.30 PM
8th March	Thursday Club Night.	Squadron	7.30 PM
22nd March	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
25th March	Sunday Club Run To Ardingly West Sussex TBA		9.00 AM
1st April	Sunday Eastern Counties Meet Finchingfield TBA		10.30AM
12th April	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
26th April	Thursday Club Night. Fish & Chips	Squadron	7.30 PM
6th May	Sunday Club Run	TBA	10.00AM
10th May	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
13th May	Sunday Jericho Cottage Bike Meet	TBA	10.00AM
24th May	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
24th-28th May	Fri- Mon 2007 International Jampot	Germany	
3rd June	Sunday 8th Classic bike show Kenebworth TBA		9.00AM
14th June	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
16/17 June	Air Britain Fly-In. Squadron North Weald		
18th June	Monday Run To Kent Section	TBA	6.30PM
24th June	Sunday Cressing Temple show	TBA	10.00AM
28th June	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM

<u>July-August 2007</u>		Venue	Time
1st July	Sunday Club Run To Battlesbridge	TBA	10.00AM
12th July	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30PM
15th July	Sunday Club Run	TBA	
26th July	Thursday Club Night BAR B Q	Squadron	7.30 PM
29th July	Sunday Club Run	TBA	10.00AM
3rd/ 6th August	Fri - Mon Jampot Rally Suffolk Woodbridge Suffolk		
9th August	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
19h August	Sunday Club Run	TBA	10.00AM
23rd August	Thursday Club Night/ invite Kent Section	Squadron	7.30 PM
26th/27th August	Sun/Mon Countess of Warwick Show	TBA	9.30AM
2nd September	Sunday Classic bike Festival North Weald North Weald		9.30AM
9th September	Sunday Plumstead		9.00AM
13th September	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
23rd September	Sunday Club Run	TBA	10.00AM
27th September	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
7th October	Sunday Coalhouse Fort Tilbury	TBA	9.30AM
11th October	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
25th October	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
28th October	Sunday Change of Clocks Run	TBA	10.00AM
8th November	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
11th November	Sunday Remembranced Sunday	Squadron	10.00AM
22nd November	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
1st December	Saturday End of Season Dinner	TBA	7.00PM
13th December	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM
27th December	Thursday Club Night	Squadron	7.30 PM

What Does a Name Mean?

If someone had told me, when I was in my twenties, that one day I would take an interest in bird watching (with feathers and wings, that is) then I would have thought they were mad and possibly even have felt a bit annoyed, as if they were trying to insult me in some way. However, quite recently on one sunny and frosty cold morning there we were, Pam and I, visiting a new centre of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds at Rainham Marshes on the site of the old Army rifle range at Purfleet in Essex. A two and a half mile walk around the new reserve, looking at the various ducks and birds plus the new work being done and the old firing range remnants then back to the excellent new centre (they even have free parking for motorcycles – how enlightened) for a hot “cuppa” and toasted sandwich, we even joined the Society. An elderly chap, also an RSPB member who obviously spent a lot of time at the centre, engaged us in conversation and was showing Pam how to work one of these huge telescope things when he noticed the AMOC section badge on my sweatshirt and asked what club it was for, so I told him that it was a motorcycle club. “Don’t talk to me about motorcycles!” he almost shouted – which was just as well, because I wasn’t going to anyway. However it was soon clear that what he probably meant was that he never intended to let me get a word in even if I had wanted to as he launched into a tirade about detesting motorcycles because he had apparently had two accidents with bikes (which according to him were not his fault in any way) in his car where the bikes were doing 90 to 100 miles an hour (why is it always 100mph people feel they have to quote when they mention anything to do with motorcycles I wonder). Finding it difficult to stop him for long enough to reply, I could only wait until he eventually had pause in order to draw breath, before replying that, “Each were entitled to their own opinion” and that I could say just the same about cars, as two had driven into my car when it wasn’t my fault in recent years, but it would be rather foolish to blame the actual cars themselves. But he was already well into his next sentences by then. Steering him onto something else he mellowed somewhat. He wasn’t a bad old boy

really and I think that even he realised eventually that he had been a bit silly, even making sure that he told me that he had taken a photo of an old Matchless outside a café last year for some reason or other. It got me to wondering how differently I would probably have reacted when I was 20 years old, at a time when all and sundry were quite willing to tell you how bad bikes were and took every opportunity to do so, even though they had no idea just what they were talking about and thought that because you were young they had the right to “put you straight” about things. Back then I would certainly have showed that I was annoyed, I would have thought to myself that he was just another stupid old fool and possibly have told him so as well. I certainly wouldn’t have bothered to talk with him. Now though, although still annoyed, I find that a few simple (perhaps sometimes deliberately condescending where necessary) dismissive statements then moving on to another completely different subject, works best. That way you can subtly win them over because they can’t avoid admitting to themselves you are not the lunatic they first tried to make out and, as in this case, part on good terms. It also got me to thinking just how much my own attitude to motorcycles themselves might have changed over the years and what they meant to me back then and now. When I was young I liked sports looking bikes and now I do not. However that is really where the change ends for me and I am always interested in the technicalities of different bikes of all ages and types.

No doubt Malcolm Arnold (and Ian Farrington, who backed him up in a subsequent letter) expected some measure of negative response when he wrote about the new AJS badged Chinese bikes being imported by Fluff Brown and his son. Malcolm and Ian have both been around long enough to know how easily some people are stirred up in this club. I wonder though whether they expected some of the negative attacks to be quite so vitriolic in their content (apparently worse on the web site, which I have not actually seen), which seem to be enough to even make Chris Read say that one would never appear on the cover of Jampot. I would have thought that a little variety in the Jampot would be welcomed occasionally and I for one enjoyed reading Malcom’s appraisal of the new machine. I am glad that Roy seems to be made of sterner stuff when he put one on the cover of our little magazine. It got me to wondering though, why people

get so enraged about the use of a name.

It's a funny thing really but people often say that they like controversial comment (as in the case of the hardliner column in Jampot) but they only really like it when they agree with what is being said and when they do not, suddenly they do not like it anymore. Perhaps the difficulty lies in that very small difference between being controversial as opposed to just expressing bigoted comment.

It is not as if the original factory has just been bought out and closed down with a massive loss of jobs and there can certainly be very few, if any alive today who can have ridden a "real" AJS new from the Wolverhampton factory. When the Collier Brothers bought the AJS concern they only wanted the name to put onto their own products made in London. When I was a young (pre riding age) enthusiast I could not understand why seemingly identical motorcycles appearing in similar adverts and having the same company address should have different make badges on the tank. It did not occur to me at the time that people could be so attached to a particular badge that they would not dream of buying a Matchless badged bike instead of an AJS and vice versa. The Colliers had realised this and made good use of a phenomenon which surely came to a peak with the British Motor Corporation, who managed to produce their 1100/1300 range using the badges of six at one time independent manufacturers. What the Colliers started when they used the AJS name to badge engineer their own models was only being continued when AMC/NVT introduced the Stormer model as an AJS rather than an NVT and by Harris when he used the Matchless badge for his Rotax powered G80, so what is the difference with this new one?

Despite the "real" AJS machines disappearing with the closure of the Wolverhampton factory, it was no doubt the badge engineered Matchless made AJS models which were uppermost in peoples minds when the current Club was reformed in the post war years. It could and perhaps should, if people were going to get so pedantic about a name, have been called the Plumstead Club or Matchless & Derivatives Club, but it wasn't and it would have been really silly to have done so. No-one queried the Wolverhampton AJS models being part of the scene (how could they) but they

were of course in the minority at Club events. Grudgingly perhaps, the Harris G80s were allowed on the scene and even more grudgingly (presumably because they were two-strokes) despite their AMC parentage and nearly all British content, the Stormer models. Throughout all this the Jampot Spares Scheme still only really caters for the Plumstead made machines and there is nothing at all wrong with that. There are just not enough of the others to make any sort of spares scheme work for them in any case and Stormer spares are still readily available from Fluff Brown at AJS Motorcycles. This new bike will be no different and make no difference at all to how the club runs and what it represents. No-one is going to be forced to ride or like one if they do not wish and neither will the club get “infected” and swamped by Chinese manufactured AJS owners insisting on “their rights”. So why all the fuss about a motorcycle that would only be yours if you wanted to buy one?

There has been some talk within the club hierarchy apparently about the slow decline in club members and worry about what will happen to the club if this continues. Questions are asked about what can be done to reverse the situation but the fact is that it cannot be reversed without encouraging prospective new members by meeting them at least half way. Probably the majority of our members passed their test in the days when it was comparatively easy and are now still riding the same sort of bike as they did then, even if they also have a more modern bike to accompany it. However, anyone starting out for the first time now needs real dedication and not a little cash, to overcome the logistics and expense of compulsory training courses and three (soon to be four) tests. They have to use a particular type of approved machine for the course and test choice they are undertaking and these new AJS models are actually suitable for this. Quite why a new motorcyclist would want to buy one of these new AJS bikes to learn on and then wish to come along to an AJS & Matchless Club event where he might get accosted by some crusty old curmudgeon who, while expecting his own machine to be venerated for its classic status has no hesitation in deriding “New Rider’s” bike as merely cheap foreign rubbish, is anyone’s guess. But if he (or she) does so, then they must be interested enough to want to find out more about the Club’s traditional machinery and this enthusiasm must be encouraged and fostered and that includes showing an interest in their bike as well.

As people get older, although they tend to be mainly interested in bikes that were current when they first started riding, they gradually often become ever more interested in models from eras before they were riding – which is why pioneer bikes are still being cherished today by people whose own parents were not even born when those bikes were made. I do not see any reason why that trend should change in the future if those new enthusiasts with their present new bike interests are made welcome and an interest also shown in what they are currently riding and interested in.

The sad fact is that some people probably do not really care about whether the club survives or not, just as long as it doesn't change in any way from what they think of as an "old boys like themselves" club for as long as they are still riding. However, I should hope that they are very much in the minority and, for myself, I would certainly like to see more younger people entering into our ranks. When I first joined a motorcycle club back in 1965 I was the youngest member there and when I look around now at our club meetings I see that at age 59 I am still not too far up the ranks and wonder will I ever reach motorcycle club senior citizen status or will the majority always be older than me. As far as these new AJS models are concerned, I have to admit that "race replica" style machines are not at all my "scene" (although I wouldn't mind trying one out) and neither are "cruiser" style or "off road" style bikes, but if one appeared in a more "sedate" 1950s/1960s roadster style then I could certainly be interested in one for a runabout – If only to get up some people's noses at club events. I bet though that for every one who



walked up moaning about it there would be a least half a dozen who would show a real interest and that has got to be a good thing.

Colin

Photos of the Quarter

Fish & chip Night



Ferry Crossing Germany

I suppose I was first aware of motorbikes when I was about four

I suppose I was first aware of motorbikes when I was about four years old, in 1932. At that time dad had a big vee twin A.J.S with double adult sidecar fitted with two triplex screens, two doors, a boot box, a spare wheel, and of course it had gas lighting. I can remember him going behind a bush to put liquid into the gas generator, and then drop a couple of lumps of carbide in before relight the lamps. He was always tinkering and repairing bikes for himself or others. I think he had this bike until about 1938, when he changed it for a Sunbeam

Lion outfit. (John Marston) I seem to think it was a 600cc but most I see advertised are 500c .He kept this for the rest of his life (I am sorry to say he died at 54) in 1952.

The bike was laid up during the war because of the fuel shortage In 1945 I got my provisional licence, I was about 17, and I started to ride his chair outfit on and off until I got married in 1949. The week I got married I took a week of from work, no honeymoon, and no money. Dad said I know where a bike is for sale, he wants £5 for it, and I will lend you the money and pick it up for you. He returned with a 1932 350cc A.J.S. big port, on top of his sidecar.

I managed to tax and insure it (with petrol coupons) put on a new tyre and a lick of paint, but unfortunley it had no lights. So I made do with bicycle lamps front and rear. I had this for a year or so, until one day, coming home from work it decided it would not start Pouring with rain with my mate on the back we ran it down a hill, it fired with a Mighty bang, it blew the butterfly valve out of the carb,. With very high revs it caught fire, a kindly gent threw a bucket of sand over it. I sold the bike for £5 with the remainder of the petrol coupons.

It was this time a neighbour was selling his Sunbeam 500cc side valve; would I like it. He wanted £60 for it, so I paid him 30 shillings a week but I could not run the bike and pay for it. So I had to leave it at dad's house for a year this was frustrating. After this time I road solo for a while. In the mean time I bought a 500cc Norton outfit (yes another £5) kept the chassis and chair (rebuilt the chair) And sold the Norton ES2 and got my £5 back!

It was time to look for a house or flat as we was living with the wife's parents. We had saved £100 we were having a survey on a place with the asking price of £1,000; when it was bought for cash by others. We were upset at this so we decided not to buy property (we were never encouraged to buy property) at this time. In the exchange and mart there was an advert for a Triumph Thunderbird in North London for £100. With my wife's agreement, I went to see it. It was in fair nick, but the front fork stanchions were bent, but I decided to have it. I rode it home; it was hard going, the steering was stiff and hard to ride. I replaced the fork stanchions and road it solo for a time

I sold the Sunbeam outfit to a local chap for £30 at £2 a week, which at times he found hard to find. After about a year riding the Triumph solo I decided to restore it. I had the bottom half renewed, top half resleeved to standard, Cylinder head and electrics sorted. Then it wanted painting. I had a cylinder vacuum cleaner with a blow end on it, with a hose and a glass spray bottle. I had the cellulose made up, a lot spare thinners, and wet and dry emery. After a lot of rubbing down and filling, I started spraying. Seven coats, cutting in each coat, and the final polish with bluebell. it turned out a treat! After it was finished I had a new chassis and child adult sidecar fitted. I also fitted a screen to the bike; it was a nice outfit.

We went all over the country with this bike, by the time I came to sell it There were 100,000 miles on the clock. I think it was about 1961 when I sold it. I had it up for sale for £15; our milkman at the time wanted an outfit and offered me £13, which I took because I was buying a second hand car. No more bikes until purchased a model 16 A.J.S in 1994, joined the A.J.S and M.O.C club and restored it.

P. Bearman

The Next Quarter

July 2007

Sun 1st Battlesbridge Bike Show

Sun 8th July British Owners

Thu 12th Club Night

Sunday 15th Section Run to Bike show Barleylands

Thu 26th Club Night 25 Anversary Bar B Q

August 2007

Friday 3rd-Monday 6th Jampot Rally Woodbridge

Thu 9th Club Night

Sun 19th Section Run TBA

Thu 23rd Club Night Visit from Kent Section

Sun 26th Countess Warwick Show

September 2007

Sun 2nd Classic bike show North Weald

Sat 8th Sun 9th Barleylands

Sun 9th Section Run Plumstead

Thu 13th Club Night

Sun 23rd Section Run TBA

Thu 27th Club Night

Section Committee

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