

# CLUB TORQUE



## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RMDC

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Quarter 3 2020

### **A MOAN FROM THE EDITOR**

It's good to see that despite the Chinese Flu you have all taken advantage of the decent weather and been on a number of ride outs both planned and impromptu.

However I have come to the conclusion that there is only one member in the club given the number of articles submitted for inclusion in the club newsletter this quarter. Well done that member!!!!

With the ending of summer and darker days ahead, both weather wise and lockdowns, those 50 other Rouges Gallery members will no doubt have plenty of time to start bashing out articles and downloading pictures of your summer adventures to make the Christmas addition a bumper one.

So here is a not so subtle front page reminder:



## CLUB BBQ & CONCOURSE EVENING

Jasper

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic affecting us all and the cancellation of the 2020 Bike Show, there was no cheque presentation evening this year. However, we did hold the BBQ and Concourse Club bike social gathering at Eternit Sports Club on 19<sup>th</sup> August.

A good turn-out from Members and their families with a total of 12 bikes on show in spite of the rain earlier in the day. Thankfully the evening remained dry – as forecast!

The criteria given to the judges is to select the bike that appeals most to them, so bike age, manufacturer or condition makes for a level playing field for all. The winner this year was Mat Brett with his spectacular 2019 Kawasaki Ninja H2. Mat is pictured below with President Ben receiving the coveted trophy. As a matter of interest, Mat also won the trophy last year with his Kawasaki ZX-10R!



For the technically minded is a brief summary of the H2 that makes it quite special:

- Liquid cooled, 16 valve in-line 4-cylinder motor
- Supercharged 207 bhp performance
- 238kg weight
- Öhlins rear suspension

Note the cornering lamp on the lower off-side faring!

Well done Mat – a worthy winner!

## RIDE OUT – HOLBEACH ST MATTHEWS

Jasper

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted us all since we were locked down on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Needless to say, this has had a significant effect on Club activities – cancellation of the Annual Bike Show, planned visits and speakers postponed until who knows when. However, in spite of this, Sunday, mid-week and some evening ride-outs have blossomed thanks mostly to John Gordon, Simon Whybrow and Alan Evans, with participation levels consistently encouraging. Dave Richards has even added to the excitement and anticipation of mystery tours with seemingly off-road challenges – not for the faint hearted.



On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September, John organised one of his many mid-week rides to what seemed like to the back of beyond to Holbeach St Matthew on The Wash and as customary nowadays, he meticulously plots the route and provides gps files for those with sat navs. Here are the out and back routes taken.

The outbound trip was not without incident as Guy Moody's VStrom overheated in Wisbech as the cooling fan did not kick-in amidst the traffic chaos in the town for some reason. Keith Barrell stayed with him whilst it cooled down and followed on shortly after having the benefit of the gps file loaded on his R1250 RS. Wisbech seems an interesting Fen town where one can imagine the locals greeting each other mostly with 'high sixes' instead of the customary 'high fives' no doubt due to many generations of 'social integration' in the Fens.....

We arrived at Holbeach St Matthew to be confronted by a flood defence earth wall that stretched a long way and having climbed up it to hopefully gain full view of The Wash, we could just about see the sea on the horizon beyond the marsh lands.

We happened to get talking to an Englishman, local to the area, but normally resides in the Philippines, but travel restrictions prevented him from returning at the moment, but he did have with him a drone which we all found most interesting. Here it is hovering about 1 metre or so from us:



This whole kit was described to us as being 'mid-range' costing a mere £2600! From memory, it could climb to about 400 feet, with a range of 3 to 4 miles and can fly at 50 mph. Twin joystick operation was remarkably easy to control as he let me have a go.



There were 10 riders on the day and all pictured from the drone. Keen observers will note an element of detritus on the flood bank – this is in fact Steve Wilson's picnic rug. He tells us he is refined and as such travels with him everywhere. Such class.

Both outbound and return routes were very interesting with quite a lot of wheat still being harvested in the Fens (in contrast to our neck of the woods). Much of the Fens are at or about sea level and as we returned via Welney and rode beside the Bedford Old River drainage dyke, my sat nav recorded 35 feet BELOW sea level.

A great day out and thank you John!

## EDITORS CHOICE: A MOMENT IN TIME

**June 8, 1962 – Beryl Swain becomes first woman to ride solo at Isle of Man TT**

A racing pioneer who defied authority. Sadly Beryl Swain did not live long enough to see a woman finally win a motorbike world title. Nicknamed 'The Racing Housewife' — Beryl had to put on weight in order to be allowed to become the first woman to race solo in the TT.



It may have taken 60 years to complete the journey to Ana Carrasco becoming the first female motorbike world champion in 2018 but it can be said to have begun in Walthamstow with Beryl Swain. A 15ft mural – high on a gable end looking down on Wood Street, north-east London – depicts Beryl in her racing leathers, goggles perched on the peak of her gleaming red helmet, blonde hair cascading to her shoulders.

It is painted from a photograph taken in 1962 when newsreels treated Beryl as a curiosity rather than a serious sportswoman, using her fame to campaign for greater opportunities to compete. Pathe footage portrayed her as “the racing housewife”, a gimmick designed to promote her as an adjunct to her husband Eddie’s garage. In fact, she held a senior secretarial role in the City and funded herself in the sport.



She started riding after meeting Eddie in 1952 and took up serious racing after they were married in 1958. She joined the Racing 50 Motorcycling Club and prospered in the 50cc class, often as the only woman, winning trophies at Snetterton, Cadwell Park, Gosling Stadium, Brands Hatch and Silverstone.

In her first year of competition, she overcame a heavy crash at Crystal Palace, even trying to carry on despite blood leaking from her helmet. When, in 1962, the Isle of Man TT introduced a new 50cc ultra-lightweight class, Beryl's application provoked prejudice and publicity.

She was accepted, but the International Motorcycling Federation brought in – for that class only – a minimum weight requirement of 9st 6lb, claiming it feared public revulsion if a woman was killed and that it was being chivalrous, not prejudicial.

Undaunted, Beryl switched to a high-carb and oil-heavy diet and, after featuring in several articles in the press, all with a condescending tone – “When it comes down to the hard graft she is a complete, helpless SHE,” wrote the Sunday Mirror, pointing out that Eddie did the mechanical work – she was allowed to carry lead weights as ballast to make the limit.

On Saturday, June 8, 1962, with a twist of the wrist, Beryl became the first woman to ride solo in the TT.

In a field of 33, more than half of whom rode bikes with full teams behind them, Beryl came 22nd out of 25 finishers despite clutch trouble limiting her to 55mph for all of the 37.4-mile second lap of the course.

She vowed to be back the next year on a better bike. But she never competed again. The Federation revoked her licence and enforced a male-only rule. Even her protest was reported in a tone of sexism: "This wordy wife is hopping mad," wrote the Mirror when her letter failed to overturn the ban for the 1963 TT.

Thwarted, she retired from club racing and focused on her career with Sainsbury's. She died in 2007.

It was not until 1978 that Hilary Musson become the second female TT racer. Back in 1962, Pathe's profile of Beryl ended with a voiceover that said: "Slowly and surely women, the weaker sex, are muscling in on man's domain. Practically no sport is sacred."

She did not survive to see Carrasco triumph but, thankfully, she lived long enough to see all of Pathe's "sacred cows" blown away.

Acknowledgement:

Original article by Rob Bagchi 28 September 2020 - Telegraph Newspaper.

*With thanks to Kirstin Sibley and her exhibition and catalogue: 'Beryl Swain: The Need for Speed'.*



**GRAND DAY OUT – CRACKIN PICTURES GROMIT NOT!**



That's All Folks!

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Bonjour*

*I'm Martin Priest. This is me with one of my trailies.*



*I used to be a member of the club in the 1990s riding, at the time a Moto Guzzi Le Mans 3. In 2003 I moved to Aveyron region in France. With the restrictions on having fun at the moment I would be pleased to send you an article of my biking life down here.*

*I've looked at some of your recent photos and, I'm afraid, don't recognise any faces although they would all be 20 years older.*

*Say Hi to any of the old brigade.*

Merci Martin. Contributions always welcome and I for one would be very interested in hearing what biking is like for you in France. No doubt a few of our continental tours could head your way once the Chinese Flu passes.

Sadly those faces don't recognise themselves these days when they look in the mirror. Fortunately I have still kept my youthful looks and the mirror on the wall still tells me I am the fairest of them all.

Ed.