



# CLUB TORQUE

November 2018

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RMDC

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## WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR

Once again this month's packed addition has something for everyone. Thank you all for your contributions. Keep them coming!

Post what seemed a long winter the UK finally offered up some beautiful riding weather and the Indian Summer was the icing on the cake. But now as they say "Winter Draws On" and I expect many of you have put the bike away and will be cleaning and tinkering to help pass those dark winter nights in preparation for next year's ride outs. Which reminds me I was helping my friend Bob, who is just back from his honeymoon, with some work on his bike in his garage. His new wife was standing there by the bench watching him.

After a long period of silence she finally said, "Honey, I've just been thinking, now that we're married, maybe it's time you quit spending so much of your time out here in your garage.

You probably should consider selling your bike and all that welding equipment; they take up so much of your time . . . and that golf and fishing gear, they just take up so much space. And you know the boat is such an ongoing expense; and you hardly use it. I also think you should lose all those stupid model airplanes and your home brewing equipment. And what's the use of that vintage sports car?"

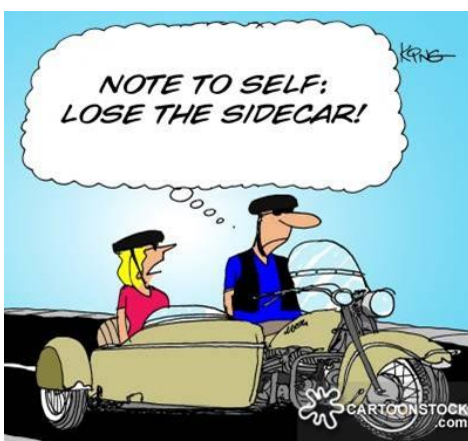
Bob got a horrified look on his face and I felt a little awkward.

She noticed and said, "Darling, what's wrong?"

He replied, "You were starting to sound like my ex-wife."

"Ex-wife!?" she shouted, "YOU NEVER TOLD ME YOU WERE MARRIED BEFORE!"

Bob replied, "I wasn't..."



## WHERE HAS MARK BEEN?

Manchester is a beautiful city at 3am

"Hello Mr Coningsby, I'm sorry to wake you but there's been an issue with your bike...."

Not the way I like to be woken at 3am, but those words certainly woke me fast. But allow me to start at the beginning.

My Thursday was like a normal day. A nice ride up to Manchester, 25c and clear roads all the way, even the M6 was being nice. A nice little "play" on the M6 toll made for an even nicer day. With plans to ride to several other hospitals near the Yorkshire Moors on Friday, and somehow get lost 😊 the week was going well!

I arrived in Manchester at 3pm. A row of parked Motorcycles met me outside my hotel, so it would be rude to not park next to them for the night. After all it seemed secure.

It was a well-lit area, under CCTV, 2 metres from the hotel entrance and even next to a nice "Manchester Bee" sculpture, everything seemed safe enough.... "seemed". I've stayed in Manchester many many times, but never stayed somewhere that seems so safe and secure.

It's amazing how quickly you can wake and get dressed when asked at 3am to come to the hotel lobby.

The worst I could think of, as my lift slowly took me to the ground floor, was that some drunk prat had kicked my bike over..... nope!

Two very nice uniformed Police Officers greeted me, in the hotel reception.

"Mr Coningsby? We have some good news and some bad news..."

"The good news is your motorcycle has been recovered...." Is how I'd like to have heard it.

Sadly they informed me the usual way, that my bike had been stolen....however after a quick search it had been found "abandoned" 100 yards down the road.

Two lovely young whipper snappers had taken a shine to my bike and came "tooled up".

They made short work of the disc lock and the steering lock was just quick smack (I assume).

Now, here is where we can make an educated guess as to the skill set of these young gentleman. Yes they came tooled up with crowbars....but in the rush of removing the disc lock they bent the front disc (you know the round bit on the front) so when trying to push it away, using a second stolen bike and bracing on the pillion foot peg...sadly (for them) the spiny go round bit wasn't really going round....so they had to stop 100yard away and "abandoned" the Tracer.

The nice and VERY camp night manager did film the incident but due to the level of aggression he and the porter encountered they backed away and called the police immediately. Unfortunately the young chappies were a little too light footed once they left the bike.

With the steering lock broken, it needs a new frame. Normally that means a write off, however the age and low mileage on the bike makes the work needed below the "60% value of the bike" v "being written off" mark.

As of October 25th the bike is still being worked on.....

To be continued!!



Search ID: jknn199  
*“My new security system vaporizes anyone who gets too close to my bike. I’m going to miss Jim.”*

## DOUG'S GALLERY

This month our tame club photographer Doug has taken time out from polishing his equipment to remind us all of the fantastic club ride out to visit the Crofton Beam Engines

As you know Doug is a great photographer however he is not too good at joined up writing so Jasper kindly helped with the words. In return Doug helped Jasper get a couple of Kodak moments and has promised to show him how to capture a perfect glamour shot like this one below .....



On September 30<sup>th</sup>, seven Club Members made a 250-mile round trip to visit the Steam Gala Day of the Crofton Beam Engines near Marlborough, Wiltshire.

Crofton Pumping Station was built in 1807-9 to supply water to the highest point of the Kennet & Avon canal which links London and Bristol to prevent the canal 'drying out' due to the operation of the locks 'drying' the canal out. It is a rare survivor of the technology which enabled British engineers to drain mines and supply towns and cities with water throughout the world, and has recently undergone Heritage Lottery Fund supported conservation and visitor facility improvement work. The Crofton engines are the worlds' oldest working steam pumps that are still pumping water today on their original site, although they now only normally work on special steam open days when the modern electric pumps are switched off and have been used when the electric pumps have failed.

Rebuilt and modernised several times during its long working life, one of the two original engines – a second hand engine build by Boulton & Watt purchased from the West India Dock Company, survive in rebuilt form and ran until 1958 despite the canal becoming derelict after WWII as water was still needed for farm and railway locomotive supply.



*The Steam Boiler*

The original engine has a 90cm (36 inch) diameter steam piston and a 2.5m (8 foot) stroke. It had a wooden beam – now replaced with cast iron - and worked a 66cm (26 inch) diameter lift pump.



*An engine beam*

Typically, the engines run at about 15 psi (1 bar) and work alternately to cover in the advent of a breakdown and with the cutting-edge condensing technology of the day, the vacuum side of the engines provide more power than the positive pressure steam side of the engine enabling approximately 1 cubic metre of water (1000 litres/1 tonne) to be pumped every 6 seconds – in effortless, almost silent operation!



The survival and subsequent restoration of the canal is one of the triumphs of the Volunteer Preservation movement, spearheaded by the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust. The volunteers wear period costume on gala days. The Trust bought the redundant pumping station for preservation in 1968, at a time when England's Industrial Heritage was fast disappearing, and by 1971 both engines had been restored to full working order.

## LETTER FROM DOWN UNDER

### Back in the Saddle Again

G'day All

Well I can't believe it's over a year since I last wrote a letter to you.

So picking up where my last one left off you will recall I've bought the bike and now need to find some mates to play with. There are a couple of famous bike clubs in Sydney; The Comancheros and their arch rivals the Finks.

Unfortunately after sitting the membership interview with the Comancheros they felt that whilst I would be suitable to join their club they did stipulate it was subject to changing out the Triumph for a Harley. Not wishing to lose my beloved Tiger a smile came to me as I remembered what Groucho Marx said and I quote "I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member." Anyway it was their loss I thought to myself as I secretly wanted to join the Finks who have great club house facilities and do mates rates insurance.

The Finks Club House boasts a Jacuzzi and pole dancing facilities and the female instructors certainly look like they could keep you fit. For those who prefer a visual insight into what I'm talking about, here is my video of the place when my mate Simon and I went for a pre-member selection inspection visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXX83InR3gQ>

They said they would love me to join them as my feminine side would be an asset to their club but once again it was Hogs only so sadly I had to decline.

Fortunately I did find a club that accepts all makes of bike and much like the RMDC is full of character(s). The Ulysses Club is an Australian wide motorcycle club and to my delight I found the local Branch (The Hills Branch) meet every Saturday morning at a Café just up the road from where I live. No more Billy no mates!

The Ulysses Club for older motorcyclists is the largest organization of its kind in Australia. The Club name comes from a poem of the same title by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. It tells how the great Greek hero Ulysses, now middle-aged and securely in charge of his kingdom of Ithaca, is getting bored with things around him and longs to go adventuring again with his shipmates of old.

The original suggestion for the club was put forward in a letter by Stephen Dearnley published in the August 1983 issue of Bike Australia. Stephen had initially responded to some comments that older riders needed to grow up and one stinging comment in particular hit home; "Hasn't anyone ever told you about growing old gracefully ..."

This drew two significant responses. One from Rob Hall, a reader at Albion Park NSW, who suggested the present name and motto for the club. The other was from Peter Thoeming, the then



editor of Bike Australia who sketched the logo and offered support from his magazine if Stephen could get the club off the ground.

This was duly done at an inaugural meeting in Sydney on 6th December, 1983 when the five people present approved a basic constitution and the Ulysses Club was duly formed.

From that tenuous beginning it has never looked back and the club now boasts a large and extensive network of members throughout Australia and Internationally. There is even a Branch in the UK

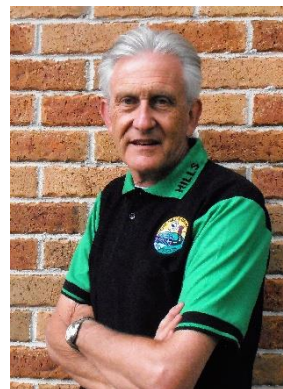
although I had never heard of it before.

From that tenuous beginning it has never looked back and the club now boasts a large and extensive network of some 15,000 plus members throughout Australia. The concept of over 50's only lasted three short months and from that point on Ulysses Club became a social club for motorcyclists over the age of 40, so I only just got in.

With over 300+ members belonging to the Hills Branch it has taken a while to remember names and faces. I thought that gaining membership approval as a "POM" might be a problem however they have allowed me in as they said they needed someone new from the old country to take the P out of. Fortunately being married to a "Sheila" all these years I'm used to being called "A Pomie Bastard" and I now constantly remind them that when they make derogatory comments about me my wife told me it is a term of endearment!

Seriously they are a great bunch and just like you dear reader they raise money in support of disabled kids and the local children's hospital. So it's just like the RDMC; a proper motorcycle club without a Jacuzzi etc.

*George Clooney modelling the Hills Branch Colours*



Next time: Let Loose on the Open Road



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

Last night (November 7th) we had an excellent talk at Whaddon Village Hall from a company that is the UK importer of Arai helmets. A very informative, lively and interesting talk on crash helmet design, materials, performance and safety. The meeting did not finish until just past 10pm and indicative of the interest shown in the topic.



The evening was very interactive with audience participation by asking a whole range of questions on the fly and were all well answered. To give you an example, Ken asked why he got a rustling noise generated from wind in his Arai helmet that he subsequently ditched for a Shoei - Doug (it can only be Doug) immediately offered some well-honed advice that he has clearly gained from many years of motorcycling and suggested that Ken firstly removed it from the polythene bag before use. Incisive stuff!

Other Members who may wish to tap into this vast well of knowledge should ask Doug directly and for those not sure what he look like, photo attached.

One of our new Members, Linda, produced a very nice yogurt cake to supplement the refreshments. Needless to say, quickly devoured by the assembled locust.

Dear Sir

I just wanted to congratulate you on a fantastic piece of petrol head writing. There are few, well only one actually, person who can articulate motoring events and produce a motoring magazine me. However I take my cap off to you as I know that neither I, or Captain Slow, or the Hampster could do the same for motorcycling and so we salute you.

Keep it up!

Yours

J Clarkson

P.S Have you thought about approaching the Beeb as they are desperate to get a show called "Top Gear" going again.

