

Knight

Winter 2021



Riders

**Blue Knights Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club
UK & Ireland Conference**

**Touring In
Thailand**

**MAG &
BMF**

**Ride To The
Fort Cyprus
Remembers**

**Steve Mead's
last ride**



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Editor's Note

Welcome to the first **Knight Riders** of 2021, and yet another lockdown. At least this time it is winter, and the draw of the motorcycle is not so strong.

My thanks go out to everyone who has contributed towards what would otherwise have been a very thin magazine. Please keep them coming, as there might not be many events happening before our May edition.



With my European Representative's hat on:



Rules on travel within the Schengen area changed on 31st December. I have copied the Government guidance later in this issue. The advice is to check the requirements well in advance,

particularly regarding insurance and other documents.

This year's events, especially for the first half of the year, remain uncertain. I will update the UKIC FB group when I have confirmed information about upcoming events.



UKIC Chairman's address



Brother and sister Blue Knights,

In some regards this has been a difficult year. Because of the Covid Virus. Ireland I's International conference has been postponed once again, until next year. I hope things are back to normal and it will go ahead as planned.

Chapters have been doing their best to function within the restrictions imposed by the virus. Chapter officers should be congratulated for their efforts in this regard. As a Conference within the Blue Knights, we continue to grow slowly but steadily. We are financially strong, enabling us to support this growth.

I am disappointed by some of what I see happening in North America, as they do not seem to be able to recruit as strongly as we and the European Conference are doing.

Many of us on this side of the Atlantic find it difficult to understand why so much of our money goes to the US, when we are growing; and the club is shrinking there. We also have issues with the club's official magazine, Sword & Shield. As I'm sure most of you know, we are doing our best to improve this.

I wish to thank Neil Hallam for his brilliant efforts in producing Knight Rider magazine. This goes from strength to strength. Neil is also our European Rep.

Leonie Tromans as Vice Chair is responsible for recruiting, I wish to thank her on your behalf for her efforts in recruiting. Her contribution is valued and without doubt has produced great results.

Last year our conference appointed Matt Parker, President of England VII, as our Public Relations Officer. This is a new role which presents new challenges. One of Matt's projects is creating a BK You Tube channel.

I would also like to thank Naomi Gledhill as Treasurer, who has maintained our Conference finances in good order.

Also Walter Head, our conference Secretary, whose knowledge and records are invaluable. Graham Buxton as our International Rep has the delight of attending the very lengthy International phone conferences. I wish to say thank you to Graham for spending hours of his time representing us.

On finishing I would extend my thanks to all the Chapter Presidents and other Chapter Officers for their time and commitment.

In particular, I thank those involved in forming of our two new chapters, England XV and XX.

Please continue to do what you are doing, riding your bike and enjoying the company of your Brother and Sister Blue Knights.

Tom Elliott Chairman UKIC



Whatever your view of Brexit, the United Kingdom ended its transition period with the EU on 31st

December. This article deals only with the aspects of driving in the EU, post Brexit, and does not touch on any other practicalities members might face. The information was taken directly from the UK

Government website on January 1st.



Driving licences and international driving permits

You need to carry your UK driving licence with you.

You do not need an international driving permit (IDP) to visit and drive in the EU, Switzerland, Iceland or Liechtenstein.

You might need an IDP to drive in some EU countries and Norway if you have:

- a paper driving licence
- a licence that was issued in Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey or the Isle of Man

You will not need an IDP to drive when visiting Ireland if you have a UK driving licence.

An IDP costs £5.50 over the counter at the Post Office.

Insurance for your vehicle, caravan or trailer

A 'green card' is proof of motor insurance cover when driving abroad.

Carry a green card for the vehicle you are driving in the EU (including Ireland), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Serbia or Andorra.

You will need to carry multiple green cards if:

- you have fleet or multi-car insurance – you'll need a green card for each vehicle
- your vehicle is towing a trailer or caravan – you'll need one for the towing vehicle and one for the trailer or caravan (you need separate trailer insurance in some countries)
- you have 2 policies covering the duration of your trip. For example, if you renew your policy during the journey

You must carry a physical copy of your green card when driving abroad. Electronic versions of green cards are not acceptable.

You can now print green cards yourself. They no longer need to be printed on green paper.

Vehicle registration documents

If you are taking your vehicle to the EU for less than 12 months, carry one of the following documents:

- your vehicle logbook (V5C) if you have one
- a VE103 to show you are allowed to use your hired or leased vehicle abroad

Trailer registration

You need to register some commercial and non-commercial trailers before towing them to or through most EU and EEA countries. (These are larger trailers – check the latest information if you are towing)

GB stickers and number plates

You do not need a GB sticker if your number plate includes the GB identifier on its own or with the Union flag.

You do not need to display a GB sticker to drive in Ireland.

If you are in Spain, Cyprus or Malta, you must display a GB sticker no matter what is on your number plate.

What to do if you are involved in a road accident

If you are involved in a road accident in an EU country, you should, in the first instance, contact your insurance provider.

Any legal proceedings will need to be brought in the country where the accident happened.

You will not get compensation in some countries if the accident is caused by an uninsured driver or if the driver cannot be traced.

Get legal advice if you need more information about this.

Editor's Note

Any advice is at risk of changing. Please check www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-in-the-eu for the latest information.

Petrol Bikes get a Reprieve

The Government previously announced that the UK will end the sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030. In November 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) clarified that the sale of petrol motorcycles is not included in those plans.



The Government formally announced a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. Included in the plan is the intention that the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans in the UK will end by 2030, ten years earlier than originally planned.

The position on motorcycles was not mentioned in the announcement, so MAG contacted the DfT for clarification.

They received confirmation that motorcycles are not in scope of their announcement about ending the sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans.

The Department went on to say that there are no timeframes for ending the sale of petrol motorcycles. Further, should the department wish to make such an announcement, they will consult first with the Motorcycle lobby.

The Bikers' Voice: MAG & the BMF Neil Hallam, Editor

The UK & Ireland Conference of the Blue Knights is currently affiliated to the BMF (British Motorcycling Federation). Through this affiliation our members get: access to public liability insurance, discounted entry to BMF events, and something of a voice towards influencing government decisions. The BMF is not the only motorcycle lobby group and this article highlights the two major ones. Further research is encouraged, as not everything can be covered in a short magazine article.

The BMF (British Motorcycling Federation)
www.bmf.co.uk



Founded in 1960, the BMF was originally called The Federation of National and One Make Motorcycle Clubs (FNOMCC). The M1 motorway had only just been opened, and top of their campaign list was preventing the imposition of a 250cc learner limit. Things got serious in 1966, when amidst legislation to impose the 70mph national speed limit, the government debated banning motorcycles completely. Over the years they have been involved in debates about: helmet law, motorcycle insurance and the re-vamped motorcycle tests. One of the big "wins" was successfully arguing against EU Type Approval Regulations, which would have made motorcycle customisation unlawful. Today the BMF has about 350 affiliated clubs, and continues to lobby against unnecessary interference by European, National, Local Government and anti-motorcycling campaign groups. The BMF is a member of several government advisory groups. They also work in Europe to help British motorcyclists, through FEMA (Federation of European Motorcyclists Association) and the FIM (Federation of International Motorcyclists). They run several events each year, which follow more of a bike show format, than that of a bike rally. They also help sponsor NABD (National Association of Bikers with a Disability). It is unclear from MAG's website, which of their Directors / Administrators are salaried and which are volunteers.

MAG (Motorcycle Action Group) www.mag-uk.org



MAG was founded in 1973, initially to protest imposition of helmets on motorcyclists. One of their key activists in the early days was Fred Hill, a former Dispatch Rider who died in 1984, aged 74, during his 31st prison sentence for not wearing a helmet. Their most recent success was lobbying for confirmation that motorcycles are not "currently" included in the 2030 petrol engine ban.

MAG has two paid lobbyists, one of whom achieved some notoriety through dating Cheeky Girl, Gabriela Irimia. Lembit Opik was a Lib/Dem MP from 1997 to 2010.

MAG runs several rallies each year (including the Farmhouse and Yorkshire Pudding rallies). These are traditional "biker" rallies with bands, beer and muddy fields. They are run as fundraisers for MAG. Just like the BMF, MAG has an option for clubs to affiliate, with similar benefits including Public Liability Insurance. One potentially useful benefit is an advice service towards running club events, including access to appropriate insurance (at cost).

A Combined Approach

Both organisations recently joined together to form The Coalition of Motorcycling Organisations. This coalition consists of the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the Vintage Motorcycle Club (VMCC), the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) and the British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF).

Editor's Comment

The UKIC Board asked me to write this article, following suggestions that we might change our affiliation from BMF to MAG. The article is intended as a very high level overview and I make no recommendations either way. It may form an agenda item at a forthcoming UKIC Presidents' Meeting, so please do your own research and feed back to your Chapter President.

Ride to the Fort: Paul Carter

Inspired by England's Ride To The Wall, Paul Carter got busy organising his own version on Cyprus. Despite the Covid restrictions, they managed to attract over 40 bikes to show their respect. In addition to the remembrance of the island's war dead, the event also has a charitable purpose. €768 were raised on the day of the event alone, with more expected from collection tins around the island. This year's donations are going to assist a Cyprus based biker with medical treatment.



On the Box: Blue Knight member Dave Vickery gets a TV role



Members of a certain age might remember former Dr Who, Jon Pertwee, playing scarecrow come to life - Wurzel Gummidge.

The magical scarecrow is now back on TV, in a re-vamped children's show.

Eagle eyed viewers of the second episode - Saucy Nancy, might have recognised a familiar face. The episode involved a detached ship's figure head, named Saucy Nancy. A nasty man riding a motorcycle & sidecar stopped at a bus stop and collected Saucy Nancy, putting her in the side car.

Well, star of the screen for at least 10 seconds, was none other than England XVIII member Dave Vickery. Rest assured, Dave does not usually pick up women from bus stops, just the occasional ships figure head.

India: a new home for classic British motorbikes: Neil Hallam, Editor

In December 2020, BSA became the latest classic British brand snapped up by an Indian company. Earlier the same year, Norton too was taken over by an Indian firm, who announced ambitious growth plans.



Of course, BSA and Norton are very much the newcomers when viewed alongside Royal Enfield, which has been in Indian ownership for decades.

Business journalists have said that Indian manufacturers are well known for buying up well-known but struggling brands, in the hope of turning them around.

They highlight Land Rover, which was taken over by India's Tata in 2008 and turned into a profitable firm.

Indian companies have perfected a strategy of acquiring a famous brand, then taking it to new countries, while improving profitability and scale.

India continued

BSA



This is certainly the hope of BSA's new owner, Anand Mahindra. The Indian billionaire said that he hopes to "resurrect the British motorbike industry" with a plan to start

building electric motorcycles in Birmingham by the middle of 2021. Anand Mahindra, who according to Forbes magazine, is worth £1.3bn, said he invested in Britain because of "its history of motorcycle production".

BSA will soon open a research facility in Banbury, Oxfordshire, to develop their electric motorbike technology. Although they will continue making motorbikes with petrol engines.

BSA, which stands for Birmingham Small Arms, was originally founded in 1861. By the 1950s, it had become the world's largest motorcycle maker, owning both the Triumph and Sunbeam brands. But it went bankrupt and ceased production in the 1970s.

Although Mahindra is the majority shareholder, BSA is officially owned by Indian conglomerate Classic Legends. Their venture has received support from the UK government, which awarded a £4.6m grant to develop electric bikes, in the hope of creating at least 255 jobs.

Norton

In April 2020, Indian manufacturer TVS Motor paid £16m for Norton, a few months after it went into administration. Founded in 1898, Norton is one of the last remaining British motorcycle brands. Norton



began making bikes again in December 2020, building a small number of Commandos. They hope to reach full production in early 2021. Norton's interim chief executive John Russell said, "After this, we will continue the product cycle of some models that have already been revealed, before we look to reveal some exciting new models,"

Royal Enfield



Royal Enfield is one of the world's oldest bike brands still in production. It has been owned by India's Eicher Group since 1994, who recently announced plans to open a new factory in Thailand.

Royal Enfield sales grew 88% across Asia last year, and the company is expanding aggressively as it aims for the world's biggest motorbike-buying market. The Thailand factory is expected to be in operation within the next year and will be the firm's biggest factory outside of India.



A Fast Farewell: England XIII's Steve Tromans remembers Steve Mead.

Steve was a member of England XIII for only a short time. He was a former Met officer, often known as "Meady" and a few other things too.



Steve lived on the periphery of our Chapter area. He joined England XIII when he lived in Banbury, but moved away to Beaconsfield, near London, to be with his wife, Fran. Steve did come up to meet us for rides in the beginning, but as his illness progressed and the Covid lockdown happened, we saw less and less of him.

Steve's first outing with us was to the COPS Lawride. He rode up to meet us and then on to the Arboretum for the service. It was his first time there and I remember him saying that the whole experience was quite humbling and moving. So much so, that he requested any donations made at his own funeral to be donated to Care of Police Survivors.

Steve was one of those larger than life characters you get in the police. The first time I met him I couldn't get over the feeling that I had met him before. It dawned on me later that he sounded just like Kris Akabusi and looked just like him too, although Kris is clearly African. It was uncanny.

He was loud, and had a wonderful laugh and voice that was always amusing. He was always smiling and was a lovely guy to be around. Apparently, he was at the top of the tree in car and motorcycle training, both in the police at Hendon and later, after he retired, as a senior instructor for the IAM. Graham Buxton worked for him At the IAM and knew him for much longer than I did. It was always great to be out on the road with him, England XIII is blessed with at least four ex-police advanced motorcycle instructors / examiners, so our rides are usually quite fun.

The last ride out Steve was able to attend, was just after the first lockdown of 2020 ended. He and I had a chat as we were both diagnosed with cancer around the same time. My treatment appears to have been successful but sadly his was not, so it was a difficult conversation. It was obvious that Steve was not well, and Fran came in their car to follow and make sure he made it round on his bike. This isn't really the sort of thing I would wish to read about a friend and fellow Blue Knight. Steve actually died of Covid - 19. A great loss to his wife and his family.



Steve Mead continued



Meady planned his own funeral. Which must have been difficult, knowing that he would soon die. But he planned it so that we, the people attending, would have a good time and not a sad experience. It was not a religious event as he didn't believe, and there were no flowers. He was buried in a natural environment, a wooded area that was as beautiful as it was tranquil. We were all given a card during the funeral, and asked to write on it anything we wanted about Steve. I wrote "Blue Knights - England XIII. You rode with pride", along with a little personal thought. All the cards were put into the grave with him. The hearse, a Suzuki Hyabusa, reached 105 mph on the motorway, as Steve had planned. Then the final ride from Steve's house to the cemetery was at a slower, more funeral like speed. Steve's brother rode at the front on Steve's old traffic bike, together with Steve's son riding his Honda and wearing his father's England XIII vest.



**Police Sergeant Stephen Clifford Mead -
Metropolitan Police - Blue Knight - born 19th
October 1954 - Died 18th October 2020.**

No rest at the Knights Rest: Peter "Spud" Spowage, Secretary England II

Thankfully 2020 is now over, but England II have not sat back and waited for 2021 to arrive, even during this bad year our Chapter has achieved an incredible amount.



Firstly, we found new premises for our club house. We let our old one go a few years ago and thought the time was right to re-open. Just like the old one, our new Knights Rest is within the historic walls of Fort Horsted in Chatham, Kent. An enthusiastic team of members pulled together in building a bar and repainting the inside of the former military accommodation block.

We now have not just a place to party, but an office we can use to plan rides and hold meetings. We plan to host film shows, play pool and invite fellow Chapters to join us for BBQ's, ride outs and more parties.

Knights' Rest continued

In January last year, we visited Belgium with 16 members to enjoy the returned hospitality of the Belgians who regularly attend Cops & Robbers.



During June, we were lucky that groups of 30 were still allowed to meet in Kent, so we arranged a ride out with England VII around the beautiful Kent countryside. We then invited them back to our newly opened clubhouse "The Knights Rest" for our opening party. It

was an overwhelming success, and shows how Chapters can enjoy each other's company, something we at England II wish to continue in 2021.

We welcomed four new members to our chapter during 2020, and with some magical effects, held an event to present them with their colours. The candle lit corridor was once the fort's



ammunition dump, and it made an atmospheric location for the membership ceremony.

After the ceremony, we held a party and BBQ to show what The Blue Knights means to us all: friendship, comradeship and the love of biking.



We unfortunately had to cancel our annual Cops & Robbers event in September 2020, but it is with great delight I can inform you that Cops & Robbers is looking good for 2021.

It will be over the weekend of 3rd to 5th September 2021. We already have 70 people with bookings carried over from last year. Booking details will be available soon.

We have many plans for 2021. With our enthusiastic ride captain, Ron Heath, we will be out exploring the wonders of England's south east once the regulations allow.

So bring on 2021, we are ready to greet you and ride yet again.

Surviving Thailand - Paul Black, England XIII

After retiring from West Midlands Police, Paul Black took the opportunity for an extended visit to Thailand. Of course, motorcycles played a part in his trip.



I flew into Thailand in late October 2020, amidst all the uncertainty of Covid-19 restrictions. I was not sure if I would get there until the last minute. It took three Covid tests and 14 days isolation in a Bangkok hotel, but I made it just ahead of the second Lockdown in the UK. Leaving quarantine was a strange experience, as even Bangkok Airport was incredibly quiet. Chiang Mai was also quiet, but at least the bars were open.

A Remembrance Day service, organised by the British Legion and the Embassy made it feel a little like home, even if the temperatures were in the 90s. The service was very meaningful, especially when they played the last post.



Thailand continued

Then I took a motorbike out for the first time. I had a choice of two, a Triumph Bonnie or a Triumph Bobber, but I took the Bonneville. It was a good ride, despite being a bit rusty after quarantine, and there were fantastic views.

I ended up near a lake where they feed some very big fish. I also found a Thai guy who makes excellent fresh fruit smoothies and fresh orange juice, which I sampled every morning. Many of the elephant homes have closed due to the lack of tourists, but I managed to find one that was open.



I decided to go down to the beach, as it seemed a good opportunity with no tourists here. The 2000 km journey to the beach was via Rayong and Ko Samet, which

involved a ferry. It also involved a motorbike taxi in Rayong, with a wire side car attached. The sidecar can take up to five passengers and was an interesting experience as the driver was drunk.

I had hoped to dive, but because there are no tourists, only snorkelling was possible, but it was excellent. I saw quite a few different fish and coral, and had to snorkel a long way around some rock pinnacles.

I got hold of a very yellow Suzuki V Strom 650 for my first long motorbike ride. Unfortunately, I could only get third-party insurance, so my fingers were firmly crossed. My ride was up to Udon Thani, which is in the north east of the country. The 1000 mile ride took four days and felt like riding from Coventry to Aberdeen, with no motorways, in 35° of heat. There were five of us in the group, three Aussies and two English guys, what could possibly go wrong. On the way we visited an interesting former American military camp, where thousands of Americans were stationed during the Vietnam war to listen for intelligence. It was absolutely fascinating. The Thai army showed us around the site which is called Ramasun Station.

The following day we visited a new glass sky bridge, near the border of Laos at Chang Khong. A lot of the Thais seemed nervous about walking on the glass bridge, and did not appreciate my English sense of humour in shouting "boo". Laos was apparently the most bombed country in the world during the Vietnam war, but Chang Khong was lovely, the people were friendly and there was a nice Buddha too. The trip was challenging but good, and the Suzuki 650 V Strom was perfect for Thailand.



My next adventure involved a train, rather than a motorcycle, when I took an adventurous three day Railway trip right down to Su-ngai Kolak, the last stop on the train line. Just one mile from Malaysia, this is a Muslim area, which is in dispute with Thailand, so there were about 20 armed Thai soldiers on the train. The train was very interesting and very basic. Even when the train is moving, the side doors are fully open, and passengers step off at whatever speed we happened to be doing. When we stopped at some of the stations, street vendors approached the train with some nice food. My train compartment was basic to say the least, despite being first class. I spent two overnights on the train.

In Bangkok the track was next to people's' shacks. At 06.30 I made my way to the river and took a ferry, which cost 50p and stayed on it for a few hours.



Then I met my friend Nick, who lives in Bangkok, for lunch. Then it was time to get back on the train, where I was the only westerner travelling.

Thailand continued

When the train arrived at its destination, there was a high level of security with armoured cars, stop checks everywhere and a serious amount of military with automatic weapons. An article in the Bangkok Post helped explain the security, reporting a total of 6,543 deaths and 11,919 injuries between 2004 and the end of 2015. There were an estimated 15,374 “insurgency-related” incidents during the same period. I knew this was an area the UK Home Office advised against travelling to, so my insurance didn’t cover me and I decided not to stay too long.

I spent a decent night there with no problems, apart from the very loud prayers from the mosques at 4am. The next day, the only way I could find to leave was to pay someone to drive me. The guy who turned up was a young man wearing a baseball cap backwards and driving a tricked up 4x4. I tried to set aside my ageing stereotype, thinking “he’ll be okay.” He wasn’t okay, he drove like he stole it. We made it back in five hours, even with lots of army stop checks.



Old obsessions.... Steve Cambers



I am completely and hopelessly obsessed with all forms of motorised two wheeled machinery. I love everything, from 50cc upwards.

In truth, every machine has its good and not so good points. They are just like individual breeds of dog or cat, beautiful and wonderful in their own right.

In 1963, as a small child, I saw a rider fall off a BSA 250 whilst attempting to negotiate a traffic island at excessive speed. On that occasion, I felt sorry for the bike but not for the rider. The bike was smashed and lying on the ground; I just wanted to pick it up, take it home and mend it. But I couldn't because I was too small.

One of the many threads to my obsession is an interest in the classic bike world. It goes without saying that these more mature machines can never compare to the awesome computer laden motorcycles of today for performance or reliability. However, they do have a certain style and a charisma all of their own. On a mercenary note, with interest rates at an all-time low, classic motorcycles are a good place to put your money right now.

Old Obsessions continued

For me, classic motorcycles fall into two main categories:

- 1) Ancient vintage machines which were around long before my time.
- 2) Those I remember and can relate to from my own formative years.

I believe that we all covet the objects we desired when we were around 14 years of age. Then, on reaching maturity, we might try to get our hands on some of these things. Indeed, I have a formula for guessing the age of a classic motorcycle rider. I simply add 14 years to the age of the machine and I am usually about right.

I have two classic bikes in my garage, both fit into one of the categories I described.

- **A 1954 Sunbeam S7 Deluxe, from before I was born.**
- **A 1973 Suzuki T500K, which I lusted after when I was 14.**

Sunbeam S7

I admired the Sunbeam S7 for many years. I recently read a critical comment, saying that the S7 was "Under powered & under developed," which seemed a bizarre opinion, considering that it was made just after the Second World War.



My example was never advertised for sale and I discovered it by word of mouth,

following the death of its custodian at the age of 85. The gentleman had cherished his bike for over 40 years, so I feel a serious duty of care towards his prized possession.

These machines were produced from 1947 to 1956. They are a copy from the basic design of the pre-war BMW R/75. Great Britain 'acquired' the design information from Germany after the war in 1945.

The bike does look unusual & quirky but when you begin to dismantle it, the design is found to be very basic & simple. There doesn't seem to be a lot to it. In fact, the engine is more like that of a small car. I would liken it to that of a half of a Morris minor 1000



The S7 is at home cruising through the English countryside on any Sunday afternoon during the summertime. It sounds wonderful & ancient. My quickest speed to date is 60 mph but this old lady seems far happier at 40 to 50.

One of the anomalies of this bike is that the gear lever & rear brake pedal are on the opposite sides to the norm of the modern machines which tend to dominate our roads.

Presently, the engine is undergoing a complete rebuild due to a couple of minor but nevertheless, very annoying oil leaks. Following the engine work, the bike should hopefully out live me & be in good shape, ready for the next generation of enthusiasts & admirers to take over its care. It is also a sobering thought, that bikes like this will probably still be around in 100 years time, when we have all shuffled off.

Suzuki T500

My second & longest serving classic, a Suzuki T500. This model range was produced with a number of only cosmetic refreshments, from 1968 to 1977.

I was given this bike as a box of old bits & pieces back in 1998. It had been taking up space in the garage of a local police house near Ollerton, Nottinghamshire for about 10 years. The resident wanted it out of his sight, so I duly obliged, turned up with my trailer, carted it away & did him a favour. Its condition left a lot to be desired, with many parts completely worn out, damaged or even missing.

The restoration project encompassed some 13 years & one divorce. All the spannering, mechanical, engine & electrical work was carried out by me. The paintwork, chrome plating & metal coating/polishing was farmed out to the best technicians available.



The final result is an outstanding Classic Bike Show winner. The T500 has many cups, ribbons & trophies to its credit. These days, it spends much of its time languishing in the corner of my living room, yet it has been out & about recently. I am very proud of it.

The engine is of a twin cylinder air cooled 2 stroke design. Delightfully pungent & smokey, this bike is not slow. It is a pleasure to ride & has a claimed top speed of 110 mph. However, the best I have seen is 100 a race track. In the real world, 60 to 70 mph is good for the road because the vintage braking design. I shall be floating around the A & B roads of the British Isles during the summer but don't expect to see me on the M1.

If any of you do notice me on either of these elderly machines, causing a rolling obstruction, please honk as you come wafting by, but try not to make me wobble...

Hurry up and Wait, Tony Toner, Ireland I



Airside, Dublin Airport and the four of us are standing inside a hangar for the past five hours, our motorcycles are lined up outside, as we await the arrival of a private jet, the foreign government official certainly not on our favourite list, the clock ticking by with all the enthusiasm of a one-legged snail.

It being November, it was none too warm, the expanse of the airport allowing the air temperature to drop, the unhindered gale doing exactly what it pleased and the rain showers not content in their efforts to enter any gap in your armour, got perverse assistance from said wind, sending spears of water from every angle – it was miserable on any number of levels.

The four of us were despatched from the Traffic Department, Dublin Castle with all the necessary instructions on the Who, What and Where, all pretty normal stuff. We ensured our motorcycles were refuelled, all the lights, including emergency lights and sirens, working as per their function. Having already brought numerous other VIP's in from the airport to their respective hotels and consular residences that day, we had just this last one to bed down before the mayhem of the following few days of our European Presidency hosting.

Working in a motorcycle escort team is unquestionably a buzz for any motorcyclist to contemplate. Given that way back then, it was a very functional part of our day, there was little room for adrenaline overload and even less for renegade behaviour. The heritage of the Traffic Department was drilled into every motorcyclist, with granite ground rules mentally tattooed into everyone's mindset – a guy called Campo was not to be messed with.

Hurry Up & Wait continued

We were expecting to roll out of the airport at 9pm, our precious cargo delivered, our bikes parked back in



the Castle and heading home by 10.30pm. Well, that plan went into the shredder, as our VIP got delayed and our residency on the tundra of Dublin Airport was now going to be undetermined.

'Never pass a cup of coffee, the chance to go to the loo, or twenty minutes kip,' the mantra of Traffic, was somewhat lost on us in this terrain. With no facilities within easy reach and a VIP who could plant his plane at a time of his choosing, we were effectively anchored and abandoned.

Thankfully the technical staff, in whose hangar we were hanging, came to our rescue and secured coffee and sandwiches from their staff restaurant – we were saved! Being motorheads we had great banter with the air-tekkies, some of them owning motorcycles, all of them gumming to take our motorcycles for a blast down a stretch of unused runway in lieu of housing us - which never happened.

Midnight clicked by and we were alone, save for the mixture of weather that at this stage was just showing off. We started the motorcycles every hour, checked them over and hibernated back inside the hangar doors as quick as we could. We went through the routes to our destination, the hot-spots and dodgy areas numerous times. All we needed was our insomniac VIP to touchdown and let us put on a late-night show.

Sometime after 2am we got word our man was entering Irish airspace – time to zip-up. We walked out of the massive doors to see the sleek private jet touch down on Irish soil. As it rolled up adjacent to where we were parked, we took our place to the front of the four-car convoy, the nods exchanged with the drivers speaking volumes.

The November rain refused to let up all night and now as we hit the road into the city, it did its damndest to blind us in our open-face helmets, as well as creep into any weak spot in our Belsfaff suits. Leap-frogging at traffic lights and other junctions is all about trust. You know where you are within the team, who is in front and who is behind you, the four cars keeping a constant pace and gap, the motorcycles going by using all that second, third and fourth gear could offer.

Running a high-security motorcycle escort through the city centre in the early hours is not normal or expected, even now. Back then, the only folk who are around were those in the service industry, insomniacs, clubbers and those with mischief on their minds. The arrival into their midst of this mobile music ensemble provided for quite the diversion.

While the vast majority were more than delighted with the visual entertainment, a couple of street revellers decided to bounce their beer cans off us, while others waved at the Mercedes in the excited expectation of internal recognition. With the sirens off until they were required, we made serious progress through the all-but deserted streets, our blue emergency lights bouncing off anything with a reflection, all the while the four-cylinder, twin-cams sang their own particular lullaby.

Arriving at the consulate we adopted positions front and rear of the escort and allowed the VIP to enter onto home soil.

He did so without a hint of recognition or gratitude, the four soggy motorcyclists undeserving of even his merest acknowledgement.

As the door of the consulate closed the drivers turned to us and highly unusual, they applauded, the crack of the hands reverberating through the stillness of the night – respect shown and humbly accepted.

With the lead motorcycle firing up, the other three followed suit and in a blink, we were two-by-two and en route back to our Castle base.

We were cold, wet, hungry and a tad tired, the journey back as sharp as our previous – complacency has no place.



We were all scheduled to begin work at 6am and since the option to go home was taken away by our tardy VIP, an alternative plan would now be put in place. Once back in the Castle we put our gear into the drying room and headed for the showers – there was no point in doing anything other than get ready for the next shift.

Clean-shaven and relatively refreshed, we raided the kitchen, did some toasties and then retired to the TV room where comfy chairs would provide some shut-eye before the early shift arrived in with all the subtlety of a Genghis Khan house party. We were not disappointed, our quattro-slumber ended amid copious amounts of cold water and sheer abuse – we were home.

Taking our place for the days detail, there was little mention of our ordeal, 'Sympathy is a word in the dictionary between shit and syphilis' – certain things are not worth the expectation.

There were numerous days like that, where the set agenda got stretched and tolerances were tested. Through it all there were a number of constants – the teamwork, the satisfaction of working through all manner of hassles and the knowledge that *the guy in the Merc never buys you coffee* – that guarantee comes from any one of the three guys in you mirrors – motorcyclists are like that.

Events Section

May 2021

The Lakes Rally 2021 UKIC Convention

Hosted by England III & XVI

**21st to 23rd May 2021
At The Patterdale Hotel in the Lake District**



Bookings are now open is on a DBB basis for the two nights and will cost between £135 to £150pp. dependant on the room type selected. Plus a £25pp rally fee.

There will be Ride outs in the Lake District together with option for Non ride out activities with entertainment on the Saturday night.
Please email Walter Head on bikerblue@btinternet.com

You cannot book direct with the Hotel as you will need the specific booking code.



Further information is on the booking form. No single rooms are available. Twin and Double rooms only.



BK LEMC Wales I

**Announce their 2021 Summer
Camp on the weekend of the
9th to 11th July 2021**

Book your pitch directly
with the
campsite via their website:
<http://appleorchardcampsite.co.uk>
or call 01452 760018

Ireland I had to postpone the International Convention due to Covid-9 restrictions. The Rally will take place from **26th June 2022**. Please take this opportunity to strongly consider your attendance. It is a great honour for us to hold this event in Ireland. A lot of hard work has gone into this, and we should support their efforts.

