



CLUB TORQUE

Quarter 3 2019

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RMDC

In this issue:

WERE YOU A DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN?

TRACK DAY AT RON HASLAM RACE SCHOOL

CLUB PICTURE CAPTION COMPETITION

BACK FOR MORE

CLUB TOURING – A FIRST TIMERS' PERSPECTIVE

A GRAND DAY OUT

And lots more

WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR

What a spring and summer the UK has had! Plenty of opportunity for great ride outs and articles. If you missed getting yours into this bumper quarter's publication don't despair there's plenty of opportunity to have your say in the next one. Thank you all for your contributions. Keep them coming!

WERE YOU A DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN?

The *Distinguished Gentleman's Ride* is a celebration of the art of being dapper and classic and vintage style motorcycles. Did you don your plus fours, wax the handle bar moustache and raise money for the noble causes supporting prostate cancer research and men's mental health? I saw Mark's request for help with the Cambridge event however I didn't see any comments from members that they were participating apart from Mark himself.

If you did, pictures please!

A global event which has raised, at the time of typing, \$5.5M USD with 113,000+ riders taking part in over 700 cities across 110 countries. I was planning to join the Sydney DGR however the date clashed with another engagement so I duly handed my conscience and my readies over to my mate Q who, looking very dapper, set off on his Bonnie to join other DGR riders at Bondi Beach.

Now I'm not sure how the UK events were organised but I kept asking Q if he had the ride details after he signed up. He said they would be issued 48 hours before the event. Sounded more like an organised rave to me. Perhaps it was to keep the boys in blue on their toes! Turned out to be a great ride over the Sydney Harbour Bridge with 819 riders in total on mainly classic bikes.

I'll be looking to join the ride next year which gives me just enough time to polish the bike, press my trousers and produce a decent looking moustache.



Q looking very dapper

TRACK DAY AT RON HASLAM RACE SCHOOL

By Mathew Brett

April 2018

Since I was a young boy I've always wanted to ride a bike around a track, before I could ride a motorbike my best friend and I used to race around the pathways in our local village on our bicycles, I was Wayne Gardner and my best mate was Rayney (I think)! I was obsessed with the 500 two stroke GP bikes and I loved it when they were on TV. When I eventually learnt to ride and finally got onto big bikes I used to have this reoccurring dream of riding down fast sweeping roads with my knee skimming the tarmac on a warm summer harvest evening! I can still recall the dream now.

Fast forward a few non biking years due to a young family, another mate convinced me to get back on two wheels. I brought myself a nice entry level bike for a born again 40+ male, a Kawasaki ZX10R! After a year or so back on the road we started having conversations around track days, which my mate wasn't too keen using his bike for, however he had spotted the Ron Halsam race school. He sold it to me as a no brainer, turn up, they give you all the gear and CBR600RR with no consequence i.e. no big excess if you crash, accept for if you chuck it down the road you lose your ride for the remaining session, all for less than £400. I was in.

So permission was granted by the respective wives and we were booked in on our first ever track day with a bonus of an early bird discount offer in April. Praying for good weather and no snow the day came and it was a perfect spring sunny warm day. We sat in the briefing and then moved to be paired up with an instructor. We were booked on the Premier class which was a 2 to 1 with the instructor. The morning plan was general briefing with the instructor followed by a sighting session for you to get used to the bike and track and the instructor to gauge your capability and match with the 2nd rider. Before we went out we were asked what we wanted to get out of the experience, I'm embarrassed to say I want to get my knee down! My instructor smirked rolled his eyes and said I'm sure we can do something about that.

We headed off on our first session, instructor out front, my mate second and me following at the back. We have a few laps then I swapped places with my mate for a few laps and then we came in. At this point it became apparent that I needed to be paired with a faster rider, when asked how did we find the first session my mate was like "yes that was great" and I was like "err that was really slow!"

So now I was paired with some guy more my pace who after introductions said "yes I'm a bit rusty I only did 16 track days last year"! No pressure then.

We headed out on the second session same format as before swapping positions every few laps and building the pace as we went.

With each lap I did my speed got higher and my confidence in the corners grew and just before the end of the second session I did it, Melbourne Hairpin touched my knee down, I'd done it goal achieved, what a feeling!



Brimming with confidence and now really hanging off the bike I was pushing harder every lap now screaming down the start straight into Redgate off the brakes cranking the bike over, I must confess well out of my comfort zone, my knee touches down and this time it's scraping all the way around the corner, the noise was awesome the feeling just as I'd dreamt all those years ago, ahh! Fantastic though!

This continued and more corners were now torturing my knee pads. Favourite corner of the day was Mcleans, you are cranked right over slightly up hill and fast, amazing. What a day and what an experience, smiling all the way home and for many weeks after.

CLUB PICTURE CAPTION COMPETITION



Your chance to show your fellow members your wit!

This picture taken by Doug at the Mods and Rockers Event is just crying out for a great caption so get your creative juices flowing.....

Send your entry to the Editor for inclusion in the next edition of CLUB TORQUE.

BACK FOR MORE

By Mathew Brett

July 2019

Now we had done the premier class on the 600 we were eligible to do the Elite session on the Honda FireBlade 1000RR. This is a 1 to 1 experience totally tailored to what you want to get out of the session. After my first experience I was totally up for this and the opportunity to take a blade out on track was too good to miss, slightly more expensive at just under £500. These bikes also had sensors that recorded telemetry about your riding. I was really looking forward to this as after lots of post over thinking about my first experience on the 600 I really wanted to improve on my braking and corner speed.

So we turned up a little early on the day and watched the bikes for a while which in hindsight was probably not the best thing to do for the nerves. Standing in the pit lane hearing the blades coming past screaming flat out in fourth was a little intimidating and made you think these guys are bonkers what am I doing!

Before booking my mate decided to do the 600s again as he wanted to improve his cornering confidence and was happy sticking with the smaller bike. This meant we were in totally different groups and parts of the pit lane, he was in a garage and I was in an air conditioned room with light refreshments and hot and cold drinks on tap. It was mid July and one of the hottest weeks of the year so far, about 28c. Feeling smug and quite comfortable I met my instructor Ben who was a supersport road racer and pretty handy on a bike, also a nice chap. We went through the basics and formats about going out on track coming in to debrief and working on whatever I want to improve, in my case breaking and corner speed.



Still with the fresh memory of the Blades screaming past earlier I set off following Ben on track trying to remember his tips and which gear for each corner and generally getting a feel for the blade which was slightly smaller than the ZX10r I was used to. It wasn't long before there was a familiar sound of scraping knee pads (no I hadn't fallen off) which was a pleasing sound and

satisfying that I hadn't forgotten what I learnt the previous year. Now time to focus on my riding. One

good thing about the bikes is they had an up and down quick shifter which helped keep the bike settled when changing gear especially at places like the Craner Curves at 115mph.

As I eased myself back into riding around the circuit I was surprised to find myself coming down the start/finish straight with the throttle to the stock tapping up the quick sifter, 1st, 11 thousand RPM, orange light to change up, 2nd, orange light, 3rd, orange light and then into 4th up to around 145mph watching for the red breaking cone marker and then a massive handful of front brake and down the gears with the quick shift, tap, tap, tap while the bike weaves beneath you, spot the turning cone, push on the bars and hang off the side, look for the apex and then for the exit cone and on the gas back up through the gears and repeat for each turn. What fun and that was just the first lap! This continues for 20 minutes which only seemed like 5.

We eventually pulled in to cool down and debriefed. Ben got a print off from the data logger and took me through it. We looked at my split time and it showed I was quite inconsistent in my pace between sections, on one lap I was quite quick on one half and slow on the other and the next completely the other way around. So the next session I was to concentrate on hitting my markers and being more consistent.

So we went out for my second session this time focusing on breaking late and getting my turning points nailed and getting my gearing right for each turn. Speed was increasing with every lap and I was really getting into the rhythm, my favourite section still McLeans and Coppice, so fast and you feel you are really cranked over, such a thrill.

Then onto the back straight again throttle pinned to the stock in fourth gear, however half way down I had to either touch the rear break or dip the throttle over the little bump as the front kept lifting at 145/150mph! This certainly gets your attention especially as about 2 seconds later you are in the breaking zone for the Foggy Esses. You are then on the gas in second front lifting off the ground heading for the Melbourne Hairpin, dropping into first round the corner and as you exit pinning the throttle again front in the air in 1st and 2nd.

The one corner I continued to struggle with was Goddards. The only real big left hander on the circuit, it's a really late entry corner that invites you to turn in early, it's off camber so the track is falling away from you so difficult to judge. As the second session continued I slowly started to get the hang of it but it was still my least committed corner. Then your back on the gas flat out down the start/finish straight front end lifting in 1st through to 3rd and holding it open in 4th for as long as you dare before breaking. One time I totally scared the living day lights out of myself, I was holding out to break as late as possible and I was I coming up really fast on my instructors thinking OMG I'm going to take him out thankfully I didn't, I held my breath, pushed the bars, gritted my teeth and prayed I would get around the corner! Made it phew!

We came in again to cool off and debrief, this time we looked at my throttle and breaking, what it showed was the was a slight pause between me coming off the throttle and then breaking, this translates in to wasted time which is bad for lap times. In the first session I managed a 2m 22s, the second session I had done a 1m 58s, so a slight improvement plus I was much more consistent in each sector. The third and final session I was advised to concentrate on shutting the throttle and getting on the brakes immediately to eliminate and coasting.



After a short rest we went out for a final flying session, approaching each corner of each lap I focused on keeping the throttle open for as long as possible and grabbing the brake as I shut off the throttle aiming to get an almost zero gap, this session disappeared as fast as the first. We pulled in after another 20 minute session to debrief. I was looking forward to seeing the fruits of my effort and hopefully a further improvement on my lap

time. Ben came over to my bike to take the data logger and it had disappeared! Somehow it had fallen off during the last session, I was gutted especially as I had tried so hard to improve and now I'll never know. We did know my fastest lap which was some consolation and I was happy to be told it was an improvement at 1m 47s which I felt wasn't too bad for a novice on his 2nd only track day.

These two experiences have been a blast, I did say that I'd probably not do another but after riding the blade around the Donnington circuit I am itching to do it again. On the face of it the race school does seem expensive but looking at other options it is probably, in my opinion, the best value for money way for an introduction to track day riding and getting 1-2-1 guidance from professional racers. I would totally recommend people giving it a go. I certainly will be saving to do it again next year.

Brilliant couple of articles Matt. I was with you on every corner as I read through that!

The Guys and Gals have made a mental note not to let you lead on ride outs. If you do just remember Brian likes to be tail-end Charlie so go easy on him as he is still saving up for his first track day session.

Ed

CLUB TOURING – A FIRST TIMERS' PERSPECTIVE

By Jasper

I have to admit to being somewhat apprehensive before signing up for touring the Pyrenees in May as I had never ridden a motorcycle on the continent before and although having driven a car on many occasions overseas, I had never experienced 'real' mountain roads and I also knew that I would be in the company of many seasoned tourists. I had heard tales of the challenges of mastering tight right-hand hairpin bends so I think a degree of anxiety would be natural.

For someone who gets sea-sick in the bath, I was grateful for a calm Bay of Biscay crossing. On arrival at Bilbao, we had a good ride to the hotel on the French side of the Pyrenees just in time before the rain came and then it rained for the next 2½ days or so which was not great as it was cold and even having to resort to wearing my Long Johns in bed....

It seemed ironic that the poor weather seemed to reside only on the French side and once through the 9km Somport tunnel or over one of the spectacular passes, we were basking in glorious Spanish sunshine. My photo's do not fully capture the magnificence of the scenery but some pictures below give you an idea:





The scenery is fairly obvious to state, but for me, the most memorable aspect of the tour was the camaraderie of the entire group. Tim Williams, who moved to Dorset from Reed some months ago brought his wife Sam and two friends Keith and Tina from the USA and everybody fitted in well and it was a fantastic opportunity to see others in a different light and get to know them better. Realising that I was the weakest rider in terms of ability and although there were more bicycles on the mountain roads than any other wheeled vehicles where the absence of traffic was very noticeable, I am somewhat averse to blind hairpin bends. I chose to ride towards the back of the pack to allow the more capable riders to move at a pace appropriate to them. The drop-off system worked extremely well and the tail-end Charlies – usually Steve C or Simon – ensured nobody got lost. What did surprise me that in most part, the quality of the roads we encountered was very good and in contrast to local UK roads.



My room-mate for the tour was Ben and he was keen to maintain his fully toned body-beautiful image and can be seen having just completed a full 25 to 30 second work-out on the rowing machine in the hotel gym.....

It was a great trip and the traffic density we found on our return came as a surprise after a week of traffic absence. To summarise: a lot of leg pulling and a huge amount of fun!

Finally, a huge thankyou to Mark for setting this up and the organisation and a trip to remember for the rest of my life!

I'm with you Jasper. My first RMDC continental ride was in 2014 to the Black Forest and the B500. Loved it and still talk about it. This was also organised by Mark so me thinks he has too much time on his hands and simply pretends he is working too hard – Ed.

MOTOR CYCLE PRODUCTION ON THE DECLINE - THE LOST GENERATION EFFECT



Apparently the Baby-Boomers all have motorcycles.

Generation X is only buying a few, and the next generation isn't buying any at all.

A recent study was conducted by the RMDC to find out why?

Here are the reasons why Millennials don't ride motorcycles:

1. Trousers won't pull up far enough for them to straddle the seat.
2. Can't get their phone to their ear with a helmet on.
3. Can't use 2 hands to eat while driving.
4. They don't get a trophy and a recognition plaque just for buying one.
5. Don't have enough muscle to hold the bike up when stopped.
6. Might have a bug hit them in the face and then they would need emergency care.
7. Motorcycles don't have air conditioning.
8. They can't afford one because they spent years in school and University trying to get a degree in Humanities, Social Studies or Gender Studies for which no jobs are available.
9. They are allergic to fresh air.
10. Their pajamas get caught on the exhaust pipes.
11. They might get their hands dirty checking the oil.



12. The handle bars have buttons and levers and cannot be controlled by touch-screen.
13. You have to change gear manually and use something called a clutch.
14. It's too hard to take selfies while riding.
15. They don't come with training wheels like their bicycles did.
16. Motorcycles don't have power steering or power brakes.
17. Their nose ring interferes with the visor.
18. They would have to use leg muscle to back up.
19. When they stop, a light breeze might blow exhaust in their face.
20. It could rain on them and expose them to non-soft water.
21. It might scare their dog and then their mum would get upset and dad will get angry.
22. Can't get the motorcycle up the stairs of their parent's home.



HONDA GB 250 CLUBMAN

Editor's note: I thought you might like another article from Greg Evans, a member of the Australian Ulysses Hills Branch I belong to here in Sydney. He has written quite a few articles and I do enjoy reading them. This one, although with Australian references will probably relate with many of you child of the Seventies types. Australian/English translation is available on google.

Think of the nineteen seventies. The mid and late nineteen seventies.

Nobody earned much, but none of us felt particularly poor. Our surfboards were cheap cast-offs from uncles and older cousins, but we could surf all day at any Sydney beach and if two other guys joined the break it was 'crowded' and you could paddle down to another empty break a bit further along. Only a few cars had seat belts, so your girlfriend could sit right next to you on the bench seat of the FE Holden. It cost five cents to cross the Harbour Bridge and you could sticky tape the coin to the back of your glove and the toll attendant would rip the coin and tape off the back of your throttle hand and have you on your way in no time. You could go to the footy at the SCG for about a dollar fifty, sit in the front row and watch Graham Langlands twinkle-toe down the touch line fending off opposing forwards by screwing off their faces with his left hand. It was a golden era.

Our bikes were marginally roadworthy old wrecks, but we had more fun on them than you could poke a stick at. In those pre-surveillance, pre-computer days all sorts of techniques were used to stay on the road and keep riding. Registration was expensive, you see, and we were perpetually broke, so

number plates and registration stickers in their little plastic holders were a sort of communally owned asset, to be shared between bikes and riders. From each according to their means, to each according to their needs. We were Communists, of a sort. With hindsight it is remarkable how little trouble with officialdom this reprehensible irresponsibility produced. Innocent times, spent wisely on having fun.

Motor bikes in those days were just motor bikes. I don't recall the terms sports bike, or cruiser, or even touring bike. If it could be started, we would do anything on them, including lots of dirt road riding. This was because extensive parts of the road network criss-crossing this wide brown land were unpaved. So regardless of the type of bike we were on we would bowl into a dirt road section without pause or thought. There were dirt bikes, of course, but what was meant by that term in those far off days was usually something without lights or number plate used for dedicated riding in remote areas - such as existed behind most rows of houses, or down in quarries, or in state forests. Unlike now, there did not seem to be the hordes of busy-bodies intent on detecting other people enjoying themselves and putting a stop to it.



Now in my humble opinion our club member Barry Lunn has obtained for himself a lovely piece of the essence of that era. He has found and purchased an imported Honda GB 250 Clubman. I know, I know, it is a 1982 model, but in my view with this bike Mr Honda captured the essence of an earlier era in what was even in 1982 part of a sentimental past. This little Honda is a single, with six speeds, is of remarkably light weight and has delightful handling characteristics. No, you

can't do stoppies pulling up at the lights. No, wheel-standing is out of the question. And no, you are not likely to wear the knee of your jeans out on the tarmac in corners. But if you can prise this little gem out of Barry's grip you will discover something wonderful - a beautifully balanced little bike where all the elements of engine, gearbox, handling, braking and ergonomics come together to create much more than the sum of the parts. These elements are arranged in a harmonious whole which gives pleasure.

Some bikes have that harmonious nature. I was told by my grandfather that side-valve flat-tank Nortons were like that, possessing an addictive whole arising from an assemblage of quite humble basic components. 'Better than a great many much more modern bikes' he told me - and he didn't mean faster, he meant **better**. Some BMW motorbikes were like it too. I am thinking of the R65 boxer series, the R90S, the 5-speed 750 boxers, the 850 boxers, the R80GS and the K-75 triple. The K-75 was particularly sweet in nature, and this marvellous quality was in my opinion lost when developed into the four-cylinder K-100. More can sometimes mean less.



Kawasaki demonstrated this principle with the legendary Z-1.

In my view, the Z-650 was a much better bike. Not as beautiful, to be sure. Not as historically significant, I freely admit. Nowhere near as powerful, not nearly as fast, but in terms of pleasure gained in the saddle, **better**. It's just my humble opinion, mind. I won't fight in pubs or ditches over it.



Some of us - me included - habitually disparage Harleys, but have you ever bowled a Road King down an open remote section of road? A Road King just clicks into a coherent rumbling perfection on the right stretch of road. The sweeping turns and rolling heights and hollows of the road beside Lake Windemeer on the way to Mudgee is the sort of road I'm talking about. Bloody marvellous! Try it if you can, but remember the experiment is tainted if the Harley isn't a Road King. There is only one King.

Moto Morini is a distinguished old Italian motorcycle name which has lately risen from the financial ashes again. I wonder if their modern products achieve the harmony and perfection of the Morini 350 and 500 V-twins of the seventies and early eighties. I'd love to ride one of those again, they were an absolute revelation back in their day, making Japanese 'big bike' products feel clumsy, cumbersome and ponderous and slow. I remember sweeping through a fast corner on the Putty on a 500 Morini borrowed during a group ride to find a large pothole which had not been there just a few days before. Like magic the Morini picked itself up, clipped the edge of the pothole without becoming unsettled, leaned back into the turn again and made the corner as if nothing had happened. I reckon I would have crashed most of the bikes I knew at the time. Magic is real, ladies and gentlemen, and that's why Italian electrics don't work - the magic in the frames disrupts electrical fields. This happens with Ducatis, too.



Speaking of Ducatis, go to YouTube and google up video of Mike Hailwood's famous 1978 comeback victory at the Isle of Mann TT. His Ducati was a ridiculous mount for an attempt to win this race - on paper. But in reality the bike had a coherent balance which proved critical. The Ducati also had Mike the Bike in the saddle, but my argument stands, balance and harmony are great virtues in a motorcycle.

And even if the bike in question is a humble 250 single like Barry's Clubman, the presence of that coherent balance is something rare, something to be treasured. If you find a bike that has it, hang onto it and keep the bearings properly greased.



Or you could try to talk Barry into letting you ride his little 250 gem. My grandfather would have loved that little bike. It is brim-full of the reason we ride - for the pleasure of it.

DE HAVILLAND MUSEUM VISIT

By Jasper

On Sunday July 7th, we had a visit to the de Havilland Aircraft Museum with 24 Members & guests with 21 bikes – probably a record for a Club outing!

The museum is located at Salisbury Hall, London Colney, Herts, a stone's throw from Junction 22 of the M25 adjacent to the Arsenal training ground and former home of Winston Churchill's mother during WW2 and where Geoffrey de Havilland developed the DH98 Mosquito in just 11 months in 1938/9. We had a most informative and humorous private guided tour by the museum Curator whose exhibits include partial Horsa glider, DH Dragon Rapide, DH Comet 1A fuselage, Vampire, Sea Venom, DH125, Sea Vixen, DH121 Trident fuselage, Chipmunk, Tiger Moth, Bae 146 plus others and many artefacts/memorabilia.

The stars of the museum are 3 Mosquito's. With a top speed of 440mph, the Mosquito was the fastest aircraft of WW2 – not surprising given that it was powered by two Rolls Royce Merlin engines housed in an innovative construction of spruce timber for the structural airframe components and clad with a composite of balsa wood sandwiched between thin plywood providing a stiff, lightweight structure.



On arrival parked up in front of the Trident fuselage



Mosquito – wings assembled to fuselage with just 4 bolts



DH Rapide restoration



Merlin engine from crashed aircraft



Tiger Moth amongst other exhibits



Sea Vixen cockpit



DH Comet 1A fuselage. Note early squared windows inducing stress raisers & onset of famed catastrophic fatigue failures in the early 1950's



Some of the external exhibits

We had planned a ride-out after the visit, but as we had spent a considerable amount of time at the museum, we ran out of time. The Curator described the museum as Hertfordshire's best kept secret as few seem to know of its existence. Well worth a visit – or re-visit! See www.dehavillandmuseum.co.uk for further information.

You probably don't know but my Mum was one of a large workforce of women who built the Mosquito at the Lebus Works in Tottenham London. Lebus were a large and very well-known furniture maker so the wood framed Mosquito was ideal war work for them. The Germans were busy bombing the local chip shops at the time and never thought that the fastest war plane was being built right under their bomb doors in the insignificant furniture factory. So remember guys and gals Mum's the word! - ED

GRAND DAY OUT – CRACKIN PICTURES GROMIT



Kings Lynn Mods and Rockers – August 2019 (Doug)

