

Editorial

Well, in this household the last month hasn't been the best of places on this planet. In reality Christmas didn't happen. It never rains but it pours!

I had intended making one 'planned' visit to the Broomfield Butlitz or hospital as I believe it is known in some circles but instead of that I ended up making two unscheduled visits as an inmate, the second incarceration permitting me to return home to freedom on Christmas eve. This caused my scheduled visit to be postponed so I still have to take another 'holiday' but I don't think that will be for a few weeks yet.

I am afraid that this months editorial piece is going to be a bit on the thin and boring side as I am still struggling to get over the effects of the hospital stay but all being well things are looking up and I should be fully back in business in a few weeks.

An apology fo a failing on my part in last months magazine. You may remember the photograph of a Matchless on page 1? Well, it belongs to Andrew Prill - please accept my apologies, Andrew, for not being aware it was yours - my correspondents gave me no idea whose it was but I do realise that is no excuse.

I gather that our Presidente was the subject of a presentation ceremony at Mike Harden's recent Sherry and Mince Pie Plonkaround to celebrate his achievement of going clean (courtesy of Little Eric). Does this make him King Rodney I of Boxford? If so, would it be a good idea to celebrate his coronation at the AGM in March?

The Arbuthnot or should I call it the Hardbuthnot is still ringing in our ears all these months after it took place. I am pleased to include an article from our correspondent who resides on the south nank of the great divide, down in Kent, Dave Blanchard, with his views and thoughts on the event.

We made a visit south of the river back at the beginning of December to have a look at the Jack Tompson down at Canada Heights. Quite a good day really. Once again the event seemed to be sponsored by Bartholomews maps, navigation between the begins and end cards being equally as difficult as coping with the obstacles en-route.

Not so many riders from our part of the world this year but I think that those who did make the journey enjoyed themselves. However, I was a little surprised

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Youths • Twin Shock sidecars

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that some who ride the hard route in this centre made do with the easy route on this occasion. Congratulations to Richard Challis who I understand went clean.

Was pleased to see Dave Blanchard having one of his now infrequent rides. I thought the 'easy' route to be quite 'easy enough' until witnessing the good entry of girder rigs attempting to traverse the tortuous routes set out.

Seems like 'Our Tone' or some of his political cronies have got bored with the 'weapons of mass distraction', as 'imself so eloquently described them during his visit to the troops in Basra, that they have taken on the countryside and people such as ourselves in particular. I refer of course to the 'consultation document' being pushed about at the moment, the intention or at least some of the intention being to limit access to parts of the countryside with vehicles. We all must realise that we are plagued by the cowboys in our midst, both on two, three and four wheels but rather than using a steam hammer to crack a hazel nut surely some actual enforcement of laws already in existence would be more appropriate or have I got it wrong and the rural policies of the current government are being controlled by the hierarchy of the Ramblers Association, many of whom have little or no contact with the countryside, even down to undertaking 'rambles', but do live in the rural locations of inner London and other similar metropolitan locations. I might add that these 'ramblers' have little in common with genuine ramblers.

If DEFRA gets it way it makes me wonder whether it will finally spell the end of 'road trials' as we have known them for the best part of the last century and just think about the trials that are the talk of the EFA at the moment, the Arbuthnot and the proposed Eastbuthnot.

It is now some years since Olde Fred produced his Almanac and I was hoping to have included this years version as an insert with this edition of your favourite monthly. Perhaps next month. He can be surprisingly accurate with his predictions!

Swing Low

An Australian family of rugby supporters head out one Saturday to do their Christmas shopping. While in the sports shop the son picks up an England rugby shirt and says to his sister, "I've decided to be an England supporter and I would like this for Christmas". His sister is outraged by this and promptly whacks him around the head and says, "Go talk to your mother".

Off goes the little lad with the white rugby shirt in hand and finds his mother. "Mum" "Yes son?" "I've decided I'm going to be an England supporter and would like this shirt for Christmas". The mother is outraged at this, promptly whacks him around the head and says, "Go talk to your father".

Off he goes with the rugby shirt in hand and finds his father. "Dad" "Yes son?" "I've decided I'm going to be an England supporter and I would like this shirt for Christmas". The father is outraged and promptly whacks his son around the head and says "No son of mine is ever going to be seen in THAT!"

About half an hour later they're all back in the car and heading towards home. The father turns to his son and says "Son, I hope you've learned something today"

The son says, "Yes dad I have."

"Good son, what is it?"

The son replies, "I've only been an England supporter for an hour and I already hate you Aussie Bastards!"

Gradually, the 2004 fixture list dates are creeping up and catching us out. As I have mentioned in a previous T&T, the Southend club are running their Pre-70 and Twinshock trial at Danbury on the 29th February. I am assured there will be no 'modern bikes'. Also, they are intending to have an even longer lap than they did at last years event. I am sure this will go down well as last years event was very popular amongst those who rode. Regs for non-championship contenders should be included with next months magazine. As usual EC Pre70 Championship contenders must enter using the entry form in the Eastern Centre Gazette.

Those of you who rode at the December Plonkers will be aware that the results were later arriving than normal. I apologise to all who were awaiting the results with baited breath but as stated earlier, I was somewhat 'hors de combat' but I hope, Mkke Harden willing, to be able to produce the results for the next Plonkers.

Coming soon! The Raydon Rampage is a replacement for the event previously scheduled for the Boxford Scout HQ. This will take place this coming Sunday, 11th January - further details from Heather.

I shall finish by wishing you all a Happy New Year.

Best wishes,

Murphy's Laws



- Murphy's First Law** - Nothing is as easy as it looks
- Murphy's Second Law** - Everything takes longer than you think
- Murphy's Third Law** - Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong
- Murphy's Fourth Law** - if there is a possibility of several things going wrong, at a minimum the one that causes the most damage will go wrong.
- Murphy's Fifth Law** - if it is impossible for something to go wrong, then it will definitely go wrong.
- Murphy's Sixth Law** - Left to themselves, things will go from bad to worse.
- Murphy's Seventh Law** - if things seem to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

Did you ever wonder why Murphy's Laws are called Murphy's Laws?

In 1949 at Edwards Air Force Base an engineer named Capt. Edward A. Murphy was working on Air Force Project MX981 (a project designed to see how much sudden deceleration a person can stand in a crash). One day, after finding that a transducer was wired wrong, he cursed the technician responsible and said "If there is any way to do it wrong, he'll find it."

The project manager kept a list of "laws" and added this one, which he called Murphy's Law.

Other Murphy's Laws are:-

- Research** - enough research will tend to support your theory
- Open Road** - when there is a very long road upon which there is a one-way bridge placed at random and there are only two cars on that road, it follows that (1) the two cars will be going in opposite directions and (2) they will always meet at the bridge
- Fools** - it is impossible to make anything foolproof because fools are so ingenious
- Bread & butter** - you cannot successfully determine beforehand which side of the bread to butter
- Carpet** - the chance of bread falling with the buttered side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet
- Priorities** - whenever you set out to do something, something else must be done first
- Copiers** - the legibility of a copy is inversely proportional to its importance
- Computers** - the attention span of a computer is only as long as its power lead
- Wet paint** - tell a man that there are 300 billion stars in the universe and he'll believe you. Tell him that a bench has wet paint on it and he'll have to touch it to be sure
- Meetings** - a meeting is an event at which the minutes are kept and the hours lost

Secretarys Scribblings

Hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year.

We enjoyed a sociable outing to Raydon for a plonkers practice where motorcycling met culture when Mike Harden kindly provided sherry in proper glasses and mincepies all set out on a table cloth - thank you Mike, most enjoyable. A presentation was also made to ELP. who went round the Plonkers December trial clean and thanks to the handicap system only had 17 marks added resulting in him becoming top plonker! Next plonkers practice is Saturday 17th January.

Roger reported that the Woodbridge trial was a good event. We didn't get off to a very good start as we didn't check where the start was and drove straight into Gate 29 to be met by some hostile looking people and an even more hostile looking dog! A quick about-turn and we joined a convoy of other competitors riding round the lanes of Tunstall. We eventually stumbled across the road markings and found the right gate number. I was lucky enough to be chauffeur driven to observe on section 10 which was sheltered from the cold wind and quite an interesting little number, catching out quite a few riders. Kevin Harris came along and offered to take over while I had a sandwich and cup of coffee and then I was chauffeur driven back to the van - can't be bad. Graham Steward kept the Christmas spirit alive by riding round in his Santa Claus outfit - it didn't hinder him too much as he only dropped 3 marks. Chris Mace came to the rescue when two-thirds of Team Greeves expired on the last lap. He towed Mick H and Tim back both at the same time. Does this mean one Enfield equals two Greeves? Tim managed to resuscitate his Greeves and roared off down the track only to re-appear pushing it back with the chain wrapped around his neck, not a perfect day.

Regs are available for our first event of 2004 for solos and sidecars which takes place at Raydon this coming Sunday. So if you're still suffering from the excesses of Christmas or just want to blow away the cobwebs after the first week back at work it could be just the ticket.

Happy New Year

Heather

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Several men are in the locker room of a golf club.

A mobile phone on a bench rings and a man engages the hands-free speaker function and begins to talk. Everyone else in the room stops to listen.

MAN: "Hello"

WOMAN: "Dear, it's me. Are you at the club?"

MAN: "Yes"

WOMAN: "I am at Lakeside now and found this beautiful leather coat. It's only £1,000. Is it OK if I buy it?"

MAN: "Of course, . . . go ahead if you like it that much."

WOMAN: "I also stopped by the Mercedes dealership and saw the new 2004 models. I saw one I really liked."

MAN: "How much?"

WOMAN: £45,000

MAN: "OK, but for that price I want it with all the options."

WOMAN: "Great! Oh, and one more thing . . . the house we wanted last year is back on the market. They're asking £450,000."

MAN: "Well, then go ahead and give them an offer, but just offer £425,000."

WOMAN: "OK. I'll see you later! I love you!"

MAN: "Bye, I love you, too."

The man hangs up. The other men in the locker room are looking at him in astonishment.

Arbuthnot 2003 ...

I should think by now that almost every pre 65 enthusiast has heard of the Arbuthnot trial. A trial reminiscent of the period between the two world wars. When re-introduced in more recent years it was limited to rigid rear end machines only, plus three wheelers of the Morgan type. Motorcycle combinations were of course included and they are great fun to watch and ride.

Wiltshire with its natural sections and many miles of tracks has always been suitable for these ancient and unwieldy types of vehicles. But the tracks over the last several years have been steadily eroded by our 4 wheel drive friends in their Land Rovers and equivalent foreign 'purpose built bogwheels'. This has made the going in between the sections a bit of a challenge. Quite a few riders, especially the newcomers tend to fall to earth when getting cross-threaded in the many deep ruts. Because the trial is held in September time, these ruts are quite often covered by longish grass and are not visible to trials riders who lack the necessary X-ray vision. Most dismiss 'falling off' immediately with a dose of strong and sometimes inebriated laughter, this can often be heard bellowing around the rolling hills of Wiltshire. Some of our more 'down to earth' senior riders who only do the odd trial in the year collect a few bruises during their 'off', which obviously takes time to heal. But! We all have the well thought out 'body and bike friendly' sections to cheer us up and look forward to, don't we?

Beautiful weather was the order of the day plus the company of great friends and many acquaintances; everyone is out to enjoy the adventure of real old-fashioned motorcycling. We punctually started at the Barford Inn with Pam Venables our regular and official starter. Ralph Venables was sorely missed this



The Kentish Mix Team

year; he was one of the biggest supporters of this trial. Ralph always made the effort to get his report of the day into the relevant sporting newspapers.

We started with sections not much different to other years except that the ground was much harder due to the continuing dry weather. This caused problems with the rigid frames and their lack of rear springing, also troublesome was girder front forks that were devoid of damping! Further into the trial some of the sections got much trickier. Very steep hillsides and tightened up sections caused many a five and a fall. Although the number of sections was limited we were still in for a fairly hard day here and there. I would normally go round for a single figure score but not this year. Much better riders than me were also into double figures and I was pleased I wasn't driving a Morgan three wheeler on the day. A few years ago when rear sprung bikes were allowed into the competition to bolster up dwindling entry numbers, we had the suspicion that the sections would get stiffer. We guessed then that the relaxing day would get a little more hectic to allow for the nimbleness of the relatively modern and more competitive spring heeled machines. We were right.

The now temporarily nicknamed 'Hard-Buthnot' trial is still one of the best around and it is well worth doing for the flavour of times gone by.

The rider of the day has just got to be John Excell on his 1938 BSA 250cc Empire Star. Steely eyed concentration, mixed with determined and positive riding saw John on just 7 points lost at the end of the last girder fork competition section. Those other two well known girder fork exponents, Pete Robson (Levis 500cc) and Jeremy Tester (Ariel 350cc) finished in 2nd and 3rd places respectively, both men losing 14 points. Last years girder fork winner Brian Clark (Matchless) was fourth on 18 points lost. In no uncertain terms John Excell has annihilated his girder fork opposition and his ride will be talked about over many a pint for a long time to come. Fantastic! Well done John!

In the telescopic rigid competition class Ian Watkins showed us how to ride the sections when you have the slight advantage over the girders with front-end hydraulic damping. Even though he was still recovering from an unmentionable

QUICKIE:

A woman walks into a chemist shop and tells the pharmacist she wants to buy some arsenic.

He says "What do you want with arsenic?"

She says "I want to kill my husband because he cheats on me by having sex with another woman."

The pharmacist says "I can't sell you arsenic so you can't kill your husband, even if he is having sex with another woman."

So she reaches into her pocket and pulls out a picture of her husband having sex with the pharmacist's wife.

The pharmacist says "Oh, I didn't realise you had a prescription."

operation, he floated round for a clean score! Dick Comer matched him in the sections but was a second slower in the special test. Both men were really on the ball on the day!

The competition sidecar winners were Arthur Walton and A.N.Other with 25 points lost on the 1949 Ariel. Runners up were Roger Ashby (aka crashby) and Ralph Brown with their Matchless 650cc G12 outfit. They managed to get the big AMC parallel twin round for a loss of 21 points in the sections, plus some extra penalties for late starting. What a lovely noise that Matchless made! Reminded me of the bypass burn up days.

Competition pre unit springer maestro was Steve Kingstone from very nearby Salisbury. He piloted that long stroke 1958 Matchless through the day's events for 5 points lost. Now did I previously say that springers have an advantage? Ah yes! But this trial can be a little like the Talmag where you need 'lady luck' to smile on you, on the day. Still a great ride though and in single figures too!

Colonial Girder Fork man of the moment was the ever smiling (and old) Ali Tanner. He lost 6 points on the friendlier sections, but might have been clean if he had not spent time kissing and cuddling other peoples wives, including mine! Still it saved me having to do it when I got home! He was also awarded the highest combined age of machine and rider. I think this was about 190 years including him and the 1935 BSA 250cc. Well done hotlips!

A feminine touch is always welcomed by trials men and their dirty bikes and this year we had a Ladies award won by the very consistent Sara Carter on her throaty sounding 1948 girder forked, Triumph 3T 350 twin. Sara is well known on the trials circuits and is no mean performer in pre 65 scrambles either.

Colonial telescopic fork top dog was Mark Worsfold (of long distance trials fame), he rode a 1948 BSA B31 350cc for a clean score sheet! Runner up Tony Drewett coaxed his 1950 Royal Enfield round for an identical score! He needs to find another 5 seconds on the special test for next year to beat speed merchant Mark.

All minor gripes about the sections have been forgotten now and next year can't come soon enough. Many thanks to the Salisbury Motorcycle Club for their hard work and to Mike Rye and Ian Rennie in particular, for listening to our constructive moans. See you all next year!

Dave Blanchard

Please Note:

The closing date by which all articles and adverts to be included in the February issue of Trials & Tribulations should reach the editorial office is Tuesday 27th January.

Material for inclusion in the magazine may be supplied in the following forms:

handwritten • typed • computer hard copy • fax • email • floppy disc

If providing computer hard copy, a font size of 12pt minimum is preferred whilst articles supplied on floppy disc should be saved in text format.



The JENKS Cub

editors notes:

I had the privilege of meeting Jenks several times during the sixties and seventies and am pleased to be able to include this article by Mick Brown on the restoration and forthcoming auction of 'the Jenks Cub'.

"Jenks" initial fame was as a competitor, a world-class sidecar passenger; he moved into journalism later, and one of his finest and most evocative pieces derived from his first-hand competitive experience - he partnered the victorious Stirling Moss in a Mercedes in the Mille Miglia, navigating him through the thousand-mile road race at record pace and producing one of the true classics of racing journalism as a by-product. DSJ's writings for Motor Sport combined a competitor's insight, a journalist's immediacy, an enthusiast's love of the sport and a historian's sceptical eye. Generations of British enthusiasts grew up on the prose of DSJ.

His many books covered a wide range of topics in motor racing - he was as comfortable writing about the men as he was about the machines. He had firm beliefs in what made cars and men great and was unafraid to express his opinions forcefully and elegantly.

His death in 1996, though not unexpected, has left an irreplaceable void in racing journalism. There is not likely to be another competitor/journalist of DSJ's calibre again.

Denis Jenkinson, journalist, trials rider, sprinter, passenger extraordinaire and an original world champion. A true all rounder who passengered Eric Oliver in 1949 to become the first World Road Race Sidecar Champion. He also acted as navigator/co-driver to Stirling Moss when he won the 1955 Mille Miglia in Italy at record speed. He is reported to have competed over here in the East at the Martlesham, Suffolk, sprint in 1971.

During the early sixties I remember him, a diminutive character, with an enormous ginger beard, competing in the Southern



Photo courtesy of Deryk Wyld



Centre. He rode his Triumph Tiger Cub in events like the Ringwood club's Perce Simon or Committee Cup. Ray Small of 'Cub Mods' has recently beautifully restored the Cub, GXA 551.

Evidently 'Jenks' sold the Cub to Graham Kent, of Church Crookham, Nr. Aldershot in the seventies, for coppers! Many trials riders will remember Graham as a successful rider, very handy on his Cotton I remember. The Cub was just a load of bits, Graham recalls, and it remained in a heap until recently when he gave it to Ray small for spares. However, this pile also contained a buff logbook and V5! When Ray realised what he had the restoration project began.

The buff logbook shows it registered in 1956 to H&L Motors, Triumph agents from Stroud in Gloucestershire. 'Jenks' name appears in 1964 and the V5 also bears his signature. There is a mystery over the registration number as GXA 551 was issued in the London area! This leads one to believe that this machine was built originally from a load of bits and pieces.

The Tiger Cub narrow swinging arm curse appears to have been cured by a cunning piece of blacksmithing. A banana shaped piece of tube has been inserted into the right hand side of the swinging arm and has increased the tyre clearance by a half-inch or so. Crude but effective! The other obvious mod. Is the fitting of BSA forks, probably C11, with modified yokes.

The photograph of the restored machine shows what a good job Ray Small has made, the only difference I can spot are the additions of rubber fork gaiters, purists may say it should have a Dunlop rubber saddle? I don't think so as 'Jenks' was a bit short in the leg and probably had a simple pad seat as fitted by Ray. Much of the machine is original as ridden by 'Jenks' with some 'donor' parts, one being a genuine rubber distributor cover, this was donated by Roy Price of the famous sidecar scrambling crew.

Ray tells me that he intends to enter the Cub in a Cheffins Auction in the near future, what an opportunity to buy a real piece of Motorcycling and Motoring history with a guaranteed provenance.



BUSH VISIT PART 2

Whilst on his recent visit to England, President George "Dubya" Bush is invited to tea with the Queen.

He asks her what her leadership philosophy is. She says that it is to surround herself with intelligent people.

He asks how she knows if they are intelligent. do so by asking them the right questions" says the Queen. "Allow me to demonstrate".

The Queen phones Tony Blair, puts him on a speaker phone and says, "Mr Prime Minister, please answer this question for me. Your mother has a child, your father has a child, and this child is not your brother or sister. Who is it?"

Tony Blair responds, "It's me, ma'am".

"Correct. Thank you and goodbye". says the Queen.

She hangs up and says "Did you get that, Mr President?"

"Yes ma'am, Thanks a lot. I'll definitely be using that!"

Upon returning home, he decides he'd better put some of his old friends to the test.

He calls Dick Cheney first and says, "Hi, Dick, I wonder if you can answer a question for me?"

"Why of course, Mr President, What's on your mind?"

"Well your mother has a child, and your father has a child, and this child is not your brother or your sister. Who is it?"

Cheney hems and haws and finally asks, "Can I think about it and get back to you?"

Bush agrees and Cheney hangs up.

Cheney immediately calls members of his staff and they puzzle over the question for several hours but nobody can come up with the answer.

Finally, in desperation, Cheney calls Colin Powell at the State Department and explains his problem.

"Now look here, Colin, your mother has a child, your father has a child, and this child is not your brother or your sister, Who is it?"

Powell answers immediately "It's me of course, you idiot"

Much relieved, Cheney rushes back to call Bush and exclaims, "I know the answer sir, I know who it is! It's Colin Powell"

And Bush replies in disgust, "Wrong, it's Tony Blair!"



Ruthys Racing Revival

Part Two



The final days leading up to the Goodwood revival weekend seemed to crawl by as I waited in anticipation for my five-year plan to reach fruition and I kept imagining all the things that could possibly go wrong at the last minute.

This state of mind was not helped by a late request for me to vacate my Beart aermacchi seat by two ex world champions, who had been invited over for the Barry Sheene tribute parade on the Sunday and were looking for a bike to ride in the two races as well over the weekend.

The owner/ entrant was having none of it though and informed them that he was more than satisfied with his nominated jockey thank you very much.

This more than proved his loyalty as a friend, but led me to question his judgement a little as well as his expectations of his favoured jockey's ability!

The date finally arrived and as I drove through the paddock gates into the competitors enclosure to meet up with the rest of the favoured few on the Thursday for signing on, scrutineering and riders briefing, the reality was beginning to kick in!

"RacerRuth really was going to ride again.

Practice the following day consisted of un-timed practice in the morning in which to give the bike a final shake down and, in my case try to acclimatise myself to both the bike and the circuit ready for the timed practice in the afternoon which decided the grid positions.

As we sat in the warm up area awaiting the first practice I felt a bit like David in the lions den, having scant racing knowledge of the bikes limitations on a circuit which I had little idea of the racing line for two wheels rather than four.

The little 'macchi' was one of only four 350cc entry's in an otherwise all 500cc grid of thirty on what is now acknowledged as the fastest and most unforgiving in England.

We would need to get on to the pace reasonably quickly if we were to stand any chance of staying with the pack.

With the engine nice and warm Dave handed me the bike and giving the throttle a final blip shouted, 'Feel that response now' as he patted me on the shoulder and wished me luck.

At last it was time to go out and a very hyped up rider slipped the clutch up to 5k and headed out through the paddock gates out on to the circuit in a mixed state of exaltation and anticipation.

Motoring with the rest of field into the first corner, Madgewick, the engine felt a little fluffy.

Forever the optimist I put this down to the time spent in the warm up area and expected it to clear as I got down to it in the middle of the pack through Fordwater, one of the more character building parts of the circuit.

But clear it did not!

No matter what I tried it would not rev out and run clean and my mood steadily changed from elation to dejection as I ran through all the possible permutations in my mind as I stuttered around trying to keep out of the way of the quick boys.

I hoped to avoid that inevitable dive back into the pits. As we needed those laps under our belt so I had little option but to make the best of what we had and press on for a few laps in the hope of salvaging a decent lap time.

But in a repeat performance of Snetterton it steadily got worse leaving me no option but to dive into the pits to be greeted by an incredulous looking Dave.

A rapid diagnosis followed with much shouting and gesticulating from both rider and entrant as Dave made a few hurried adjustments to the fickle little Italian racer before I rejoined the track for another 2 laps before the un-timed session came to an end.

Back in the paddock a thorough de brief with Dave and Aermacchi guru Dick Linton revealed that the only changes that had been made since the successful Lydden hill outing had been the exhaust system which had been returned to an open megga as no sound limits apply for Goodwood.

(The open pipe gives another two b.h.p but narrows the power band)

Dave and Dick set about the bike with a vengeance, re setting the float height and needle settings to suit in a last ditch attempt to sort it out.

All was not doom and gloom though as I felt the rapid adjustments in the pit lane had at least given me a base to work from, so at last things seemed to be looking up.

On the final lap I had managed to latch on to the back of Wayne Gardner no less on his 60b.h.p. Manx Norton for a couple of corners before he disappeared into the distance but at least I had managed to start racing the bike closer to the limit.

Riding the Aermacchi demands an all-round more brutal technique to that of say a Manx Norton or A.J.S. 7R. on which you can play with the throttle through the corners finding a balance between the powerband and adhesion.



The Wit of Tommy Cooper R.I.P.

Tommy Cooperisms. to brighten up the day.

Guy goes into the doctor's.

"Doc, I've got a cricket ball stuck up my backside."

"How's that?".

"Don't you start."

With the Aermacchi you need to run a lot deeper into the corners hard on the brakes while stamping down through the box before snapping the throttle open on the apex all on a rising throttle letting the rear wheel hang loose.

Any rolling back on the throttle and the front-end tucks under causing it to run wide, which forces you to roll back even more which then becomes a vicious circle and this can be a little unsettling.

As timed practice loomed it was becoming increasingly apparent that this was our last chance to get it right and we had it all to do. If we were to make any impression at all.

On arrival in the warm up area for timed practice the riders were called into the pre practice briefing which is traditional and in which the ACU Steward, Clerk of the Course and riders spokesman all have their say.



Wayne Gardner was nominated as the rider's representative this year, the position previously held by the late Barry Sheene, and the first point he made was to highlight the speed differential between the quicker 500s and the slower bike/rider combinations as an area of concern.

He didn't point this criticism in my direction particularly but I felt a little like the choirboy who passes wind in church and wont own up! None the less.

Sammy Miller however who was running his 500cc Gilera four suggested that Wayne and the quicker chaps would just have to go slower as most of us couldn't go much quicker anyway which eased the tension somewhat.

Sitting between Wayne and Jamie Witham at the time I could almost feel the rivalry between them so I made a mental note to keep out of their way.

But I needn't have worried, as that was the closest I ever got to them all weekend! Out on the circuit anyway.

While all this was going on a major incident had occurred out on the circuit involving a C type jaguar so we were told to expect a delay before we could go out.

So we all filed back to the warm up area and waited, and waited, and waited!

Finally we were told that there would be no more practice as the police had closed the circuit for the remainder of the day due to the serious nature of the incident out on track. and our practice would now be at 9am tomorrow morning.

So we all dispersed back to our paddock area and formulated plan 'C'. which was that I kept off the champagne at the reception that evening laid on by Mercedes Benz at Goodwood house, before returning to the motorhome a little later for an early night.

Plan 'C' worked fine and I managed to grab some well earned sleep before attempting a last ditch effort to qualify in a reasonable position on the grid first thing the following the morning.

Saturday morning dawned wet but by the time we filtered out on to the circuit at 9 am a few dry patches was appearing so I was felling confident that I would be able to get my head down behind the bubble and at last turn the wick up a bit.

To my relief the bike was at last running as sweet as a nut and would now rev cleanly to its 9.2 limit,so after a couple of laps to settle in I began to push it harder.

Those last final adjustments have really transformed the engines performance between that of night and day and I was now able to start drifting the bike through the long sweeping bends, which the Goodwood circuit is renowned for.

Upward gearchanges are made clutchless with just a stamp of the foot and a flick of the wrist, the six speed box keeping you busy as your dance up and down the gears like a rat up a drainpipe to keep in the power band.

On the limit the Aermacchi skips around a lot anyway but a damp patch in the middle of Fordwater which is taken flat in top had both the wheels drifting just a little too much for comfort giving the rider a quick reality adjustment.

And it was another damp patch at Lavant which caught out the unfortunate Colin Seeley who high sided the original John Cooper Seeley G50 Right in front of me in the middle of a banzai lap.

I managed to miss both him and the bike though and went on to record a time good enough for a 5th row grid position in the middle of the pack so I was feeling a little more confident as we filed back into the post race paddock.

Now all I had to do was to try and get amongst them in the first race later that day.which unfortunately Mr Seeley was unable to do as they had carted him of to hospital for a few repairs.

But he returned to the event later on with his arm in a sling feeling rather sore but in good enough spirits to give Dave and I some stick on our last ditch efforts to get our act together.

TO BE CONTINUED.

End Thought . . .

War does not determine who is right, war determine who is left.