

TORQUE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF TRIUMPH



No 6 Winter 1997



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international news

Kent gold closes season

OUR first British season closed with over 100 Triumphs and 150 members taking part in the Autumn Gold Rally at Kent's Whitbread 15-p Farms in early October.

Forty members came together on site the night before the rally to enjoy the fun and music in the rally tent until the small hours, but all were back in action the following morning as the rest of the rallyists arrived.

After exploring the Hop Farm's permanent attractions many members tried their hands at kart racing and quad bike riding as well as joining one of two groups who were led around the lovely Kent countryside by riders from



the local Paul Smart Motorcycles RAT pack.

The barrel-throwing contest outside the rally-marquee brought out the heavyweights, with London's John Mickleborough and Rupert Smith taking the competition to a throw-off that left Rupert the winner. Young Grant Williams won the junior prize.

The Farthest Travelled award went to Peter Soete from Roeselare, Belgium.

Award winners

TRIUMPH have scooped two prestigious prizes in the annual British Motor Cycle News Awards.

Readers of the widely read weekly newspaper voted Triumph as Manufacturer of the Year in recognition of not only the TS95 sports bike but for the breadth of its whole range of motorcycles and motorcycle products.

Triumph owner John Bloor also received a personal accolade with a special Services to Motorcycling Award in recognition of his achievement in leading the company to its current strength.

'It's very nice to receive an award like this and I'm extremely grateful, but I see this as the result of a great team effort and not of any individual performance,' said Mr Bloor.

'It takes more than one ingredient to bake a cake.'

Desert RATs head for the hills

TRIUMPH riders in the United Arab Emirates are coming together under the RAT banner thanks to local distributors, Motorcycle City of Dubai.

The group meet for a ride out on the last Friday of every month and planned outings include a trip to Jebel Hafet, which National RAT Manager Philip Nuthall describes as a 3000 feet high moun-

tain with 12 kilometres of hairpin bends.

'Knee down and all that business. I can't wait to take my new TS95 there and will keep you posted,' he says. He's the guy in the centre of the photo wearing the Motorcycle City t-shirt.





Greek delight

FORMER Triumph factory test rider and race hero Percy Tait was the guest of honour at the first Greek International Triumph Rally which attracted over 130 people to sun soaked Galaxidi in September.

Now a successful car dealer, Mr Tait was on hand to regale the rallyists with stories from Triumph's past and to take part in the celebrations that marked a very successful debut event.

For most rallyists the weekend began with an exhilarating three hour ride west from Athens. The route covered a quick blast up a motorway to leave the city behind, followed by terrific fast sweeping bends as the road headed for the mountains.

Once in the hills we climbed through hairpin after hairpin, taking great care on the slippery road surface, passing the ancient site of

Delphi before taking a coffee stop at an out of season ski resort.

As we left the resort the sight that greeted us was simply stunning. Way down below, we could make out the sea, still miles and dozens of hairpin bends away by road, but tantalisingly close as alternate hard acceleration and hard braking started to take its toll in the sweltering conditions.

The rally base was at a coastal hillside campsite well shaded by trees and cold drinks awaited the stream of riders who turned up during the afternoon.

A target shooting competition and sidecar slalom riding contest

with the rider blindfolded and passenger shouting instructions got the rally proper underway and things really started to roll as darkness gathered, with an open air dinner, limitless amounts of Greek wine and a disco that kept the enthusiastic dancers going until the small hours of a warm evening.

Next day saw most riders take part in a traditional road book ride, with competitors answering a series of questions as they tried to get to the finish at the lunchstop in the picturesque fishing village of Galaxidi in the shortest time possible.

Then it was again down to the serious business as everyone settled down to a long and leisurely outdoor lunch by the side of

Galaxidi harbour.

Before the rallyists broke for home, Triumph Greece chief Michael Stagonakis presented the weekend's awards of Triumph and RAT goodies. Prize winners were:



Triumph Greece's Michael Stagonakis (left) with Guest of Honour Percy Tait.

● **Shooting contest:**

Stelios Patakalis

● **Rally (47 kms):**

1. Dimitris Gagaras (55 minutes)

2. Thanos Merkouridiadis (56 minutes)

3. Andreas Poidis (57 minutes)

LAST: Robert Martin (2hrs 25 minutes!!!)

● **Furthest travelled:**

Kurt Janda (Austria)

Peter and Kim Daskalopoulos (Australia)

Frank and Lynn Henry (Australia)

Paul Dinnerville and Rosemary Pittaway (Australia)

Brian and Margaret Kelleher (Australia)

Michael Ilet and Emily Bedford (Australia)

Carl Blecher and Jenifer Howes (Australia)

Keith Braddock and Dorothy Gould (Australia)

● **Oldest rider:**

George Ioannidis (aged 45)

The rally will be held again next year and if enough members are interested we will organise a run from northern Europe to take part. I can assure you that it is more than worth the trip. NW



History made at

COLORADO'S Steamboat Springs provided the perfect base for the first United States National R/T Rally in September, with over 120 members from all over the country (and further afield) making the trip to take part in a bit of Triumph history.

Even the weather held out to help make the rally a success, with clear blue skies and

plenty of fresh air greeting the riders who took part.

The rally started on the Thursday with demonstration rides on the full Triumph range - including the US launch of the Thunderbird Sport - while on Friday members came together for an all day ride passing through Vail, Silverthorne and Kremmling.

With the elevation ranging from 6000 to over 9000 feet, Colorado provided some great roads and breathtaking scenery, giving



Clockwise from top left: Bill Foley and wife; Just some of the Big D Cycles R/T Pack; Staging for the parade laps; One of the many R/T Runs that took place over the weekend; A couple of newbies couldn't resist joining in the fun and trying the new Thunderbird Sport for size. Thanks to Bill Foley for the photography.

Steamboat

everyone some brilliant memories to share at the end of the day's ride.

The riding continued on Saturday with a shorter ride tailored for more sporting riders. Another day of perfect weather and great thrills was followed by the chance to relax at the Steamboat Springs Rodeo grounds for a feast of roasted pig and a toe tappin' night of great blues offered by Lionel Young.

The night ended with an award ceremony and a raffle draw, with RAT and Triumph goodies for prizes.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the chance to take part in

parade laps on the Steamboat Springs race track, which was hosting the town's annual Vintage Bike Week during the rally.

As the RATs pulled off the track

Award winners -

Best Triumph

Runner-up:

Largest RAT Pack in attendance:

Farthest distance travelled:

Farthest distance by motorcycle:

Most embarrassing moment:

Tim Fear (1997 'X-1')

Jeremy Horn (1995 Speed Triple)

Big D Cycles, Dallas, Texas, led by Jr. Von Zapper.

Roger Harding, London, England.

Mary Neagle, Brooklyn,

New York (1996 Sprint).

Erik Lothian, arrested and overthrown by Big D Cycles.

From the saddle

FOLLOWING the advertisement in *Torque* I decided to attend the first Annual USA R:IT Rally at Steamboat Springs as it was taking place during my annual holiday in Colorado. The first problem was to find a bike I could use on the event.

I wrote to the organisers at Triumph America to see if they knew anyone who could rent me a bike. A few days later I had a voice mail message from the USA.

National R:IT Manager Erik Lothian to say that he might be able to provide a bike for an organised ride at the rally. **RESULT!**

We arrived at Steamboat late on Friday afternoon. The place was filled with bikes. Booking into the Thunderhead Lodge my pleasure was complete when I discovered that the R:IT rally was camped at this hotel.

Erik DID have a bike for me. It was an Adventurer. It was blue. And it was mine. I was at peace with the world! **NOT!**

"Let me check your helmet," said Erik. Helmet? No-one wears a helmet in Colorado, it's just not required. "Sorry, no helmet, no ride. It's an insurance thing! What could

I do?

After much searching I managed to borrow a dirty, scratched and way too big helmet from a snowmobile shop. At least it was a helmet.

I got back to the start point of the ride with about an hour to spare and showed Erik my prize. He was triumphant as he showed me the two helmets he had borrowed overnight especially for me. Gatted, I had to admit that one of his helmets fitted me best and after all his efforts I was honour bound to take it.

At the appointed time about ten of us set off on a variety of machines. We rode into town like a vigilante posse but did not harass any of the traffic as we passed at barely half the speed limit. We stopped at all the traffic lights but we felt like kings of the road.

In true Brit fashion I filtered to the front of the queue. Nobody followed me. It seems that in the States some of the red necks get so heated up by someone getting in front of them that they will open the car door as you pass by!

I left the route for a short time

the barbecue lunch and closing ceremonies began to bring an end to our first major US event. We learned such a lot and got such great feedback from members that we have already decided to return for next year's National US Rally which will be held between September 15 and 20.

Pre-registration details and a full listing of events will be in the Spring edition of *Torque*.

to return the lid to Brown Bear, finally rejoining the group at the lunch stop a few miles further on.

We enjoyed the rest of the ride up hill and down dale, swooping around the gentle curves and undulations of the Rocky Mountains. We got back at about 3pm and spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying the road racing.

That evening the R:ITs had organised a pig roast at the local rodeo ground. This was brilliant. The food was sooooo good, the band played some wild bluesy stuff and the evening temperature was balmy. I even got a plaque for having travelled the farthest distance and this is now a prized possession along with the commemorative t-shirts and badges.

Alas, I was the only Brit that made the event, next year the organisers hope to be able to supply rental bikes that can be collected in Denver, but some more work has to be done in this regard.

If there is sufficient demand we should be able to organise a decent delegation from the UK and Europe. Please let me know via *Torque* if you are interested. But don't forget to take your helmet.

Roger Harding, Egham, Surrey, England.

Ride with us

RAT exists to help you get the most from your Triumph. Whether your taste is for cruising, touring or sports riding and wherever you live, we are working flat out to build a programme of activities to suit you.

We set the ball rolling during our first season in 1997, now we are putting together a much expanded schedule for next term.

Full details of events later in the season will appear in future editions of *Torque*, but you can start to plan your 1998 riding season now.

If you have any ideas for other events you would like to attend, please let us know. We are always open to new ideas.

Neil Webster



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Homeward bound

TRUIMPH'S Hinckley factory will be the focal point for next year's RAT Summer Festival.

The factory will throw its doors open to RAT for an exclusive members only open day as the centrepiece of the club's main Summer event that will take place in the surrounding historic Midlands countryside over the weekend of July 17-19.

Full details and booking arrangements for the event will be featured in the Spring edition of *Torque*, but the weekend will run from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon and feature a selection of ride outs, music, food and entertainments and the chance to take part in the unique factory open day.

As well as the chance to explore

the factory, it's a great chance to meet and talk bikes with Triumph staff.

Refreshments and entertainments will also be laid on as part of what we hope will be the largest ever gathering of Triumphs at their Hinckley home and a terrific climax to the weekend.

The region features a wealth of historical interest, including spectacular castles such as Warwick and Kenilworth and the Bosworth Battlefield, and classic Triumph connections at Meriden where the local Manor Hotel strongly promotes its factory links with a display of old photographs in its Triumph bar.

It will be a weekend no Triumph fan will want to miss, so put the date in your diary now and watch this space for more information.

Set sights for Stanford

PICTURESQUE Stanford Hall will again play host to the club's UK Spring Rally, which this year takes place at the Leicestershire stately home on Sunday April 26.

Around 500 people attended last year's debut event and the second running of the rally will be even bigger and better.

Planned attractions include a band, bar, hot food, demonstrations

and displays, games with prizes and traditional rally awards.

An ideal season opening run for dealer packs, there will be special prizes for the pack bringing most members and individual 'best' prizes for other riders.

There is a small charge for entry into the grounds of the hall but once inside the rally is free. For an additional charge the hall itself and its

own permanent motorcycle museum are open to the public. There are also permanent cafeteria and toilet facilities on site.

For members planning to turn the event into a weekend visit we have negotiated a special ten per cent discount with the three star High Cross House hotel, a small 16th century country house hotel near Lutterworth, just a few miles from Stanford Hall (telephone +44 (0)1455 220840).

Camping is available at North Kilworth Caravan Park, also a few miles from the Hall, at £5 for a tent and up to two people. Pre-booking is essential. Call +44 (0)1858 880997 after March 1, 1998.

For other hotel information contact the Leicestershire Tourist Information Office on +44 (0)116 265 0555.



Tulip tempter

SEE the beauty of the Dutch bulbfields in full Spring bloom by joining the club's first Tulip Rally in Holland between May 1 and 3.

The event will be based at the headquarters of Triumph's Dutch importer, at Warmond just a few miles from the coast, offering both indoor and outdoor facilities for the weekend.

The event starts with a welcome party on Friday and continues on

Saturday and Sunday with rides through the bulbfields, a mystery tour, live music and rider skills competitions.

There will be a prize for the oldest participant and a highest mileage award, plus mini bikes and other entertainments for children, an ongoing cinema and displays of Triumph machines, clothing and accessories. There will also be a workshop to deal with emergency repairs.

With many people choosing to visit the bulbfields at this time of year, it is recommended that you book accommodation in advance.

Suggested hotels include Motel Sassenheim (ph. +31 (0)252 219 019, fax 252 216 829) which is within walking distance of the rally site; Holiday Inn, Leiden (+31 (0)71 535 55 55, fax 71 535 55 53); Bastion Hotel, Oegstgeest (+31 (0)71 515 38 41, fax 71 515 49 81); De Nachtegaal van Lisse, Lisse (+31 (0)252 41 41 47, fax 252 41 03 22).

Camping is available at Dijk en Burg, Noordwijk (+31 (0)71 361 25 08, fax 71 361 72 11); Camping De Wasbeek, Warmond - within walking distance - (+31 (0)71 301 13 80).

Other accommodation information is available from VVV (tourist information) Noordwijk on +31 (0)71 361 93 21, fax 71 361 69 45.



Factory visits

ALWAYS looking for ways of strengthening links between the Triumph factory and RIT members, we are launching a programme of members only factory visits during 1998.

The first tours will take place on Monday January 12 and Monday

February 16 starting at 2pm and will consist of an introduction over coffee and biscuits, guided tour of the factory and a question and answer session. All members attending will receive a complimentary Triumph pin badge.

There is no charge for the tour, but all people attending must be 16 years old or over. You must quote the membership number of all people

wishing to attend when you book your places.

The group is limited to 20 people maximum and places will be reserved on a "first come first served" basis. If you are unable to take up a booked place, please notify us so we can offer your place to another member.

To book a place, please contact club HQ on +44 (0)1455 891515 (fax +44 (0)1455 891450) or write to us at the address on page three.

Track time

WE have joined forces with track day specialists Track Time Promotions to set up an exclusive Triumph circuit riding day at Mallow Park, England, on April 10 (Good Friday).

As well as being great fun, the day provides the opportunity to develop your riding skills on your own bike in closed circuit conditions under the supervision of experienced instructors.

Riders will be split into different speed groups, so there will be no pressure to go faster than you feel comfortable with, and the emphasis will be on improving your skills rather than taking risks.

The day will be open to Triumphs only at a cost of £60 per rider. RAT members can ride for the reduced price of £50.

Places are limited and bookings must be made by January 16, 1998. To book, send a completed booking form and a cheque made payable to 'Track Time Promotions' at 14, Hamilton Drive, Woodley, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 5EX, England; or call +44 (0)1384 278387 with your credit card number (English language only).

Track Time will be hosting a barbecue at Mallow Park on the Thursday evening (April 9) for riders wanting to make the trip to the circuit the night before and there is camping available at the track. For hotel information contact the Leicestershire Tourist Information Office on +44 (0)116 265 0555.

Booking form

Triumph Track Day, Mallow Park, April 10, 1998

First name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____

Telephone number: _____

RAT membership number (if applicable): _____

I enclose a cheque/postal order to the value of £ _____ for _____ places at the Triumph Track Day, Mallow Park, April 10, 1998, at a cost of £60 per rider (£70 for RAT members).

(Please tick as appropriate.)

SWITCH DELTA VISA MASTERCARD AMEX D/CLUB

Card number:

Expiry date: _____

● Please make cheques/postal orders payable to 'Track Time Promotions' and send this booking form to 14 Hamilton Drive, Woodley, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 5EX. Telephone +44 (0)1384 278387. Fax +44 (0)1384 271093.

● Cancellations: If we are notified in sufficient time to resell your place, we will refund a maximum of 75% for the fee paid.

● Transfers: Transfer of entry from one rider to another will incur a £10 admin charge. Anyone transferring without prior consent will forfeit their place.

Winter weekend

OUR first 'Weekenders' meeting of 1998 will be held at the Bosworth Hall Hotel, Market Bosworth, Warwickshire, England, over the weekend of February 21-22.

Even if the weather doesn't encourage riding, we can still have a great weekend. The historic hotel features a heated indoor swimming pool, sauna, jacuzzi, steam room, solarium and gymnasium and is set in superb landscaped gardens.

Bed and breakfast costs £35 per person in a double room or £50 for a single. See the UK newsletter or call club HQ on +44 (0)1455 891515 for more details.

Make a TT date

WE are making plans for a special Triumph event at this year's Isle of Man TT Races.

The day to keep clear is Mad Sunday (June 7) when we will be bringing a Triumph TT Party at The Ashen, Port St. George, near Douglas.

The programme includes a brilliant band, quality barbecue and partying away from the crowds and confusion of traditional Mad Sunday mayhem.

Everyone will be welcome and there will be something special laid on for RAT members.

We will be getting underway late morning and continuing all afternoon, so there will still be chance to take part in the day's other activities if you wish.

There will be no need to book tickets and full details will be in the next *Trique*.

Stateside ... Stateside ... Stateside ... Stateside ...

Regional rallies for USA

FIVE regional rallies have been added to the club's 1998 American events programme, offering members all over the country the chance to take part in a major RAT event.

The rallies will supplement the second running of the National RAT Rally at Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in September, and the Daytona Bike Week Party in March to reflect the

club's strong commitment to North American members.

The programme gets underway with the Western Region Rally at Boerne, Texas, on March 20-22 and continues with the South-East Rally at Suchs, Georgia between April 24-26.

We then move west for the Mid-West meet at Galena, Illinois on May 8-10, the North-Western Rally at

Clarkston, Washington on June 26-28 and the Mid-Ohio Rally at the Mid-Ohio Vintage Bike Days on July 10-12.

Plans are also being made for a Canadian National Rally. This will probably take place during the Canadian Sportbike Weekend in Ontario on July 10-12.

More details will be featured in the next edition of *Torque*. For more information, contact Erik Lothian on +1 (0)770 631 9500, or club HQ on +44 (0)1455 891515.

Head for the Hill Country

OUR first season of USA Regional Rallies kicks off in March with the Western Region rally at Boerne, Texas, between March 20-22.

An ideal location for riding in the area's famous 'Hill Country' the region includes sights such as Cascade Caverns, the Cibola Wilderness Trail, Guadalupe River and the Old Train Tunnel.

As we went to press final details of

the event still had to be approved by the City council, but we plan to be based at the Main Plaza, just off main street.

Registration and demo rides will be available all Friday and we have mapped out some great roads for you to try. There will be a dinner party on Saturday night and a trip to a historical local winery.

We are also planning a motorcycle

maintenance seminar and awards for the best bikes in various classes, the furthest travelled bike and the largest RAT pack in attendance.

Special rates have been negotiated with the following hotels - Boerne Lake Lodge (830-249-3030); Borgman's Sunday House (830-249-9563); Kendall Inn (830-249-8548); Father Inn (830-249-8908); Best Western (800-299-9791); Key-to-the-Hills Motel (800-690-5763).

Beach Party

IT'S time to start planning for one of the most famous events in motorcycling - Daytona Bike Week in Florida.

To celebrate the event RAT will be hosting its second Daytona Party and Ride for all members on Friday March 6.

The ride will be open to all Triumph owners and will leave at 10am from Deland. Please be sure to wear a helmet and appropriate riding gear if you wish to ride with the group.

Judging for categories including Best Triumph (sports, touring and cruiser classes), Farthest Distance Travelled, Farthest Distance by Motorcycle and Largest RAT Pack will take place at the end of the run, with prizes to be awarded at the evening's Dinner Party.

The Party will begin at 8pm at the Daytona Beach Hilton Hotel, overlooking one of the most spectacular sections of the beach. Entry is free to RAT members, non-members can attend for \$10.

It's a great chance to meet fellow members and Triumph RAT staff from around the world, so we look forward to meeting you.

Demonstration rides on all 1998 Triumph models will take place out of Deland, 30 miles inland from Daytona, with RAT members given 'Priority Sign-Up' status allowing you to try the bike you want, when you want, so don't forget your membership card.

The full Triumph line-up will also be on display at the Daytona International Speedway's Cycle World/Advanstar show.

More events on page 24!

Way out We

Many dream of giving up everything to travel the world.

Robbie Marshall turned the

dream into reality. At the tender age of 45 he gave up his career in

advertising to circumnavigate the world on a Triumph Trophy 1200. Full of pioneer spirit he headed West to begin the adventure of a lifetime.

Someone once said that the sure sign of the male menopause is when a man leaves his wife and buys a motorbike. We all have dreams and we all find valid justification for not fulfilling them. But a time comes in

everyone's life when the talking has to stop. This was my time of reckoning and it was terrifying.

So on a watery June dawn, I stepped out for a farewell kiss from my girlfriend. 'Go West you degenerate

old hippie,' she whispered lovingly into my ear. I took her advice and headed for New York.

Although New York offered a vibrant cross section of everything I had come to explore, the relentless rain drove me South as fast as I could ride.

Washington, DC, Philadelphia, The Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, were all washed away in the spray of trucks the size of office blocks hurtling along the Interstate Highways.

More by chance than good judgment I found Route 66. That is one of the brilliant things about the USA. An intimate knowledge of a 60's song book beats a map any day, as each town or major road brings a new



The awesome Grand Canyon in Arizona. Just one stop on Robbie's epic ride.

t st



melody and lyrics to mind.

A 'no map, no tent' philosophy was adopted as they seemed less important than cameras and tools. Getting lost occasionally could be fun, and a compass was all I needed for an approximate direction finder. Getting wet each night sleeping in the open next to the bike was a lot less fun however, so I headed off to the nearest desert for a severe roasting.

Las Vegas had not been part of the plan. I had not got a map so a plan seemed a bit grown up), but the sign

said it was only a hundred or so miles out of my way and it must be hot there.

On arrival, I stopped to ask a Navajo Indian the way to The Strip, Mecca of gambling. He gave me one of those looks reserved for stupid white travellers. 'You want Las Vegas Nevada. This is Las Vegas New Mexico.' Well, how was I to know there were two of them?

America's crown is Arizona. A state full of friendly cowboys in dusty boots. The jewel in that crown is the Grand Canyon. No matter how

prepared you are for the spectacle, everyone gasps at a hole a mile deep, a mile wide and long enough to stretch half the length of England.

I was determined to spend the eye of my 47th year sleeping on the rim, watching the sleepy green Colorado River snake its way between majestic towers sculpted in stone. In the dying embers of the sun, an ochre masterpiece turns blood red and the temperature drops

like a brick. I lay awake shivering in my sleeping bag under a theatre of shooting stars wearing full leathers and crash helmet. My only company on that lonely but memorable birthday were two wolves' who retreated in a hail of fir cones.

Following the compass West, I had a pre-arranged meeting with a remarkable motorcycle hero. Dave Barr and friend Frisco, fellow Harley rider, swaggered into a seedy beer joint to meet a rather ridiculous English biker.

He proudly showed off his 25 year old machine, still in daily use but looking like it should be in a museum.

He rode this thing from the Arctic Circle to the most Southerly tip of South America. Nearly a quarter of a million miles later he had crossed most hot and cold deserts, and three times through the Great Wall of China.

Now consider the most astounding feature of this dynamic motorcycle pioneer. He lost both his legs in a land mine incident and staggers around very competently on artificial limbs.

Two days of intensive briefing and I was sure it was time to go home or be fired up by his abundant energy and tenacity. Such strength of character makes him a hard act to follow. We only had one contentious moment when he advised me to ditch the Triumph for a Japanese enduro machine.

'But Dave, you accomplished so much more on an equally unsuitable machine,' I protested. 'Maybe,' he philosophically replied, 'but I know every nut and bolt of the Harley. You hardly know how to say good morning to the Triumph.' Despite this sober warning, the Trophy and I started as a team and would succeed or fail together.

Dave and I spent our last night

**The jewel
in that crown is the
Grand Canyon**



together sleeping on his driveway watching a fabulous moon-rise over distant mountains. Enriched with Dave's infectious enthusiasm, I headed off before dawn for a serious bike in LA in preparation for the rigours of Mexico.

Mexico & Central America

The crossing into Mexico was not as traumatic as I had been led to believe. Customs were thorough but courteous, and only US \$11 changed hands before riding a reasonable black top to the nearest toll road.

If ever you travel in Mexico, take these expensive but immaculately maintained highways, built with the sweat and blood of the poor for the rich to drive on. The point I had missed, not having a map, was how big Mexico is. Its length is not much short of the width of USA so I was condemned to a

couple of wet nights sleeping out until reaching the capital.

Mexico City is a little bit like an island, but surrounded by mountains to prevent further growth, rather than sea. It is one of the highest and the most crowded places on Earth. The traffic is probably second only to Bangkok and the traffic lights so inefficient that street traders will tell you a whole week's shopping without you ever having to leave your car.

I made a tactical error of stopping too soon at a red light when the woman behind in a VW Beetle, (most popular car in Mexico), considered it unnecessary and knocked me off.

She made a 'whoops' sort of expression before smiling sweetly and driving off leaving me

Rabbie's route took him through the heartlands of the southern States. Bad weather dogged him for most of the way but the sun shone long enough to give him the chance to explore Watson's country.

lying in the road. This is where I have a problem with the Trophy. Sure, I may be lacking in the biceps department, but there is nothing to get hold of to right the bike. A small group of street traders came to the rescue, but they grabbed levers and rapidly deteriorating pannier racks.



A brief pause at the house of Elvis.



America was wet at times... well most of the time actually.

Eventually, I found the only Triumph dealer for about 3,000 miles and big steel gates were swung open into a yard heaving with bikes in various states of repair.

There were only two Triumphs, both Tigers, and one of those belonged to the owner. Bikes are sold in department stores here, so the dealers only maintain them. A dog the size of a barn immediately attempted to slug me, but this was the closest I had come to having sex since departing so took it as a compliment.

Willy, the owner, managed to locate a much needed back tyre and while this was being stolen off someone's Suzuki, a young mechanic set about fixing the potholes that packed up in the torrential North American rain. There was no way he was going to let me back into Mexico City traffic without them.

I was not charged one Pesos for all the work carried out on the bike. Such generosity from a stranger is embarrassing.

Southern Mexico changes dramatically as the GDP drops with the latitude. The road is pock marked with alarming rock falls that often block your progress. These rapidly grow into craters a couple of feet round and nearly as deep.

In a desperate attempt to reach the Guatemala border, I made the mistake of night riding through a hideous

storm and dropped the back wheel into the maw of all pot holes, severely bucking the rim.

The next day a friendly Mexican used a large lump hammer with a disturbingly loose head to persuade the wheel it should be round again. Remarkably it nearly worked so the Trophy team continued on a slightly leaky tyre.

Central America is a continent of five and a half countries we are inclined to forget about. They form the neck joining two vast land masses, with The Pan American Highway being the only major road link. In reality this is a path made of a heap of rubble in many places, and where the Triumph proved itself as an astounding mountain climber. Just open the throttle in any gear, regardless of the gradient, and another conveyer of cattle trucks was just a mess.

Guatemala was pretty unattractive with diabolical roads, but El Salvador! This place is not the world's best but ten miles up it. In the capital, San Salvador, a policeman approached as I waited at a red light. He told me to ignore all traffic signals as I was more likely to die at the hands of an assassin passing by than from the merciless trucks and buses.

Leaving the country was more difficult than getting in, with nine different police and military departments all demanding a wad of dollars to stamp a release paper.

The last one was occupied by a fat youth in Mickey Mouse t-shirt with a menacing hand gun stuck down his trousers. I refused the five dollars he

demanding and rode to the heavily guarded border where exit was denied without the final stupid rubber stamp. Soldiers lifted the barrier to allow me to turn round.

Honduras was only about a mile across no man's land. I opened the throttle and made a break for it hoping their automatic weapons were not loaded. Before the dust cloud of pursuing vehicles, bristling with fire arms, could catch up I was riding a much improved road towards the delightful country of Nicaragua.

Cost Rica has by far the best roads in Central America as good surfing and clean beaches are responsible for a thriving tourist industry. Nothing much happens in North Panama, until you cross a fantastic bridge over the canal, and into South America. This is where the road stops, so a ro-ro ferry took us to the northern most tip of Colombia and South America.

To be continued....

The video, 'Around World Triumph' is available from:

Tiger Bay Co Ltd, The Small House, 40A Sussex Square, Brighton, BN2 5AD, England or phone +44 (0)1273 748648 for credit card orders. Cheques payable to Tiger Bay for £18.99 (inc P&P).



Not all local attention in central America was hostile.

Hitting

Things could only get better!

Last year's Beaujolais Run

saw us fight through snow,

truck strikes and tunnel fires to reach our goal. What chance did a bit of rain

have of dampening our spirits this time round? Neil Webster takes the blame.

the Beaujolais



The midnight torchlight parade through the village of Beaujeu is one of the highlights of the event.

Day One

7.45am. Everything is ready. The hotels and ferries are booked, the tickets to the launch party for Beaujolais Nouveau '97 reserved, coach transfers organised and even an 'official' start and presentation certificates prepared.

Mrs Webster says the sun is shining, I kiss the kids and carry my bags out to the waiting Sprint Executive. Just as it starts raining. Ah well, what do you expect in the third week of November?

Head down and off we go, over the hills to Kettering for a rendezvous with our RAC support crew and local

members Tom Stammers, and then on down to Dover to catch the noon ferry after a 185 mile warm up.

No problems so far. Everyone who said they would be there is there, less the two who cried off due to pressure of work and family illness and Eastbourne members Baz and Sue Barron who are crossing by the tunnel. A further 175 miles gets us to the overnight stop in Reims, but with still no sign of Baz and Sue.

Led by Essex restaurateur Simon Walton we strolled up town for a slap up French feed, returned to the hotel bar for a few nightcaps and rose the next morning ready for anything.

Day two

Anything except Baz's phone call. He'd had a rear wheel puncture and been trailed in to Reims late the previous evening. Could I help?

I explained how to find the local Triumph dealer, but his breakdown guys were already ahead of us and his bike was being put back on the road as we spoke - he would catch up with us later that day.

French motorways are brilliant. Okay, you have to pay a toll to use them, but they are relatively empty, well laid out and allow you to keep up excellent average speeds.

The deal for this run was that everyone knew where we were heading for each evening - there was no set lunch stop - and you could settle with those riders going at your chosen pace. We stop every hour for fuel, coffee, sandwich, scrutiny of the top shelf of the magazine rack or whatever, and the trip slips away nice and easy.

All the other riders are on Trophys, except me on the Sprint Exec and a couple of the following RAC guys on well loaded and venerable Tridents, but the system works well.

Most of us stay more or less together and meet up within minutes at each fuel stop while Simon and Ulster member Robert Eakins choose a slower pace and a more leisurely

Trail



The British contingent ready for another day's ride led by Sprint Executive mounted Neil Webster.

lunch break.

It rained virtually non stop, but you don't leave on a trip at this time of year without the right gear and we all arrive 300 miles later at the pre-booked hotel at Belleville, at the gateway to the Beaujolais mountains, ready for the evening's celebrations.

We've had our welcome cocktails in the bar before the bus comes to take us the ten miles or so to the village of Beaujeu for the party itself, and before the off we are joined by Karin Drion and a group from Triumph France and a party from Germany led by German National RAT Manager Martin Driehaus, some of whom had ridden from as far north as Hamburg (look it up on a map!).

The 'Sarmmentelles de Beaujeu' party was even better than last year's. Two to three thousand people in a huge heated marquee; brilliant food and unlimited wine; the marching bands were a hoot; and the exotic dancer that ended last year's cabaret had obviously proved such a hit that she appeared at least four times this year - and all in the best possible taste!

As fireworks filled the air we collected our flame

torches at 11.30

and joined the march to the church square for a *Son et Lumière* show and ample free tastings of 1997 Beaujolais Nougévan as the bells struck midnight.

Then it was back down the hill for more wine, beer and dancing until our bus (thankfully) arrived to take us back to the hotel at around 2.30. (I had one member who wrote to tell me he wasn't coming on the trip because he didn't think it was right to have a bus transfer on a bike rally!!!)

Day three

Amazingly everyone made breakfast the next day (except three Frenchmen who shall remain nameless) and we were ready for the off by around 11am. Good going!

Heads were rubbed and fawcetts made, with German member Dietmar Pinck handing out 'RAT Friendship' stickers to all fellow riders, and it was back on the road. And it was still raining.

The pattern was now set - ride an hour, stop for fuel and coffee, ride on another hour. The sun threatened to shine, but thought better of it, and the day eased by.

The German contingent branched off for home, Simon and

Robert headed off

for a four course lunch in Troyes and all the British group met up in St Quentin for the night.

An excellent dinner in this remarkable town's remarkable town square rounded things off nicely, but of course we then had to stay up in our hotel's bar for a few nightcaps. But again the Triumph rider's natural resilience showed through and we were all ready for the off bright and early (say 11am) the next day.

Day four

The final 100 mile push to Calais saw us sneek on the 12.30 ferry to Dover and land back in the UK ahead of schedule. This sort of trip quickly builds friendships and it was with truly warm handshakes that the team split up.

The shortest hop home prize went to Vernon and Gill Lintern with 27 miles, while Robert Eakins took the biscuit with his 600 mile, two day trek back to Northern Ireland. For me it was a ragged 175 mile wet and windy battle home through nose to tail side by side Friday evening traffic that really made me pine for the open spaces of eastern France.

I finally hit home around 5pm, kissed the kids, had a hot bath and thought about how lucky I was to have been able to again experience such a unique event.

I wouldn't miss the 1998 trip for the world.



Some of the German members had ridden all the way from the Hamburg region in the North of their country.

Letters

Try a track day

THE letter in the last edition of *Triumph* about the track days at Malvey being under-supported was a big disappointment. Having just joined the club I didn't know about these at the time, but I would like to get involved in turning the situation around.

Like many Triumph owners I stopped at 22 and came back to it 11 years later in 1994. During the past three years I have gone from a Trophy to a Daytona, then four weeks ago I spent an afternoon at a race school at Brands Hatch. As a result I bought a T109 two weeks later.

On the way to Brands I wondered what had possessed me to fill my wife's book the size for my birthday present. I even considered carrying my just Brands and into the countryside!

However, having steeled myself and checked in, it turned out to be the absolute highlight, so far, of all my motorcycling experiences. Apart from the tremendous work-

ation, adrenaline rushes and the new friends I made, I learned a huge amount about riding technique and my own limits. Back on the road this has translated into riding with far greater confidence and ability and therefore safety.

I'm sure the membership would respond if they had a vivid idea of what they were missing and they appreciated that by being made to feel comfortable at riding within their limits and not pressured or scared, then they could triple their levels of confidence and enjoyment.

As for those worried about damaging expensive motorcycles I think most would find their own limits exceeded well to save the brains of the bikes.

I hope this brings up a sense of adventure in those currently a bit on the safe side.

Jan Lishman, London.

As every letter for our 2002 track day is included in this magazine, if you need to send a place, we'd be as at ease as possible. NH

Tiger fanatic

MY name is Gene Dexter and I own 11 motorcycles, of which six are Triumph Tigers!

I bought a new Pinnacle red '96 and a new C103 Red '97 from the Cycle Shop at Dayton and also own another '96 Pinnacle, a '96 Captain Blue and a pair of Darko Black '95s.

I ride the Tigers 90 per cent of the time. My other motorcycles are seat bikes, but the Tigers are fun. I know you can only ride them one at a time, but it is great having so many to choose from. They also look neat in the garage.

The Tiger is a best seller in Germany and also on Swinney Drive here in Dayton! Best wishes to the Triumph family in England and to Triumph riders everywhere.

Gene Dexter, Dayton, Ohio.

Sports panniers

I HAVE just purchased a new T95 and am looking forward to receiving *Triumph* and taking part in club activities.

Have any members fitted their Triumph, Nonfango or Givi pannier sets to their T95? If so, which will fit with minimal modifications and which are the best fit and value for the T95?

Philip Thwaites, Kristiansand, Norway. Fax 47 380 20189.

Triumph do not produce a pannier set for the T95, but perhaps members who have fitted sets to their own machines can offer Philip some advice. NH

Flag waver

JUST a short note from a satisfied Triumph rider and a few photos of my 900 Adventurer. I purchased the bike in Spring 1996 and had the custom paint applied by Mike Abraham of Valparaiso, Indiana. I like to call it 'Project Spitfire'.

The photos were taken at the American Veterans of Indiana Motorcycle Benefit Run in July 1997. As you can see, the Adventurer keeps me in front of the Harleys!

David Powell, Lansing, Illinois, USA.



David Powell's Adventurer flies the flag with a Spitfire theme.

Why not send us a photo of your Triumph? If we get enough we will run a regular feature in *Triumph*.

Fun and games

I'M the luck some of you may have met at Bud Perental. I live and work in Germany, but fly the flag for Scotland.

I've enclosed some photos from the event in the hope of winning a t-shirt (it's the post - NW) and would also like to say that I and my girlfriend Ros had a great time. We even won a Triumph watch in the games!

There were many interesting people at the meeting, from England, Italy, France, Holland,



Bad Peterstal reflections



Frank from Berlin made the most of the beer tent facilities and even managed to get hold of a service staff t-shirt!

High flyer

ON my way to the Summer Festival in Bad Peterstal I crossed the Czech and Slovak republics, Hungary, Italy, Austria and Switzerland - a round trip with my Thunderbird 900 of about 7500 kilometres.

In Hungary I met a pilot with a Russian Alouette biplane and we went for a flight around Horogszly - he gave a RAT member's discount for the trip.

I enjoyed the event, especially at the Olympiade fun games in the afternoon. The guided tours, treasure hunt and festival parade were also good and we had very good hospitality from the people of Bad Peterstal who provided the food.

There are a few things I can take away with me trophies for the various competition winners.



Klaus Akkermann took the long way round to Bad Peterstal, taking time out from his 7500 km trip to go for a flight in this ancient Russian Alouette biplane in Hungary.

and a simple free t-shirt for everyone coming, but altogether it was a good meeting and we had much fun.

See you at the next RAT-Festival.

Klaus Akkermann, Borlum, Germany.

Include the classics?

I WAS very surprised that there were no old bikes to be seen at the rally. When today's Triumph bought the name you also bought a great part of Triumph's past. I am the owner of a new Thunderbird and the T-1100 and I'm a great motorcycle fan in the 1960s.

The reason for buying a new one is that you have a new bike with a good engine and the mixture of modern styling but in a classic style. I am often asked how old my bike is and people are usually surprised that Triumph is building bikes again and such beautiful ones.

The festival was a chance to connect the owners of old Triumphs with people who have bought a new one. It could have been a connecting link, but it wasn't, which was a shame.

There were some other details which I am sure will be improved in the second festival but me and my mates had a lot of fun and made new contacts and we will be there next time. See you there!

Susanne and Karl Peter Kraus,
Wollstadt, Germany.



Outlaw Rally

MY idea of the night seems for a good rally is the following:

A nice computer, possibly with some hats or cartoons for a start. You can park your bike next to your tent. A big tent for people to sleep in (who don't have their own tent). Dinner tent with some food. Stoppovers, the Sweets and some new stuff. Best lighting setup. Show for fun with beer tents only, no glasses within walking distance of the tent so I can get checked without having to wait for a bus. Parts and accessories for sale (not only Triumph goods, but leatherwear, helms, buckles, etc.). Prizes, Rally patch, Raceals. No strip show or road racing. No sports events.

More awards

I THOUGHT the location of the rally was amongst the best of the various rallies I have attended over the last 17 years. The local people were very friendly and welcoming, reminding me of the 1986 FIM Rally in Bodapest.

Here are a few ideas for future events:

Belgium, Germany and even Norway and a good time was had by everyone I met. There were a few small problems which are only to be expected at a first international meeting, but I feel sure that all who were there will spread the good news and next year's party will be even bigger and better and I will be there with Ron.

I would just like to add our greetings to Graham, Barry, John, Dave, Michael, Heinz and everyone else we met.

Brian Simpson, Wickede/Ruhr, Germany.

People at rallies just want to talk bikes, see bikes and ride bikes as well as having music, eating fat meat and drinking beer.

How about a 'RAT Outlaw Rally' next year to win everybody it's not a family meeting? It just isn't worth a try.

Markus Norrén, Hålsjöberg, Germany.

Thank you for all your letters regarding the Summer Festival. We have received lots of valuable feedback and ideas for how we could improve things further. Your letters reflect the wide range of views shared by Triumph riders, but all your views have been taken into account in our planning for next year's event, which we are confident will be even bigger and better than our first effort. All

1. A fairly straightforward. It's amazing how many philosophical people become bikers and collect them.

2. A Triumph mechanic with spares on hand to rectify any faults or accidents.

3. The range of Triumph models for demonstration runs. The dealer from Mainz lent me his T500 on the Saturday afternoon and I thought one when I got home, so it does work!

4. Saturday's evening meal could have been at a set time to get everyone together for a prize presentation. This would also give the rally a focus point and a sense of purpose.

In closing, well done on the choice of the venue and well done on your first rally. I would attend the event again at the same venue. The area has a lot to offer and these events help form friendships and help making riding a Triumph a way of life, if it wasn't already.

Roger Pascoe, Cornwall.

Behind closed

SO far on our trip around the Triumph factory we have followed a well trodden path through the main plant. Now it's time to go behind closed doors. Follow me into the secret world of the Triumph Design and Development Department.....

It's in this department that ideas make the journey from concept to working prototype, to the production machines we can all buy. It's a world of 3D images twirling on computer screens and disembodied motorcycle parts being minutely examined by teams of serious looking engineers.

The department occupies a separate building at the far end of the Triumph factory site and access is strictly restricted even for

company employees. Just getting into the building requires insider knowledge of the code needed to activate the electronically operated security lock.

Once inside, the man in charge is Steve Steward, Triumph's Engineering Manager and, after more than 11 years with the company, its longest serving employee.

Steward's department consists of 55 people, four off-site sub-contracted stylists and a raft of sub-contracted test riders, all grouped into nine separate teams which take projects through all stages of engineering development.

"We put a large emphasis on project bases," explains Steward. "The

new model teams are set up on a project basis and each team has a leader. There is a concept team, five new model teams, a testing and development team, current model development team and a homologation and technical publications team."

The birth of every new Triumph begins with an idea. "Ideas come from all different directions and John Bloor is very involved at this stage," says Steward. "We then have discussions with the sales and other departments and decide what to do. As a successful businessman, John seems to have a particular knack of seeing which way to go."

A designer is then assigned from a new model team into the concept team to look at the feasibility of the concept over a three to six month period. Draft specifications will be drawn up to provide a starting point for detailed discussions and outline styling work and computer simulation models produced to identify key questions surrounding the bike's development.

"That process would also identify key testing and production deadlines and set a schedule for the sourcing of parts, so when



Computer Assisted Design programmes allow engineers to carry out much design work before any actual parts are made and to identify any key questions likely to arise during a machine's development.

start to make a prototype machine."

For a completely new bike, the team responsible would work quickly, so that a fully representative prototype can be ready to go after just nine months.

"We invest heavily in pre-production testing and quite often in production tooling to make sure that what we are testing is very close to what the customer will eventually get.

"There is no point working with hand made components only to find that we have to modify them later to suit production circumstances," says Steward.

Testing covers all aspects of performance and durability and includes road sessions in the UK, Arizona, Texas, Colorado, France, Spain and Germany to find extreme road conditions as well as track testing in various countries and laboratory tests at the MIRA facility close to the Hinckley factory.

"Arizona and Colorado provide ideal conditions for dry condition and high altitude testing. We don't have to go far from Hinckley to find cool and wet conditions, but we also use the cold chamber at MIRA which allows us to test down to minus 15 degrees.

"For tyre testing we also have access to the Michelin and Bridgestone test facilities in France and the United States."

Design engineers, development technicians, test riders and suspension



Even when a machine is in production the search for continual improvement goes on.

technicians from outside suppliers work closely together during this programme to reach T1 (trial build) and T2 (final pre-production) stages at the target dates set when the project was first mapped out.

Only when this exhaustive programme has been completed will the machine move from development into production, but even then Steward's team remain involved, with the test team under Nick Wilson and Graeme Gilbert's current model development team continuing to work on the never ending quest to improve the whole Triumph range.

But it is new model development that occupies most of the department, with 37 of the 55 strong team working on tomorrow's bikes today. It's a process that never ends. "We have teams working on bikes that will not be seen until the year 2000. Others are already looking at what comes after that," says Steward. And who knows what surprises they might have up their sleeves?

doors

we put a new model team on the project they can hit it really hard."

New model teams are sub-divided into engine and chassis groups and carry a large amount of individual responsibility. Working on CAD (Computer Assisted Design) equipment they would devote an average of two years to a new machine, with a flurry of activity in the first stage.

"CAD systems allow us to simulate testing conditions before any parts actually exist. For example we can carry out frame analysis tests to optimise the frame weight distribution and run computerised engine test simulations that allow us to go through a vast range of options before we even make a part. If we need a simple part we can then download the information from the computer and have resin samples produced.

"Using this technology we know that main features such as chassis geometry and engine performance parameters are correct before we even



Cleaning

up
up
up
up

As Winter hits many of us, keeping our bikes in good condition becomes a vital routine. But there's a right way and a wrong way to go about the job. Following these simple guidelines can help make sure your bike is still your pride and joy next Spring.

Removing the dirt -

IN many of the world's leading markets, December heralds the onset of the worst riding weather of the calendar. Special care is needed and a more reserved riding style is required if trouble free motorcycling is the goal.

Special care of your bike is also advisable both for your own safety and for the good of the bike. A tidy machine will reveal any damage or defects sooner than one encased in grime, while reduced servicing time and ultimately a higher resale value are both tangible benefits of taking a little more care at this time of year.

We at Triumph take great care in selecting materials that will resist tarnishing and corrosion, but appropriate cleaning at regular intervals will greatly extend the service life of these components.

Cleaning a motorcycle falls into three tasks - Removing dirt (washing); Drying the motorcycle; Prevention (polishing, replacing lost lubricant, minor repairs).

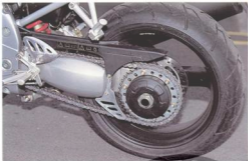
Before washing the bike with warm water it is first necessary to protect the rear opening of the silencers, the handlebar switch, cubes and control levers by placing a plastic bag secured with an elastic band over the areas concerned. In addition, use adhesive tape to cover the ignition switch and air

cleaner intakes (situated behind the sidepanels and beneath the seat).

Once adequately protected the bike is now ready to be washed. A hand sponge and warm water has the advantage of drawing the cleaner's attention to each area of the bike. The addition of an auto

Dried on road dirt immediately behind the front wheel will be more easily dislodged using a nylon bristled brush.





Use of pressure washers or steam cleaners is likely to prematurely age the chain and reduce its life!

degreaser or shampoo to the water will help remove stubborn deposits. Make sure the sponge itself is clean or dirt deposits may scratch paintwork.

The use of a soft bristled nylon brush on engine components will help dislodge baked on dirt.

Do not use household detergent or liquids. A high proportion of these contain salt which will clearly accelerate corrosion if left on the machine. The basic rule is - 'If it lives under the kitchen sink, leave it there!'

Triumph have never authorised the use of high pressure jet washers or steam cleaners which tend to be too aggressive and will easily flatten radiator fins and dry out wheel bearings.

Water or steam directed at force will also be forced into electrical connections and behind the instruments, resulting in possible poor running and condensation under the glass of the instruments.

Do not scrub seats as it could remove plasticisers in the fabric and cause the seat to lose its elasticity.

Once the bike has been washed, use clean water to rinse away any shampoo deposits.

Drying the motorcycle -

Remove the protective adhesive tapes and plastic bags. Use a clean cloth and starting at the top of the bike and working down, mop up any water. Use a separate cloth to finally dry the bike.

Prevention and polishing -

But the job isn't finished yet! Any painted bodywork can now be polished and any stone damage or chips touched in with a Triumph Touch-In Pen (available in body, engine, wheel and frame colours).

The addition of a light lubricant to those outstanding areas of the bike (with the obvious exception of the brake discs) will help guard against the effects of corrosion. Such lubricant can either be applied by hand using a dirt free cloth, or by aerosol.

All Triumph exhaust downpipes are manufactured from stainless steel which is either then chrome plated (bright silver finish on T-bird, Adventurer and early Tridents

and Trophys) or black chromed (as per Tiger and later model Tridents) or electroplated as per T500 and current build Trophys. Silencers are similarly plated.

Chromed surfaces are by their very nature porous and regular appropriate cleaning and polishing is desired. Polish will seal the pores in the chrome. Only use Motorex 645 on black chrome. Other polishes may become discoloured once the engine is run, leaving the exhaust spotty in appearance.

Other chromed or raw polished items such as T-bird and Adventurer engine covers will also benefit from regular polishing and prompt cleaning, particularly after inclement weather.

A small application of graphite grease may be applied to the handlebar control levers at the pivot point as well as on the plunger of the small electrical switch situated under the clutch lever.

A similar smear of grease on the sidestand pivot point and plunger of the sidestand switch will also prevent stiff usage.

Finally, the owner is now recommended to refer to the 'Safe Operation - Daily Safety Checks' in the Owners Handbook in order to check and make any adjustments necessary to oil and fluid levels etc.

We will look more closely at these daily checks in the next edition.



Control lever and switchgear must be protected from excess water during washing by covering with plastic bag!

Mountain magic

If the prospect of ten days' action packed riding in the stunning Pyrenees stirs your blood, why not join us on our exclusive RAT 'Mountain Magic' holiday in September?

Run by sports bike holiday specialists Big Rock, the holiday will be based in the tiny tax haven of Andorra and covers both the Spanish and French sections of the spectacular mountain range.

Running from September 15-26, it could also provide the option of making the two hour trip to Barcelona to watch the Catalunya bike grand prix passionately scheduled to take place that weekend.

Big Rock will look after everything including hotels, breakfasts and evening meals, route planning and insurance and they will have two guides on site to make sure things run smoothly.

Their package also includes return ferry crossings from Portsmouth to Le Havre with a single berth in a twin berth cabin and bed, breakfast and evening meals at a hotel stop on the way down through France and back again.

The holiday is based at a single hotel in Andorra, allowing luggage-free riding during the days. The hotel itself has a gym, pool, bar and restaurant offering buffet meals so you can eat as much as you like!

The fully inclusive cost will be £750 per rider, £530 per passenger. A ten per cent discount will be given to bookings received before March 31.

Members from outside the UK are also welcome to come along. A reduced price will be available for

members who do not need the ferry crossing and plan to join the group in France.

The trip has been reserved exclusively for RAT members, but there are a maximum of 20 places available, so if you want to take part please send a deposit of £75 per person (made payable to 'Rickerby Waterson Trustees - Big Rock Ltd') to club HQ as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or need any further information, please contact club HQ on +44 (0)1455 891515.



Diary dates:

▼ 1998

January 12

Members only factory tour.

February 16

Members only factory tour.

February 21-22

Weekender meeting, Bosworth Hall, England.

March 6

Daytona Bike Week RAT Party, USA.

March 20-22

USA Southern Rally, Boerne, Texas.

April 10

Triumph Track Day, Mallory Park,

Lilcestershire, England.

April 24-26

USA South-East Rally, Suches, Georgia.

April 26

Spring Rally '98, Stanford Hall, England.

May 1-3

Tulip Rally, Warmond, Holland.

May 8-10

USA Mid-West Rally, Galena, Illinois.

May 9-10

STS Skills Training Weekend,

Cumbridge, England.

June 7

TFTriumph Day, Port Soderick, Isle of Man.

June 12-14

Scandinavian Rally, Lake Siljan, Sweden.

June 26-28

USA North Western Rally,

Clarkston, Washington.

July 10-12

Canadian Rally, Canadian Sportbike

Weekend, Ontario.

July 10-12

Mid-Ohio Rally at Mid-Ohio Vintage

Bike Days, USA.

July 17-19

Summer Festival and Factory Open Day,

Hinckley, England.

September

Greek Triumph Rally, Galaxidi.

September 15-26

Big Rock Pyrenees holiday, France and Spain.

September 15-20

USA National Rally,

Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Some of the above dates are provisional and will be confirmed in future editions of Torque. If you have any questions about specific events please contact club HQ on +44 (0)1455 891515 or your own National Manager.

We Beat the WORLD

The story of how Charlie Rous and Fred Cooper built two superfast Triumph sprinters that proved faster than much more exotic machinery in the Sixties.

Charlie himself writes how he topped the speed record charts at Evington using borrowed pistons from a standard road-going Triumph!

Fred Cooper's Triumph business specialised in Triumph twins and although we both sprinted our respective mounts, Hermes and Quasimodo, his real expertise was very much as a builder of fast bikes, while my own input was much more on the ideas and riding side.

This business also provided a constant supply of used and wrecked machines which could be raided for parts. For example, my 650 engine came from a crashed 1959 TR6 I bought for £25 in 1961. Even the price of brand new parts was ridiculous. An exchange crankshaft assembly, complete with conrods, was about £10. E3134 racing camshafts were thirty shillings (£1.50).

The Shortrock supercharger,



Our story is adapted from a 1983 issue of 'Classic Rider' magazine.

complete with SU carburettor, that fitted to my 650, was bought secondhand for a tenner!

The most expensive requirement essential for success, was nitro methane. Pure nitro, which could be added to the fuel in various quantities, cost a colossal £8 a gallon! That's a lot less than a gallon of beer these days, but it was a great deal of money in 1965. We chose full 'dustbin' fairings in the belief that windcheating at the fast end justified the extra weight at the startline.

Without question, the success of the CRS machines stemmed from their superchargers and nitro fuel. The power output was colossal and I have often wondered what a test bench would have revealed, for as

development progressed, we never did find the optimum top gear. Both machines invariably ran undegreed even over the kilometre.

We also discovered that blown engines could be a result of us knowing something about atmospheric induction but very little about forced induction and nitro fuel.

Most of the supercharging information we had was based on pre-war activity and we consequently discovered that many theories about 'blowing' were indeed hot air!

We found that mild valve timing did nothing to boost power, long induction pipes were unnecessary, and high compression pistons reduced both power and reliability.

In fact, what did the trick was wild, high-lift, long-overlap cams, a well advanced spark, and low compression pistons.

We used a nitro methane mixture for the first time in 1965, although I knew what it could do from burning it in the Moto Vincent from 1956. Frankly, Fred and I did not use it earlier because we could not afford to buy it.

However, even at 1200 per gallon, the unmistakable boot polish whiff of nitro benzene (not quite so potent) and the more acrid sniff of nitro methane began to fill

the air in the paddock and rivals, notably Arthur Breese (500 Jap), began to go rather more quickly. We had to find the necessary cash to stay in the game.

A mild mixture went into Fred's 500 at Duxford in July 1965. My notes recall that he clocked 11.74 on his first run using straight methanol. Breese



clocked 11.82s. With just five per cent of nitro added, Fred's second run returned 11.75 equalling his best-ever time on methanol. Arthur replied with a worrying 11.71s.

We then upped the nitro mix to ten per cent and Fred's third run was 11.67. But this time Arthur's response was a stunning 11.56—the best quarter mile by a 500 so far!

More nitro went into Fred's tank, this time 20 per cent. His fourth and final run of the day was a new record, and he was the fastest 500 over the standing quarter mile at 11.43 seconds.

Development of the CRS machines over three years was extremely successful and from being best in our class we progressed to taking Fastest Time of the Day and Outright Course

records. An interesting but unsuccessful experiment during 1964/65

1964/65 was with a full size 750 (745cc) engine. As ever, it was my idea but

Fred did the work. Essentially, the 650 Triumph crankshaft (82mm stroke) was replaced by a 750cc, 89mm stroke crank from a Norton Atlas.

Always a great help to me, Jack Hitchcock of Folkestone gave me an unmachined Triumph cylinder block which Fred overbored to take 73mm Atlas pistons. It was no easy task, and

bits had to be ground away to provide internal clearance.

Fred did it though and the bike worked. Trouble was, the power was not exceptional, no better than the original 650 which had been shelved. This was fortunate as it turned out, for when I took the 750 to the Isle of Man for the Ramsey Sprint in 1965, a con rod snapped and the engine was totally wrecked!

So the 650 Triumph was recalled for the National Sprint Association World Records meeting at Elvington, Yorkshire, in October 1965. We arrived fresh from a 20.4 second winning run at Duxford but soon discovered just how different our preparation had to be.

Instead of setting up the bikes for a single quarter-mile sprint, we faced two runs of a kilometre each in both directions, with the average time counting. Both CRS machines ran into major difficulties.

The Elvington meeting took place over two days but I was eliminated on the 650 at the outset with a holed piston and a broken compressor vane in the supercharger. My major adversary was Martin Roberts who took full advantage with a 20.111 second average on the Saturday. Not only was this a new 750cc class record, but I very much doubted that I could equal it, let alone beat it.

Meanwhile, Fred was locked in his usual combat with Arthur Breese. Fred came out on top but could manage no more than 21.59s/103.60mph before magneto shaft failure silenced his engine.

Fred's bad luck provided an opportunity for me. Fred could have continued on Hermes by robbing my 650 of its magneto, but he knew how much I wanted to set a World Record and insisted on fitting his blower to Quasimodo.

But more astonishingly, with no replacement 650 pistons available, sidecar sprinter Bill Bragg came up

My major adversary was Martin Roberts who took full advantage with a 20.111 second average

with a pair of well-used standard flat-top pistons from a 1949 Thunderbird. With these fitted in my engine, we estimated the compression ratio to be reduced from 9.5:1 to less than 6:1.

All this work of course was taking a great deal of time - and I was not at all confident of success at the end of it. It crossed my mind that we should stop at this point and concentrate on the 500, but it was too late, Hermes was in too many different bits by now to be rebuilt in time.

My lack of confidence turned out to be misplaced. Once reassembled the

650 looked like a winner and sounded it. It was ultra-responsive to the throttle and both felt and sounded superbly fit.

It was also super smooth.

It was run-in over the flying quarter mile at 4000rpm which gave me an unexpected national record of 141mph! If I'd known I was being officially timed I'd have gone faster!

The 650 engine had never run as well. It was now extremely confident of a record.

Indeed, when it came to the standing starts for the world kilometre record, Quasimoto had never answered

like it did that day. On both runs, it shot from the line like an arrow, easily topping 8000 revs as I changed up into second and then third. The needle was still climbing at 7800rpm in top as I crossed the finishing line.

We estimated terminal speed to be over 170 mph. The more important figure was the time, 20.05/111.66mph - the record was mine.

With that, I took out the engine, which I kept, and sold the rest of the machine for £100. I had decided that my sprinting days were over.

Fred Cooper raced on for another couple of seasons, but he turned his attention to a twin-engined, 1000 or 1300cc machine on which he gained world records, peaking with 194.67mph.

But the unbeatable CRS team of Hermes and Quasimoto, Cooper and Rous finished on a high spot.

It shot from the line like an arrow, easily topping 8000 revs

Charlie Fous, sprinter: part two

A detailed account of the events leading up to the 1962 British 500cc Sprint Championship, which was won by Fred Cooper on his 500cc 'Hermes'.

The 1962 season was a very busy one for me. I had just finished my first year at university and was working for the British Motor Corporation. I was also a member of the British Motor Corporation's racing team. I had just finished my first year at university and was working for the British Motor Corporation. I was also a member of the British Motor Corporation's racing team.

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Charlie Fous on his 500cc 'Hermes' during the 1962 British 500cc Sprint Championship.

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Fred Cooper on the 500cc Tikarup nicknamed 'Hermes'.

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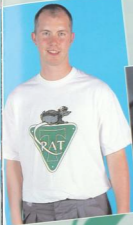
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