



**MOJACAR MOTORCYCLE TOURING CLUB**

# bulletin

A Club for Touring Motorcyclists founded by the late Ken Craven.  
[www.mojacarmtc.org.uk](http://www.mojacarmtc.org.uk)

April 2010  
Issue 183

## **SECRETARIES BIT**

A great start to the club calendar took place with our weekend visit to Abergavenny last month. Of course, we all arrived in rain and Saturday continued the theme for most of the morning, but the 27 members present thoroughly enjoyed the social gathering and the ride out into Wales on Saturday was a joy. A report on the 'goings on' is printed elsewhere in the bulletin.

As I write this we have 40 members attending the May re-union. This annual weekend get-together is still as popular as ever. If you want to join the event please contact me ASAP with your menu choice. You can turn up on the day but you will have to take pot luck on the food available at the pub if you haven't pre-ordered. As usual there will be a ride-out on Sunday provided by our chairman Dave Boon.

We have an offer for a tour next year; and it is different! Dave Gilligans tour around western Europe using hostels as overnight bases. Is there any other member out there with an idea for a tour? We need to decide at the re-union if possible so, if you have an idea let me know now or, if you are unsure propose it at the re-union.

By the time you receive this bulletin the Kirkby Lonsdale week end will be about to take place or will have taken place; It depends if I can get this in the post in time. It looks like fair weather is forecast so, keep your fingers crossed.

**All correspondence on subjects other than events to:**

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## **SPRING AT ABERGAVENNY**

The weekend trip to Abergavenny was looming large and I was a little apprehensive. The doubts that creep in over a long winter lay-off from motorcycling – was I fit enough; would I have to hit the sack by 10 o'clock to recover?

I did the preparation for the trip a bit more methodically than normal, packing the day before leaving. Travelling light (both panniers were half empty – most unusual for me). A new crash helmet, my old one from last year having fallen apart on an afternoon ride out to check the 100RT was ok. New boots – perhaps these wouldn't leak when it rained and also keep my feet warm without resorting to arctic explorer thick socks.

With the promise of rain by Friday afternoon we set off late morning so as not to arrive at the Hostel before the 4 pm opening time, the ride was good, quiet even; a coffee at Burford and picnic lunch near Monmouth broke me in gently to being back on 2 wheels. The rain started as we hit the Welsh border and we arrived at 3.50, perfect timing - of course Vince had already arrived and been let in at 2pm all nice and dry, also new member Graham Davies turned up as we rolled in getting the lie of the land before committing himself to going on the ride out the next day (he lives at Newport a short hop and skip away).

My eye caught site of what I knew must be Pat Barfoot's Vespa 250 in a lovely Maroon, I suffered serious scooter envy all weekend. It wasn't long before a stream of people were arriving – Paul Weston - our leader for the weekend, Mike Lacey, Dave and Barbara, Maureen, Tony and Chas. We all made for the side room where tea and cake were served and soon were joined by Dave Gilligan, Paul Gretton, Colin, Mark, Ross, Terry and stragglers Roy and Dean with Mike Thompson a little later. Also ready for a reviving cuppa were Laurie with Mike, John Sellwood, Brian and Jackie.

A 6pm dinner saw everyone assembled for another catering triumph for the “ladies wot cook” in the form of soup followed by Steak pie and some naughty puddings. Kit and John Evans joined us for the meal with what was a nice surprise; wine for the tables which helped raise the noise level. Then it was down to the town for a nightcap, not such an early night after all.

The ride out of 86 miles devised by Dave and Barbara was just right, for the majority were tempted out in the rain with the promise of coffee after only 20 miles in a nice warm garden centre. Brian and Jackie were delayed in setting off on the ride as the Guzzi with Watsonian sidecar all in a lovely red livery had sprung an electrical fault emitting a “bleeping” sound continuously. We had been joined by Graham Davies and Lawrence Bransby for the ride and after the coffee the rain eased to a stop, the route on small B roads in the rain kept navigating to a minimum, so I could enjoy the lovely views of Skenfrith Castle, the sight of spring lambs, buzzards and woods carpeted with snowdrops. A long winter and late spring has its advantages. The farm shop chosen for lunch was a tempting emporium, a good job we do not live nearer as I would be a regular visitor. As it was, being on the bike meant many tempting purchases had to stay in the shop. The homeward leg via Crickhowel; now on dry roads, took us past Black Mountain, still having snow on the north facing slopes tucked into its hollows on roads with fast sweeping bends and splendid views of Llangorse Lake.

We had tea at Crickhowel with some of the group and arrived back at base just as it re-opened at 4pm. Time for a shower and read of the papers before dinner at 6pm. We were joined by Lydia Gretton who had come down by train.

An impromptu book signing took place after dinner; Dave Bexley was in the chair with his PA Barbara collecting the money for the book of motorcycling anecdotes. Dave had written and personally had the book published. The noise level was even louder than the night before and we had to be prized out of the dining room into the smaller coffee room so the ladies could clear up. Eventually we made our way into town to meet up in the Hen and Chicken for the usual nightcap. As the rugby was still on “France versus England”, it made for an entertaining evening.

A super breakfast Sunday morning got us off to a good start for the journey home in bright sunshine. Not so lucky for Roy who had a puncture and, as all the bikes were liberally covered in muck and mire from Saturday, it made for a messy job to be repaired by Essex Boys captain at large Colin.

I think Tony and I were almost the last to leave what had been a splendid weekend for which we thank Paul most heartily – and the new boots? – Perfect.

**Christine Maidens.**

proposal of mine to tour through parts of Belgium, Switzerland and France using International Youth Hostels for accommodation. I have no experience of using hostels on the Continent; however images and details on the websites are encouraging. The average price per day for bed and breakfast in the nine hostels, based on a shared room basis is from 18 Euros. Evening meals are offered at all of hostels.

The hostels considered would be at Bouillon, Saverne, Belfort, Grindelwald, Clusaz, Guillestre, Tarascon, Le Puy en Velay and Vezelay.

If you go to: [www.hihostels.com](http://www.hihostels.com) you can see slideshows for most of the hostels.

To make group bookings we would need a minimum of ten participants. If there is enough interest I will flesh out the above skeleton of a proposal.

Dave Gilligan

EVENTS FOR 2010 in Date order with details where available.

**Kirkby Lonsdale – camping/B&B weekend. Date: 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April.** Organiser Alan Simister;

I will be out of action for 3 or 4 weeks. The route is done and very scenic it is - with wonderful views over the national park.

There is still time to join us at Kirkby. Phone the tourist information in Kirkby 015242 71437 for B&B accommodation or take a serious look at the Woodclose Caravan Park on the web.

Would campers please book their own pitch at Woodclose; phone number 015242 71597.

Looking forward to seeing you all in April.

**May Re-union weekend Lyme Regis – B&B/camping weekend. Date: 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> May.**

Organiser Tony Maidens.

Many members turn this event into a long weekend with the majority booking B&B. If you require help in finding B&B either ring or email me, I have many contact telephone numbers. Please indicate on the form if you are one of the hardy souls camping. I inform Adrian at Hook Farm so that he can set a plot aside for you, this is a busy time for him and he needs to know his numbers as the site is usually full, especially if the weather is reasonable.

Programme: Some members will arrive Friday and probably meet other members wandering around Lyme looking for a suitable dinner venue - there are plenty. Saturday is a do as you please day – enjoy Lyme and surrounding area or take a ride out into the lovely Dorset countryside. Saturday evening we assemble at the Pilot Boat Inn for dinner at 7.30pm.

Sunday morning we assemble at the usual lay-by on the A3052. After much chat and bike viewing we depart at 10pm on a splendid ride organized by Dave Boon around parts of south west England. Sunday evening we again assemble at the Pilot Boat Inn for 7.30pm dinner. Monday – the event finishes and people depart for home or maybe; stay on a little longer.

Note: There are 2 static 4 berth caravans available for hire at Hook Farm. They have all mod cons, i.e. shower, gas fire, cooking facilities, television, fridge,

**PROVISIONAL OFFERS FOR TOURS AND EVENTS IN 2011.**

*Any ideas or offers you have will be inserted in this box.  
Hon Sec*

Following the Secretary's request for ideas for events in 2011, I would be glad to hear from club members about a

micro wave oven etc. Cost per caravan - 3 nights for 2 people £110. - 3 or 4 people; £135. If you are interested contact Adrian at Hook Farm on 01297 442801.

**Tour to Italy. Dates 5<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> June.** Organisers Tony & Christine Maidens. See details elsewhere in bulletin.

**Bungay Suffolk – Camping/B&B weekend. Date: 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July.** Organisers Colin Purches & Colin Pegram.

We will be using the Outney meadow Caravan Park which is a 5 minute walk from the centre of Bungay. There is ample accommodation in the town at varying prices, of which we will give details in a future issue. The river Waveney runs through the campsite and, it is possible to hire Canadian Canoes by the day or half day. The run will be a ride along the Suffolk Coast stopping at the sunken village of Dunwich for coffee. Lunch will be by the river Deben on the south of the county. The ride after lunch will be through the beautiful countryside of inland Suffolk. Distance, approx 130 miles. If you do require B&B contact Colin Purches or Colin Pegram for phone numbers of accommodation

**Malvern Worcester – B&B/ camping weekend. Date: 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> August.** Organiser Martin Heuter.

There are now 21 members registered, thanks for everyone who put themselves at the mercy of my planning and the hotel in Bromyard. I am sure that there is space for some late bookings, so if anyone wants to join us, please let me know.

I will shortly be planning the route... Malvern Hills, rural Worcestershire going north (I drove a beautiful road from Stourport back to Worcester the other day and thought – this is one for the weekend..., obviously the Morgan visitor centre and last but not least... good weather. So, if you're still dithering...don't!! give me a ring and book yourself on the weekend.

**Tour of Britain – Using Hostels. Dates: 3<sup>rd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> September.** Organiser David Gilligan. See details in bulletin.

**Autumn re-union and AGM weekend – B&B/camping. Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> October.** Organiser Tony Maidens. Detail to follow.

**Winter Closer weekend Coalport – Using Hostel. Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October.** Organiser Alan Simister; The hostel is booked, no need for money yet. Lots to do and see, good pubs within walking distance, make that staggering for Mr Weston and an excellent hostel. There are only 4 DOUBLES AVAILABLE for couples, so its first come first served. If you intend to join us, let me know in plenty of time, it also insures that you have a bed. A run will be organised but I will be putting that out to tender nor being a native of the area.

## SUMMER TOUR TO ITALY

The tour has 23 members and reservations are now closed.

The tour will take us through four countries to finish on the Mediterranean coast of Italy i.e. France, Germany, Austria and Italy. After crossing France and the Rhine our route takes us on a ride through rural southern Germany, we then continue our tour into Vorarlberg/Arlberg in Austria. After crossing the Finstermunzpass we enter Italy. Our route then continues over the Stelvio pass to eventually arrive at the lovely Lago D'Iseo for a 3 night 2 day stay. We then ride on to and finish near the Mediterranean at La Spezia in Liguria for a 2 night 1 day stay.

Our mileage from the first night in France to our final destination is approximately 970 miles.

Our planned itinerary is as follows:

Saturday 5 June; Group meets at a hotel in Beauvais Normandy France.

Sunday 6 June; Ride to the southern Ardenne to a hotel in Rethel.

Monday 7 June; Ride on for a one night stay to a hotel in the village of Urmatt in Alsace Loraine.

Tuesday 8 June; Crossing the Rhine we ride to Southern Germany for a one night stop at the village of Ostrach.

Wednesday 9 June; Ride into Austria to base the group in St Anton for one night.

Thursday 10 June; Ride into Italy to Lago d' Iseo for a three night stay. This lake is one of the smaller Italian lakes. It is surrounded by mountains and has a mini mountain of its own in the form of the island of Monte Isola, a boat sails regularly from a pier not far from our hotel. On the east bank of the lake a road leads to the village of Cislano, here an extraordinary spire-like rock formation rises from the ground, each spire is topped by a boulder, these are considered to be one of the most strangest wonders in Lombardy known as "Fairies of the Forest". Our hotel is situated adjacent to the lake and is about a quarter of a mile from the nearest village centre. There is also a railway station about the same distance from the hotel.

Sunday 13. We leave Lago D'Iseo to ride to the old town of La Spezia on the Mediterranean coast for a 2 night stay.

La Spezia sits on the edge of the Mediterranean, it is an old port. The water front is surrounded by pastel coloured houses with many café's and restaurants. It is overlooked by a medieval castle.

Tuesday 15 June group breaks up and folk find their own way home.

Costs - difficult one this - prices have increased in euro land. Assume at the moment that 1£ = 1€. If the pound increases in value during the booking process then costs will be cheaper. Work on approx £53 per person per night Dinner bed & breakfast

**Tony & Christine Maidens.**

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AUTUMN TOUR 2010 September 3<sup>rd</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>  
(UPDATE)

Some fifteen Club members will be participating in this nine day tour of Britain. The accommodation in both the English and Scottish hostels has been booked.

The eight suggested daily routes which will pass through twelve of our National Parks and total nearly 2000 miles

have been completed. A paper copy of these will be posted to riders towards the end of May together with hostel information and a request for the outstanding balance. I will be using my Garmin GPS routes, if anyone wants a copy of these please let me know.

Depending upon accommodation being available additional members to the group will be welcome.

**Dave Gilligan**

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**BOOK REVIEW –**

**“A Biking Good Life” by Dave Bexley**

I finished reading Dave’s book about 5 days after having been given it on the 4 Peaks weekend. I went back to it again and again each evening with a fresh sense of anticipation and, eventually, it was with a sense of sadness when I reached the last page; it had opened up a world of sidecar racing and the motorcycle business that was foreign and fascinating to me, having spent all my life teaching. As I read it, I kept on telling myself that I shouldn’t be feeling jealous – I’ve had a great motorcycling life too – but I did! Also, Dave and I being of a similar vintage, I enjoyed the many references to life in the “good ol’ days”, especially the attitude of the police and authorities to the “letter of the law” (or not) and, in a sad and disturbing era of temporary relationships, I appreciated the early mentions of Barbara as girlfriend, sharing Dave’s motorcycle life, then Barbara as wife and, in the present, Dave and Barbara, still sharing a happy retirement with motorcycles. (I’d like to say that I think that was how God planned it all

along but with Dave’s emphatic references to his atheism, it might not be wise!)

Dave insists from the start that this book is not an autobiography – and he’s right, it’s not. Instead, it’s deliberately written with motorbikes at the heart of the narrative with Dave very much along for the ride (as it were); unselfconscious and understated, it assumes that the reader is like-minded and can empathise with each anecdote, laugh along at the trials and mishaps we have all experienced when trying to maintain a relationship with that fickle partner and taskmaster (no, not Barbara) the motorcycle, especially the early British makes which were high maintenance, to say the least. As Dave said, he wanted the reader to feel like he (or she) is part of a group of close biking friends, pints in hand, sharing well-loved anecdotes of the good old days after a great day’s riding, each story stirring memories and calling forth another often-told tale and yet another – classic bikes, great bikes, cantankerous bikes, old friends fondly remembered, races lost and won, crashes and near misses, eccentric fellow enthusiasts, adventurous travel stories, brushes with the law, squeezing the extra ounce of power out of an engine until it blows up...

A great read! Well done, Dave, on making the effort to get it down on paper so we can share your fascinating life with bikes (and Barbara)! OK, now who’s next in this book writing thing? I’d love to read about the life and travels of our esteemed chairman and his wife, wouldn’t you? How about it, Dave?

**Lawrence Bransby**



**SUMMER  
DAYS ON  
TOUR!**

A picnic lunch stop at the rural village of Vesigneul on the Marne, France.