

Editorial

What a month!

Life has been a bit hectic especially now that I have inherited/taken on the jobs of editor of the Eastern Centre Gazette and also the Eastern Centre website.

As many of you were aware, Ken Davis expressed a desire to retire from the editorship of the Eastern Centre Gazette and this is just what he intends to do with the March issue being his last. I shall be taking over from the April issue.

Before putting my name forward I did a fair amount of soul searching as to whether it was a good idea and was also grilled by several people who were worried that the standard of this magazine would be compromised. I have thought long and hard about it and earnestly believe that there should be no apparent conflict of interests especially as their respective workloads occur at different times during the month. So . . . as well as looking for articles for this illustrious magazine I shall be looking for articles for the Gazette.

For the last couple of years, Paul Fenn with the occasional help of his son Neil, has been looking after the Eastern Centre web site. Back in November, Paul announced that he wished to relinquish the job of looking after the web site and I have now been accepted by the centre board as the new web site editor together with a much more web surfer friendly brief than Paul was required to follow.

I hope that I shall be able to bring some of the humour that we have become used to in the Trials & Tribs into these Centre wide ventures. Perhaps I shall have to be a bit careful as it must be appreciated that very few (if any) of the Eastern Centre 'long coats' belong to the EFA!

Now for some sad news. After what seems half a lifetime we have lost the use of Frating, or to be precise the land which is essential for the running of the trial, namely the start area and all the sections the start side of the reservoir. As far as we are aware we haven't done anything to upset the landowner but the shooting and fishing fraternity have well and truly gazumped us with requests that they have sole use and we have been pushed out into the cold. A great shame as many people look upon Frating and its ride around as being one of the better trials of the year - I know that some of our regular visitors from the South Eastern centre who ride with an outrigger attached reckon it to be one of their

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The Mid Anglia MCC
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The Match Plonkers

The Snaque Pit, Belchamp, Sudbury, Suffolk

Sunday 7th March 2004

Start: 10.30 am

A Trial for:

Pre 65 solos • Pre 65 sidecars • Twin Shocks
Youths/Juniors • Twin Shock sidecars

For further information contact:

Mike Harden 01473 310537

email: mike@harden-j.freemove.co.uk

best venues. Well, sadly, it is no more. Your committee, sorry, Revolutionary Council, have deliberated long and hard on whether we could still 'run' at Frating but it has been agreed by us and our Frating contact, Paul Peak, that we just haven't enough facilities available to us.

For this year, Steve Sawyer, our landowner at Thorrington has given permission for the event to be run at Poplars Chase Farm. However, it must be stressed that this is for one year only - we must find a new venue for next years event. So, now is the time to get your trials land, searching for, boots, hat and smooth talking manner out of the closet - we need a piece of land like Frating for next year. Your help will be much appreciated - contact Ted for further details.

What this does of course mean is that I shan't have to be quite so careful when typing in the name and venue of the trial in future! Trouble is that my current spell checker, both human and computer, recognises both spellings as valid!

Well, the Raydon Rampage went off very well, even though the heavens opened big time during the event. I do believe that some of the entry who normally seem to think that the winner is the first to finish did in fact complete the trial without getting wet and rumour has it that they were home just finishing the second helping of Yorkshire Pud when the rains came!

Don't know what happened to the post but Colin Taverner called following the publication of the January issue enquiring where the championship results had gone to - well I never received them so this month I have included the results as depicted on the replacement copy that Colin has sent me. Perhaps this is a good example of why one should use email rather than rely on snail mail.

The first visit of the year to the Snaque Pit is about to happen - shall have to remember to wake up the great Indian Geronimo from his winter's sleep as no

doubt he will be summoned several times during the course of the day. Much discussion on the routes to be employed in club trials ensued at the recent meeting of the RC and it was confirmed that no matter what happens elsewhere, there will be a 'middy' route available at the Snaque Pit. Good! You now know where I stand with respect to the argument, I don't want the Gentlemen's Route to become harder nor do I think it needs be at a beginners level but it should be given as a value for money ride for enjoyment.

The Southend club are organising their annual Pre-70 trial at Royal Oak on the 29th of the month. I am reliably informed, that is if you can rely on Dave Spurgeon, that the event will be like last years but only better and I can vouch that last years event was just about universally acclaimed as being superb. I am told they are intending having the 'longer lap' once again with perhaps even more distance involved. This is once again a case of make the most of this venue before it is lost to us under the excavators. I have always contended that owners of gravel pits 'grow' gravel! It always seemed to be the case that the machinery at Broomfield would go back to an area they had dug a few years earlier and miraculously find new stocks of gravel. It has been suggested that as the stocks of gravel near the surface reduce it becomes financially viable to dig deeper but I prefer to think they grow it!

Mike Harden and his merry men have another of their very popular Plonkers trials in the pipeline. This time they are going to The Snaque Pit but NOT using the climbs for which the father of a certain World Champion by the name of Dougie was most impressed back in the 70s when he rode there.

I trust you don't think I have gone overboard on the DEFRA proposals that are being/likely to be inflicted upon us. It would seem that 'Our Tone' is determined to upset those with an interest in the countryside no matter what. Without doubt, he has been influenced by the inner city branches of the Ramblers Association - a pity that heed isn't taken of the rank and file members of their association who really do seem to have the interests of the countryside and all who enjoy the facilities at heart. If you require any further information then



Southend & District Motor Cycle Club

affiliated to the Eastern Centre A-C.U.

PRE-70 BRITISH BIKE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 1

SUNDAY, 29th February 2004

Start 10.30 am

Royal Oak Pits, Danbury, Essex.

For further information contact: Mark Kemp 01376 344344

MORAL DILEMMA

- hmm a tricky one!

Here's a dilemma for you With all your honour and dignity what would you do?

This test only has one question, but it's a very important one. Please don't answer it without giving it some serious thought. By giving an honest answer you will be able to test where you stand morally. The test features an unlikely, completely fictional situation, where you will have to make a decision one way or the other.

Remember that your answer needs to be honest, yet spontaneous. Please read slowly and consider each line - this is important for the test to work accurately.

You're in Florida...In Miami, to be exact... There is great chaos going on around you, caused by a hurricane and severe floods. There are huge masses of water all over you. You are a CNN photographer and you are In the middle of this great disaster. The situation is nearly hopeless.

You're trying to shoot very impressive photos. There are houses and people floating around you, disappearing into the water. Nature is showing all its destructive power and is ripping everything away with it.

Suddenly you see a man in the water, he is fighting for his life. Trying not to be taken away by the masses of water and mud. You move closer.

Somehow the man looks familiar. Suddenly you know who it is - it's George W. Bush! At the same time you notice that the raging waters are about to take him away, forever. You have two options. You can save him or you can take the best photo of your life.

So you can save the life of George W. Bush, or you can shoot a Pulitzer prize winning photo, a unique photo displaying the death of one of the world's most powerful men.

And now for the question which is at the foot of page 9
(please give an honest answer)

please talk to Bob Drane who I am sure will be only too happy to give you all the low down you require.

AGM time is fast approaching - don't know whether curry and chilli is on the menu but I hope so! Do you know of another club which feeds you so well at its AGM? I bet Delia doesn't feed the Canaries board of Directors and shareholders as well as we are treated at the Alma!

You DO know how to get there don't you? I don't want anymore problems such as I had about ten years ago when one of our club champions of the time was most unimpressed (to put it mildly) that I hadn't included a map of how to get to the Alma - shows how often he came to visit us!

Best wishes,

Jim

Secretarys Scribblings

Seems a long time ago now but thanks to everyone who made our Raydon Trial a successful event, especially the observers. If you haven't received any results yet they are available tonight

Don't forget to write to your MP and/or Alun Michael, Minister for Rural Affairs about the DEFRA Consultation Document regarding Rights of Way issues. Lots has been said about this in T+IMX so if you're stuck for ideas as to how to word your letter you can get some clues from them. We have until 19th March 2004 to make ourselves heard



Next Club Nite will be AGM time again. If you have one of the trophies which are awarded annually please could you ring 01621 892606 to arrange their return or bring them to the Snaque Pit trial on 15th February so we can get them engraved. Thanks

FIXTURE LISTS - We have a small supply of Eastern Centre Fixture Lists available at 30p each if anyone is interested.

Congratulations to Graham Braybrook on winning the Eastern Centre ACU Pre-70 British Bike Championship, and to Roger Finch on coming second. Trevor Hill tied with John Kendall on the same number of points but lost out on third spot as John had two wins.

Club Subs are due for renewal. They have been pegged again this year to £8 for Club Membership + Newsletter or £15.50 for Club Membership, Newsletter and Eastern Centre Gazette.

Whilst we're on the subject of Newsletters and Gazettes, if you have both - and have them posted to you, you may find you have to put 34p stamps on your stamped addressed envelopes as they can weight a bit heavier than the ordinary 1st or 2nd class stamp.



Heather

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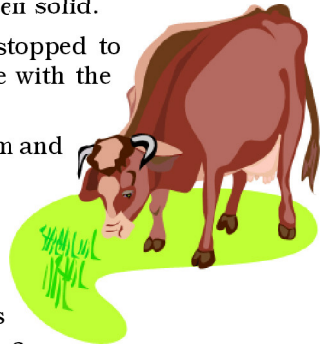
It was a very cold morning and when the farmer went out to bring his herd of cows in to be milked he found that they were all frozen solid.

One of his farmer friends was walking by and stopped to look at this most unusual sight and to commiserate with the farmer.

As they were talking, an old lady walked up to them and said that she thought she could help.

The farmer thought about it and then asked her to do what she could to help him.

The old lady went up to the first cow and gently rubbed the nose of the cow and after a few seconds the cow started to come back to life and within a minute was back to normal. She then continued rubbing the noses of all the cows until they were all back to normal.



The farmer thanked her and off she went on her way.

The farmers friend asked - "You know who that was don't you?"

"No" said the farmer.

"That was Thora Hird" his friend replied.

VERY IMPORTANT!

DEFRA Consultation Document PB8923

Well this is it! If we sit back and do nothing it looks like our pastime of green laning, one lap trials like the Sammy Miller rounds and long distance trials will soon be a thing of the past. If this consultation goes to legislation we will overnight lose about two thirds of the rights of way with vehicular rights and will NEVER be able to reclaim them. So please spend a few moments to write and lobby your MP about the effects of the proposals in the consultation paper (Use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way.) as proposed by the rural affairs minister. A copy of the paper can be found at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/mpvehicles/consultation.pdf> There are many complex issues within the paper but here are some key points that LARA think we should raise.

You can find out who your MP is and how to contact them at <http://www.locata.co.uk/commons/> Any problems with this contact Tracey or myself (Jim) on 01245 466815 and we will find out for you.

PLEASE PLEASE !!!! DO NOT simply copy these guide lines in your letter as this tends to have no effect if many letters the same are sent; they are simply read as one letter. Put it in your own words, leave some bits out or indeed add anything you feel relevant. Sign your letter from yourself, as private individuals, letters tend to have more weight in influencing MPs to take action. I understand the ACU has responded at national level already.

At the bottom of the page I have listed a number of direct questions that can be asked, please choose one or two of these and include them in your letter (if you ask too many questions they tend to get ignored but you should get an answer if you stick to just one).

The paper states no foreseen affect on small businesses. A few have been listed that I know will suffer if our sport is curtailed. If you can think of more, please mention them in your letter.

LARA - LAND ACCESS & RECREATION ASSOCIATION

No More Byways?

Ideas for responses to DEFRA Consultation PB 8923

The Government is committed to 'Evidence based legislation' - here the Minister is seeking the evidence but proposing legislation before the facts are known.

Please Note:

The closing date by which all articles and adverts to be included in the March issue of Trials & Tribulations should reach the editorial office is Tuesday 24th February.

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 Minister says it is silly to use horse and cart evidence as the basis for motoring use. How can this be silly now, when for 100 years it has been the only basis for almost all roads? Only 20th century bypasses and motorways were actually built for motors:

The Minister identifies a real problem - illegal use. We support the use of more effective enforcement in proposal 1. But the rest of the proposals will bear down almost entirely on the lawful user, and will be likely, in fact, to increase illegal use.

Motorists have been frustrated for years when trying to get the police to enforce the law against illegal use. To find, now, that the caring user is to be penalized and deprived of resources in consequence of police inaction is grossly unreasonable.

The Highway Authorities have been benefiting directly from motoring taxes since 1910 but they have failed in two important ways. First, they have failed to maintain their old roads, and second, they have failed to record them properly. Both these are duties and it is unreasonable to remove resources from motorists in consequence of the failures of the authorities.

The pressure on Byways from the walking community is also due to Highway Authority failures.

Many footpaths are impassable, ploughed, obstructed, or overgrown, so walkers rely on Byways as they are more likely to be usable. Yet again, the Authorities have failed in their duty to walkers, and motorists are being penalized in consequence. How can this be fair?

The proposals will inevitably put much more pressure on sites and facilities needed by genuine off-road motorsport. Planning rules and sensible management both mean that many sites are already at capacity. The likely outcome is that legitimate motorsport - not the cause of the problem identified here - will be reduced, to be replaced by hit-and-run events run by 'cowboy' organizers. This will not benefit the countryside, the landowner, the other users, or the rural economy.

QUICKIE:

Sally was driving home from one of her business trips up North when she saw an elderly gypsy woman walking on the side of the road. As the trip was a long and quiet one, she stopped the car and asked the Navajo woman if she would like a lift.

After a bit of small talk while resuming the journey, the gypsy woman noticed a brown bag on the seat next to Sally.

"What's in the bag?" asked the woman.

Sally looked down at the brown bag and said, "It's a bottle of wine. I got it for my husband."

The gypsy woman was silent for a moment, then speaking with the quiet wisdom of an elder said, "Good trade."

The idea that Byways can be researched in a year. when parliament has allocated 25 years for footpaths, is totally unreasonable. Even 25 years is not going to be enough, as volunteers cannot work through the week, while the authorities and the record offices are not open at weekends. All that will happen is a hotch-potch of rushed claims, which will clutter up the Authority offices for years and years. By the time they are dealt with, the routes will be ploughed out, and the witnesses will be dead. Authorities have had since 1969 to do this work with our money and have failed. How can it be sensible or fair to give us a year to do the whole job?

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR MP

- 1 How will it stop illegal use?
- 2 How will authorities be able to cope with lots of extra claims to beat deadline?
- 3 how will they police the new proposals?
- 4 why has minister not waited for his own research to be finished before writing paper?
- 5 Has the minister seen alleged damage beyond the first parts of byways? The part of the byway nearest to a road is often left in disrepair to deter people from using it.
- 6 what about motor sport already struggling to get new and hold onto land?
- 7 other users .cavers ballonists.etc.How will they transport there equipment? Where will they park?
- 8 ramblers park on byways - where will they park? On a blind bend on tarmac country road?
- 9 How will disabled people be affected if vehicular access is denied?

BUSINESS AFFECTED

motorcycle dealers; garages; local shops; bed & breakfasts; tyre companies; outdoor pursuit shops/maps; magazines; pubs & hotels; motorcycle manufacturers; guided tour companies

SPORT AFFECTED

- 1 long distance trials
- 2 enduro/rallies
- 3 ballooning
- 4 cavers

Finally (AND VERY IMPORTANT) could you please send a copy of your letter to your local LARA representative, Bob Drane, 8 Haytor Close, Braintree, Essex CM7 3NZ. This is so LARA will have proof of how many wrote opposing the proposals.

If you want to stop this government from ruining your pastime and taking away your rights I hope you will all do your bit and get writing. Remember, when this is all over they will be looking for something else to do.

What or who will be next ?

Modified from an email received from Richard May, Suffolk TRF

“The Question”
Would you select colour film, or rather go with the simplicity of Classic black and white?

2003 Club Championship

Name	Foresters 29 Dec 02	Raydon 12 Jan 03	Snaque Pit 16 Feb 03	Frating 16 Mar 03	Chattisham 30 Mar 03	Snaque Pit 13 Apr 03	Crab & Winkle 19 Oct 03	Woodbridge 26 Oct 03	Boxford 2 Nov 03	Thumpers 23 Nov 03	Total	Posn
Pre Unit												
Mark Fletcher	10	9	10	10	10	6	10	9	10	10	94	1st
Roger Finch		8	9	8	8	9	9	10	9		70	2nd
Brian Fletcher	6	7	6		7	5	8	8	7	8	62	3rd
Sam Appleton		10	7	9	9	7			8		50	
Clive Dopson	7					10				9	26	
Alan Farmer		6	5							6	17	
Graham Braybrook			8			8					16	
Chris Mace									6	7	13	
Graham Andrews	8										8	
Unit												
Peter Teager	8	9	8		10	9	9	9	10	8	80	1st
Colin Sadler		10	7	9	9	8				9	52	2nd
Trevor Hill				10		10	8	10		10	48	3rd
Kevin Plummer	9	8	10							7	34	
Trevor Baker	10		9				10		9		19	
Dave Kenward											19	
Kiwi Wakefield								8			8	
Two Stroke												
Graham Braybrook		10		9			10	10	10	9	58	1st
Kevin Teager	8	6	10	8	10			6		6	54	2nd
Mike Smith	10	8				9		8	9	8	52	3rd
Dave Spurgeon		9		10		10		9		10	48	
Colin Teager	9	7							8		24	
John Beasley							9				9	
Terry Sewell								7			7	
John Chapman				7							7	
John Ives									7		7	

Colin Taverner
Championship Recorder.

Learn to love your Computer...

by Tracey



As some of you may or may not know, Jim is now our esteemed Gazette Editor and also the new Eastern Centre Website Editor. As such he is very busy trying to sort out a number of things in addition to the T&T. I'm doing what I can to help but I have my own work to do. As a result anything anyone can do to submit an article or even just ideas, for the T&T would be very much appreciated.

As a result of Jim's new posts, he has asked to write about the ways in which items may be sent to him for insertion into the website and/or the Gazette. More specifically the format of the material sent. So often we get material we cannot handle easily simply because it is sent in a format we cannot do anything with because we do not have the program it was prepared in. For example, I have one huge program on my PC but only use it once in a blue moon to print and extract text within files we are sent perhaps three times per year at most. However, this can be so easily over come by saving in a different format which can be read by the vast majority of word processors and DTP programs, i.e. text format.

Text files are literally just that, text. They have none of the special formatting relevant to the native program. So often these days this includes styles, page layout information, and fonts etc. A file which is purely text contains only text, i.e. the words and characters - and that is ALL we want but how do you do it?

To start with, simply write your article and by all means save it in the program's native format, whether it be .doc, .lwp, .wpd, vp, p65 or whatever (all genuine formats). However, when your article is finished, before sending anything to us, please go to the file menu and select Save As (this certainly applies to word processor programs but DTP may well be somewhat more involved). This displays a dialogue box which, normally towards the bottom, has a Save as Type or Files of Type area or similar. In this area select Text (.txt) as your save format and having done this, enter the filename for saving (normally above the area for selecting the file type). This can be the same name as the native file format since the file will be saved with a different extension, e.g. .txt, to differentiate it from the native file format whatever that may be. Choose where you want to save it in the normal way and press Save/OK or whatever button the dialogue box shows for executing the save. If you've saved it to your hard disk then you can either copy it floppy disk for mailing or emailed to us as an attachment.

The process is very straight forward and should not give any problems. Apart from this it is always worth getting to know your word processor better as it'll allow you to save your files in other formats as well. One such format is HTML.

HTML is the format that web pages are created in and if you so desire you could create a web page for yourself in your word processor and put it up on the internet. However, a word of caution! Not every word processor has an option to save a file as HTML - the facility may exist for the program but it may not

necessarily be installed as it is not automatically part of the installation procedure. If you are in this position you will need to install the HTML option but remember, some word processors may not have the option at all in which case you're stuck.

For those that do have the HTML feature in their word processor, then you can save as HTML in the same way as you do for text files. However, since it is not a feature I use I am not at all familiar with it and as such I cannot be sure what sort of results you are likely to get. An example of what can be done though is the Current Eastern Centre Web site (at least until a rebuilt site is uploaded).

Jim is planning on offering clubs the option to have a page on the website but to do so would much prefer to have files in HTML and the procedure above would give a bare bones process for saving such a file. This in turn would make life so much easier for him to include the data on the Eastern Centre website.

Well, I think for the moment that is about all. As always we are on the end of a telephone and will always be willing to help should you have a problem with your PC or should you want further information on how to do something. We have had a couple of calls but not many. Our contact details are on the inside front cover of the T&T if you need any help.

Urgent Memo to:

Chief Executive Officers of American, United, Northwest, Delta, and Southwest Airlines

Dear Sirs,

I have the solution for the prevention of hijackings, while at the same time getting our airline industry back on its feet.

Since men of the Muslim religion are not allowed to look at naked women, we should replace all of our female flight attendants with strippers.

Muslims would be afraid to get on the planes for fear of seeing a naked woman, and of course, every businessman in this country would start flying again in the hope of seeing a naked woman.

We would have no more hijackings and the airline industry would have record sales.

Now why didn't Bush think of this? Why do I still have to do everything myself?

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton



Ruthys Racing Revival

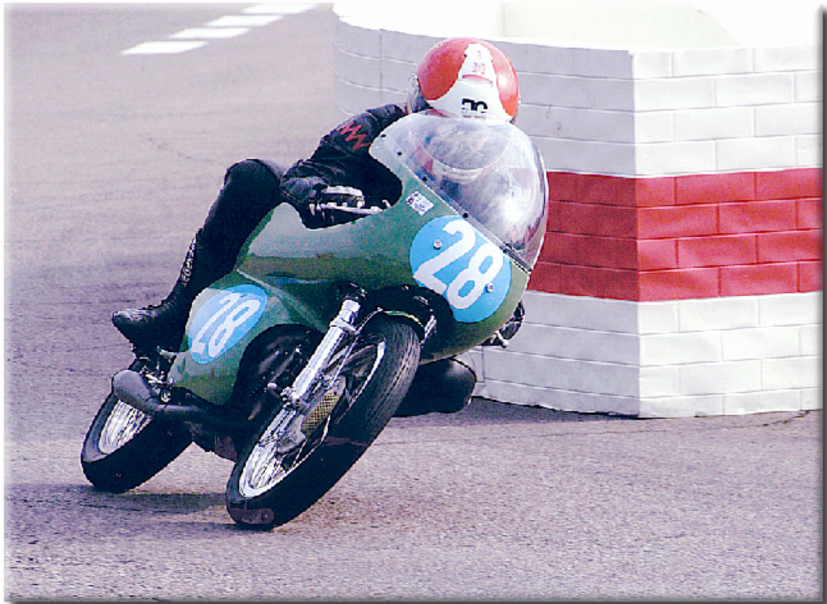
Part Three



The number of people attending the Goodwood revival practice on the Friday had been impressive but by mid day Saturday (which had both practice and racing on the program), the paddock area was packed solid with so many people milling around that every time a bike was fired up it became almost impossible to move let alone talk or work.

The most impressive sound of all though was when George Beale spun up his 350 Hailwood Honda six replica that his team had just completed.

I was sitting having a quiet pre-race chat at the time with the legendary Gary Nixon, who was in the process of telling me he was suffering from both jet lag as well as a tad too much bubbly the night before.



As the Honda screamed into life, Gary, who was lying back relaxing on a sun lounger at the time, suddenly sat bolt up right and proclaimed.

"JEEZ what the F#*K waZ Zat!", as the throttle was blipped incessantly to keep the motor running above the 6k minimum, below which it just stops dead (no flywheel).

This had a positive effect as far as we lesser mortals were concerned as the crowd all shot across to have a closer look at what was happening. It left us room to work again in comparative peace before being called up to the assembly area.



As the 30 open piped bikes warmed up in the assembly area the noise and smell of the Castrol 'R' added a sense of occasion. Following completion of the riders briefing it was finally time for the first race, so the old butterflies were well and truly in flight as we spilled out onto the circuit.

As I took my place on the grid right against the pit wall prior to the staging lap there looked like a clear line to take to the first corner so I practised a quick start to exploit it.

Back on the grid the one-minute board was shown then 30 seconds then 5 as I slipped into 1st.

As the flag dropped I managed to launch o/k only to get blown off by Sammy's Gilera and a couple of 500cc Manxs as we jostled around Madgwick and I hit the back straight in the middle of the pack.

Two laps gone and I'm having a great tussle with two 500 Manx's and another Aermacchi which is being ridden with verve by a modern style rider who seemed quite happy to go in late and tight only to dive under you on the exit rather than leave you the line till the next opportunity arises as the majority of the classic racers tend to do.

The four of us carried on like this for 3 or 4 laps constantly changing places which was all exiting stuff until, driving hard out of Lavant flat in 3rd our Aermacchi mounted friend dived underneath me one more time giving me a shove onto the grass on his way through.

Bounding along the green stuff for about a hundred yards with my ankles level with the seat for most of that time convinced me that discretion definitely is the



The Wit of Tommy Cooper R.I.P.

Tommy Cooperisms. to brighten up the day.

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly.

They lit a fire in the craft.

It sank, proving once and for all that you
can't have your kayak and heat it.

FOR SALE

Motor Cycle Sport

292 copies - covering the period Aug 1966 to Oct 1991.

Good offer secures.

Must Sell

Phone: Claude Crowder

01268 414143

better part of valour so I cooled it a bit as the thought of returning Dave's unique piece of pride and joy back to the paddock in kit form did not appeal in the slightest.

I spent the final laps swapping positions with Adrian Sellers 500cc Petty Manx just managing to beat him under the linen for a respectable twentieth place much to the delight of the team who were waiting in the post race paddock on my return and we didn't get lapped either.

A quick check over back at base proved that the bike was no worse for wear after our bit of off roading so with the routine maintenance completed it was time for us lucky Cinderella's to prepare for the ball.

The Goodwood revival ball has come to be a must on the social calendar for the historic racing following the first event in 1998 when Lord March set a whole new standard in competitor/ celebrity evening entertainment.

Each year the ball is set out in a different theme such as Africa on safari. A Cunard cruise liner, alpine holiday, the Café de Paris, etc.

This year it was an Egyptian theme with the ex WW2 Hanger set out as a temple complete with sword swallowers, fire eaters, belly dancers, not to mention the odd camel or two thrown in for good measure.

After a hectic hour changing into evening dress we walked across the paddock from the motor home feeling a little self conscious as we passed by some fellow competitors who were having a barbecue. One of them shouting you "lucky devils" as we exchanged pleasantries.

Invitations to the ball are restricted to one driver/ rider/ entrant and guest only but even so about 1200 people are catered for each year.

We arrived from the paddock village in style in a 1949 Leyland coach being greeted in the foyer with yet another glass of Champagne and a little gift, a fez in my case and a compass in Anne's.

As dusk arrived a Spitfire and a Mustang flew over in a breathtakingly low pass above our heads before landing and taxiing across to join us as we mingled with the rest of the guests.

As well as the more formally dressed there were also a few Indiana Jones types floating around, like. Damon Hill and David Richards, quite a few mummy's and pharaohs along with at least a dozen Cleopatras and a host of slaves. I even spotted a couple of eunuchs hovering around but how authentic they were I have no idea!

At last it was time to enter and we were ushered to our table for the evening. The sheer magnitude of the setting took your breath away.

We were sharing a table with old friends Ivan and Graham Rhodes of Velocette fame along with my sponsor for the weekend the long suffering Dave Varney and his Guest and last but not least Sammy Miller and his wife who were in good form.(he evidently used to ride an Ariel in trials or something years ago so he tells me!)

The whole evening turned out to be one that we won't forget in a hurry and it was two very tired revelers who eventually staggered back to our beds at 2am the next morning.

Isn't it amazing just how one motorhome looks just like another in the middle of the night in a field in West Sussex when you have been drinking wine!

We were awoken the next morning by a sharp knock on the door followed by a cheeky greeting of "Morning madam your breakfast is served" by our team co-ordinator Len, suitably dressed as a waiter complete with silver tray and napkin over one arm.

Now this is the way to go racing, it beats a cold wet morning in a tent at Cadwell Park any day!

As my second race was not until early afternoon we spent the morning meeting up with our Sunday guests, watching a race or two from the members lawn on the exit of the chicane and just soaking up the atmosphere in general. This is not just a retrospective race meeting, this is a complete step back in time with the spectators as well as competitors all getting into the spirit of the event and dressing in period costume right down to the last detail in some cases.

My favourite era has to be the 1940s and 50s with all the ladies in their seamed stockings! And knee length dresses.

No wonder Dad always had a smile on his face.



TO BE CONTINUED.

End Thought . . .

"Man who loses key to lady's apartment get no new-key."