



MOJACAR MOTORCYCLE TOURING CLUB

bulletin

A Club for Touring Motorcyclists founded by the late Ken Craven.
www.mojacarmtc.org.uk

August 2010
Issue 186

SECRETARIES BIT

Unfortunately the Bungay weekend co-incident with the funeral of our member Nick Bishop. I was informed that eight club members were able to attend and that the church was "standing room only", such was the popularity of the man. Nick had a great send off and the many members in attendance at Bungay raised their glasses during dinner in memory of Nick.

Talking of the Bungay weekend the weather was continental (to hot?) and, had a fantastic club turnout. A report by Dave Gilligan on some of the goings on is printed elsewhere in the bulletin. With the absence of a written report on the Italian tour, Christine has allowed me to publish her daily diary she always writes during our travels. I hope you find it interesting.

Dave Bexley writes an interesting thesis on the difficulty in selecting a motorcycle.

All correspondence on subjects other than events to:

A.W. Maidens Hon Secretary,
8 The Cedars, Benson, Wallingford, Oxford. OX10 6LL
Tel No: 01491 838489
E mail ac_maidens68@hotmail.com

DAILY JOTTING ON A TOUR TO AND FROM ITALY

By Christine Maidens

Thurs; 3/6/10. 118 miles to Newhaven, sunny and hot with not much traffic about, down to the Premier Inn at Newhaven.

Fri; 4/6/10. Up early-ish for 9.30am ferry. As usual got chatting to some other motorcyclists also using this crossing. These included a "man of a certain age" on an old CB200 Honda twin; even before going through passport control he had absentmindedly pulled his reservation slip out of his back pocket chucking his passport on the road as he did so, he had no maps and had to get to Neufchatel to meet up with a group. He hoped a few would be on the same ferry. I keep wondering if he ever made it. Also a couple who had lived 10 years in France but had come over to Norwich to collect, bought/unseen (by them) a son had done the deal, a red Honda Blackbird to replace a bike he had

written off earlier in the year, he had just about recovered from the broken ribs etc he had incurred. Motorbikes in France are apparently a lot more expensive than here even 2nd hand.

The ferry was on time and Dieppe a warm and sunny 28C; 69 miles to Beauvais.

We arrived at Hostellerie St Vincent at 4.45pm.

Sat; 5/6/10. A very hot and sunny day. Our first meal on Friday everything was "off" we ended up with Avocado, followed by Pork on the bone in a Pepper/Tomato sauce (very tasty), Tony had the obligatory Crème Caramel, I had cheese. We wondered what the group would get Sat evening. We spent the day lazing around after experiencing the French equivalent of Lidl (pile them high and sell them cheap) for water and fruit. Too far to walk into town & too hot, besides, Moto GP was on minus Rossi who was injured in practice.

The group started arriving from 4 o'clock, last man in Vince at 6.30pm-ish.

Sun; 6/6/10. 136 miles to Rethel.

Woke to a real storm, proper thunder & lightening and torrential rain. We left, 1st to brave the elements with Geoff & Pat and, after 20 miles we ran out of it, stopped at Montdidier for coffee and spent an hour as the heavens opened. Waited until it passed, then set off again. Lunch at Crecy in a Turkish café where Mo & Toe and Chas were having a sandwich, lucky we decided to join them as the café at Montcornet where we were heading was closed. Arrived Hotel Moderne at Rethel about 2.45pm but no room's ready, cock-up - Madame had a wedding party in who didn't vacate their rooms until mid-day. Finally got our room at 4.45pm, shades of Chef Butonne (for those who remember that ramshackle joint). Good dinner, Salad & Lardens plus Leg of Duck and Chocolate Tarte. Woke to clear sky and sunshine, very busy at the gare (directly opposite the hotel). Complication with payment of food for single man, but Madame conceded defeat.

Mon; 7/6/10. 210 miles to Urmatt.

Lovely ride in sunny weather through Ardennes and Alsace Lorraine, super roads, lunch by the river at Pont

Mausson, dearth of petrol stations and coffee stops, finally tea in Hotel 30 miles from Urmatt. Indulged in a good Tarte Rhubarb covered in Meringue, discovered by the Fishwick party enjoying our "tea". Arrived Hotel 5-ish, very nice Hotel, dinner, Pork Terraine, Duck Leg with Rice, Ice Cream.

Tue; 8/6/10. 160 miles to Ostrach.

High cloud and warm got sunnier as the day went on. Keith & Brenda joined us today, difficult to find coffee stops, but in small German town went in a Backerie with stand at tables, very clean and noticeably cheaper than France. It was run by two very lovely helpful ladies of a certain age. Petrol was about the same as France 1.41€/litre. Lovely route through Donantal Gorge, sight of splendid monastery, Wicker Moto, Stork, Heron & Black Kites. Several "Umleitungen" diversions to the uninitiated, one quite a distance out of our way. Arrived 3-ish at Gasthoff Schwanen, very pleased to see us all. A seductive young waitress served us Salad Starter, Pork & Noodles, Ice Cream plus Strawberries. Had a stroll after dinner, Geoff went to bed early with his cold.

Wed; 9/6/10. 123 miles to St Anton.

Lovely morning, very soon mountains in distance, snow capped. Stopped after 5 miles for shopping (lunch), after 10 miles fuel and coffee. After 30 miles for second drink stop at a Gashoff run by big lady in red velvet dress, very humid & warm, slow going through towns & speed restrictions. Very pretty ride, stopped by river after a tunnel for picnic, stayed an hour as Brenda dabbled her toes in river, Geoff dozed in the sun. Got to Nassereinerhoff Hotel in St Anton about 4-ish. Dinner: Soup with Strips of Pancake + Salad Bar, Chicken with Olives Pasta & Potatoes, Ice Cream & Strawberries.

Thurs; 10/6/10. 190 miles to Villa Bredina, Lago D'Iseo. High cloud as we set off, good route on small road through villages to Landeck, very busy through towns on to Stelvio Pass. Lots of snow about (not on road), narrow - many hair pin bends - tight - hard work for Tony. Many other Moto's on the pass making riding the tight bends difficult. Stopped at top, cold & busy. Down other side, eventually thru valley, picnic in area by road, hot & humid. Lots of tunnels. We didn't do second pass although many did, very narrow with snow piled high at the sides they said. Did our own mini pass to Aprica to cut a corner & on to Lago D'Iseo, route finding not easy. Arturo put on a real spread for dinner - wine, water all in. it was 30c + from Bormio, very sunny, Villa Bredina just as I remember it.

Fri/Sat; Lago D'Iseo.

Very warm both days, 30c+ by pm. Each morning we walked to the village & site of the lake ferry mooring with café opposite. Eventually ambled back by the lake to hotel & lunch. We declined the full 3 course + buffet & wine for 10€ and just had the buffet with wine except on day 2 when Tony had chicken as well. The dinners have been great, 3 course + buffet with choices and as much wine as you could want. Friday night Arturo produced Asti & Cake as it was Mike Thompson's birthday the day before. Some went on boat trips across to the island, others swam in the pool or lake, Alan & Chas + Graham & Bill went on boat trip round the lake (4hrs), Arturo drove them to Iseo to get the boat (an adventure in itself). Keith & Brenda went out on their bike, Colin & Co did a 70 mile trip into the hills. Kate &

Geoff nursed their colds. Some bikes got hosed down. Pat bought herself some reading glasses from the pharmacy to replace the ones she had lost. One night Andy and Colin went across to the island after dinner for coffee!! Bet it looked good at night. We watched the England V USA match, hilarious. Early start next morning, Arturo & Claudia sorry to see us all go, gave Tony a bottle of wine.

Sun; 13/6/10. To La Spezia, 177 miles.

A hard and difficult day. Got round Brescia & Cremona ok but it was hot & humid, we stopped for coffee then picnic lunch and a welcome cuppa on one of the passes. It was a lovely route but very demanding to find. Arrived about 5pm at Hotel Nella at La Foce in the hills above La Spezia. Mo & Toe & Chas didn't get in till 7pm, big probs route finding, Mo & Toe had a domestic before dinner, we have all been there. Rain in the evening & overnight, it was still misty by morning.

Mon; 14/6/10. Bus to La Spezia.

We went prepared for rain (so of course the sun shone) to La Spezia on the frequent bus from La Foce as did many others. A good morning people watching in a busy city by the sea, got back for lunch at the hotel, everywhere else in village closed. Another good dinner, we had Brenda & Keith + Geoff & Pat in for a glass of wine pre dinner to thank them for their company and to drink Arturo's bottle of wine. An early night to pack.

Tues; 15/6/10 90 miles to Bobbio, Albergo Piacencia.

The tour went its separate ways today, little groups setting off for different destinations. We were riding with Mo & Toe & Chas on a lovely ride of only 90 miles, but all of it slow work along Passo de Bracco in the hills above the coast, then along the busy sea front before turning north along another pass and gorge following the river Areto, "stunning" to Bobbio. A very pleasant dinner after a wander round town of Parma Ham for Tony, grilled Veg for me, Potato & Garlic Ravioli for Tony, Basil Ravioli for me. To follow - Panacotta or fruit washed down with a lovely red wine - very potent, couldn't finish the bottle!!! Tony slurring. Heavy rain overnight.

Wed; 16/6/10. 202 miles to Barcelonnette.

Set off in full wets as we were going over the passo de Penice straight out of Bobbio, cloud hung in the valleys. A lovely ride, stunning views, a glimpse of navy blue sky lit by the sun with white cloud between the peaks. After coffee (in a café in a lay-by in town) - on a flat plain industrialized area we were pitched onto a new motorway for part of the route to Cuneo, a bit of a performance getting the barrier to work, then back on the old road. Lunch in a town café while it poured with rain. Very friendly lady sorted us out with Ham & Mozzarella Panini. Back on the road it got warm in our wets but as we were approaching the Col de Maddalena and the sky looked dark ahead we kept it all on. The pass was lovely, open with wide hair pin bends, some Lorries, but actually saw the surroundings this time, not like 2 years ago. Arrived at hotel Cheval Blanc at 4.30pm. Very odd hotel, old and a bit of a maze. Toilet didn't flush and needed a shoe horn to sit on it. The 1st was mended by monsieur, the 2nd we accommodated. Set menu for dinner - Avocado & Salad, Spag Bol followed by ice cream; plenty of it. 2nd night Quiche Lorraine, Veal &

Rice with veg, fruit salad to follow. What it lacked in amenities it made up for in food.

Thurs; 17/6/10. Barcelonnette. Did the town, very old narrow streets, museum (nude paintings) garden & river. Lunch - Pizza – just off main square. Sunshine for most of the day but showery with new snow on the mountains surrounding the town, cold 21c !!!

Fri; 18/6/10. 210 miles to Yssingeanx; Hotel le Cygnie. Chas ill even before we set off. Sunny & cool, lovely ride all day, the Gorge de Cabre especially beautiful. A tense day because of Chas though. Our 200 miles all dry & sunny except very last 20 miles heading into Puy de Dome area, then we finally got into the cloud & rain, a shame; the route from Tournon once again done in cloud as 2 years ago. Hotel sort of modern, Chas glad to have a bed. We had dinner in hotel restaurant across the way just 4 of us.

Sat; 19/6/10. 198 miles to La Charite sur Loire.

No breakfast for Chas but 4 did, we set off about 8.30am in cloud, damp near Puy en Valais. To start - route good but couldn't see a lot, as we came out of the hills the weather got worse, after coffee, wind, rain & cold, tried 2 restaurants for lunch, both full, grabbed a sandwich from a boulangerie & ate in a bus shelter. Afternoon tea 30 miles from hotel, a life saver, a huge cup of tea in an old Auberge with an open fire going, put on extra layers. Last 30 miles in semi sun at last, arrived about 4pm at hotel le grand Monarque, nice old place but weird approach to dinner.

Sun; 20/6/10. Charite sur Loire.

Overcast & showery in the morning, cold, some sun pm fitful. Tony had breakfast then broke out with the "trots". However, oiled bike chain, rested until stable with pills then walked to centre ville (on camino de compostella trail). I bought olive & cheese breadsticks for lunch, went back & saw Moto GP. Mo also unwell. PM went out & watched country dancers (all part of w/e/ festival). Back at hotel Tony bad again so, I went to dinner with Toe & Chas (now recovered). Smoked salmon & toast, most peculiar – very expensive hotel.

Mon; 21/6/10. 200 miles to St Evroult Notre Dame de Bois. Tony had light breakfast, Mo declined. We all set off within minutes of each other. Mo, Toe & Chas off on a 5 hour slog to Dieppe, us on an expected 175 miles that turned out to be 200 mile ride to the Hotel 'Abbeye. Still cold but bright, no rain. Arrived about 4pm, hotel very similar in style to one at La Ferte Fresnel. Very smiley Madame and modern facilities. 2 flights up our family room is in the roof, nice for a quiet rest after Perrier Menthe on arrival. Shower & change walked to large ville pond and abbey ruins; glass of wine & into dinner. Super! Tony had Pork, I had Lamb after Shrimp & Veg starter. No room for dessert or cheese, coffee came with little cherries in brandy (for your digestion the little waitress explained) and a petite Choc Cake. Tony managed ok but needed Rennie later – we will return.

Tues; 22/6/10. 118 miles to Dieppe.

Sunny day of course, good breakfast (pancake included?), gentle ride through Normandie countryside to port after stopping for Pizza at a busy sandwich bar in Yvtot. Behind us in the lane for ferry turns up a 125cc Vespa, 7 years old, 2 nice young lads been down to Loire via Paris with camping gear and all!!! Apart from a hole in exhaust no probs; so, "size doesn't matter".

Total mileage to front door 2308miles.

.....
Bungay Weekend July 9th – 11th

By Dave Gilligan

Neighbour: "see you've been away at the weekend on the bike again Dave?"

Me: "yes, camping with our motorcycle club at Bungay"

Neighbour: "Bungay? Where's that then?"

Me: "Suffolk"

Neighbour: "Oh I see" (none the wiser)

Well if someone had asked me where Bungay is some ten months ago I too wouldn't have had a clue without consulting the map. Thanks to the two Colins some forty plus of us now know a little more about this delightful market town, the surrounding area and Adnams beer!

About half of the members camped at the very popular Outney Meadow Campsite adjacent to the River Waveney whilst the rest were accommodated in various hotels and B&Bs in the town. By early Friday evening most members seemed to have descended on the Fleece, a 16th century coaching inn on St Mary's Road. Hands were rung, tales were told, food consumed and as with most Mojacar get togethers the noise levels rose!

Legend has it that in 1577 a black dog, a beast said "to have eyes that shine burning red", attacked villagers gathered at St Mary's Church, just yards from the Fleece, killing and mauling some of the congregation. Having consumed a fair quantity of Adnams best ale the campers didn't give a fig for the legend and staggered back to the site to snore the night away.

Blue skies and with temperatures rising to continental heights riders departed on the Saturday morning along Colin's 100 miles plus route. Some say that Suffolk has the right elevation for cycling; I can tell you that it's ok for motorcycling too. We passed through a picturesque landscape, dotted with windmills, going via Beccles, Southwold and to a seaside tea stop at Dunwich. Now if we had been riding these roads in the 20s or 30s then I suppose it would have been a nail from a horse shoe, however in 2010 it was an equally troublesome shiny one inch nail which had no respect for Colin Peg's shiny new Triumph. Tyre fixed and on went the party for a few more miles until the next casualty was Frank Chapman's Harley, this time a front tyre and no quick fix due to it having tubes. With the sun beating down we were more than pleased to have lunch under the protection of a marquee set up outside the Ramsholt Arms on the banks of the River Deben estuary. With the exception of Frank and Doug I think that most of the group descended on the pub on mass and overwhelmed the catering staff. Luckily my good lady was near the front of the ever growing queue so we got our snack some fifty minutes before poor old Derek got his. One member was even served cold chips, but not for long at £9 plus a plate!

With lunch consumed bikes were retrieved from the improvised grassy car park and riders continued on their way in a northerly direction. We hadn't travelled far when I noticed a road sign pointing towards Coddham. This was the village from where Greeves works rider Dave Bickers came. To me it only seemed like yesterday but it was back in the mid 60s when Bickers, Smith,

Lampkin etc could be seen on the telly, battling it out in the winter scrambles with Murray Walker on the microphone.

Following an afternoon tea stop at Derek Robert's house near to Diss, Eileen and I arrived back at the campsite to find members busying themselves for the evening bash at the Kings Head Hotel. An efficient Mrs P collected our monies and we were soon tucking in to a three course meal along with much banter and jollifications. As the sun went down the lights were turned on in the dining room. It wasn't long before poor old Alan Simister's head was slowly being cooked by one of the lights which were obviously heater lights used to keep food warm in a restaurant. Eventually the chef removed the offending bulbs just before Alan's head was approaching medium rare! With sunshine streaming in to our Clamp loaned tent we consumed our Sunday breakfast as others were packing their tents away. Whilst some of the campers were staying on for a few more days the rest of us were soon waving goodbye and would allow Bungay to return to it's usual peaceful state.

So a big thanks to the two Colins for organising a great weekend in beautiful Suffolk.

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 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 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

SUMMER TOUR 2011

Prior to the May reunion another offer of a tour for next year was received from Laurie Shephard. As you all know we also have a tour on offer from Dave Gilligan detailed in "Provisional Offers". Both these offers were put forward at the reunion by Chairman Dave Boon. Both Laurie and Dave Gilligan had discussed their respective offers and, Dave was happy to run his offer as a September event subject to agreement at the AGM.

It was proposed from the floor and agreed that we accept Laurie Shephard's offer as the tour for 2011.

The basic framework of the tour is as follows:

4 June group meets around Chartres, ride down to Clermont Ferrand region, on to Millau, then to Cathar region for 2 nights say at Quillan. Out to med. Along

coast into Spain to Cadaques for 3 nights, back inland through France to Encamp in Andorra. Into Spain to Veilha, back into France and do Tour de France Colis to Arudy. Back into Spain then onto Atlantic coast (Hondarriba or back into France) to finish on Wednesday night.

Laurie says specific details will be available later in the year.

EVENTS FOR 2010 in Date order with details where available.

Malvern Worcester – B&B/Camping weekend. Date: 13th to 15th 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: 3rd to 11th September. Organiser David Gilligan.

Names of participants: *Richard Clamp, Colin Purches, Colin Pegram, Vince Noad, Phil Noad, John Sellwood, Ross Finlay, Graham Davis, Dean Simpson, Roy Simpson, Mark White, Maurice Jones, Dave & Eileen Gilligan, Geoff Barfoot?*

The week's accommodation has now been paid for and routes plus hostel details forwarded to the participants. The fourteen participants will ride through twelve of our national parks and cover some 2000 miles. The first night will see members gathering at the Treynon hostel in Cornwall and their final night being Ilam hostel Derbyshire. If anyone else wishes to join all or part of this tour please contact Dave & Eileen on the telephone number above.

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

Winter Closer weekend Coalport – Using Hostel. Date 22nd and 23rd 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 not being native of the area.

DAVE BEXLEY & BIKES

This is about the contrast between two motorcycles. Riding can give huge satisfaction and enjoyment. Conversely, if our mount is misbehaving or unpleasant to ride, it is no fun at all. I want to share my recent experiences covering both sides of that coin.

First let me preface my comments by saying that all modern motorcycles are quite miraculous compared with the bikes I started on in the sixties. I have never quite understood the attraction of classic motorcycles: vibration, unreliability, poor brakes, oil leaks and comparatively low performance. Good on those who enjoy them but not me. That said, there is no way that any current manufacturer should be forgiven for producing a less than adequate or unreliable motorcycle. Which brings me to the first motorcycle I want to talk about. Some of you may have noticed that I was riding a 2010 Kawasaki 1400GTR at the Abergavenny weekend. The mileage on my FJR1300 was piling up so I looked for a replacement. Yamaha had hiked the price by 45% since I bought mine in 06 so, at 14 grand, another FJR was out. I was intrigued by the new Ducati Multistrada 1200 but in March there was no chance of a test ride and no test ride, no purchase - ever. This left the BMW 1300GT and the Kawasaki. After a visit to the local showroom I realised that I could never buy into the BMW culture so the Kawasaki beckoned. I was very lucky to find a 6 week old example with just 300 miles on the clock at a saving of over £2200. Briefly, the 1400GTR was a big heavy bike, nearer the Goldwing end of the touring market than the FJR1300. The engine was a peach; very flexible and docile but with a startling raw edge when you revved it hard. The multiple electronic gizmos were OK, some useful, some not. That is the way the industry is heading, like it or not. Fuel consumption, using the ECO engine setting, was remarkable - over 50 mpg on a two-up cross-country run at well over the speed limits. Computer controlled brakes were not so welcome although I got used to them and they really did stop quickly when called upon. The seat was not quite right but all of this was kind of par for a newly acquired bike. Inexcusable was an abbreviated front mudguard that spewed water and filth onto the exhausts and radiator so that, every time we stopped in the rain, a cloud of steam enveloped the handlebars and instruments. Ludicrous! Easily fixed with a fender extender but why not from new? Not so easily fixed was the suspension. It had some adjustment of preload and damping but that was not enough to dial out the very harsh ride quality. It persisted in transmitting nasty jarring shocks to rider and passenger. It could simply have been the vast un-sprung weight. Lifting the rear wheel out for a tyre change was hernia time. When we started to avoid B roads because of the uncomfortable ride, I realised that this was a bike that we couldn't live with. The K1300GT, GL1800 and the FJR1300 can float over road surfaces but Kawasaki, in the 1400GTR, had utterly failed to build a practical tourer. What a disappointment!

By now, a test ride on the Ducati Multistrada had become possible. What a revelation! This was suspension at its absolute best (it should be for the price) and fully adjustable from the handlebars no less. The rest

of the bike, to my immense surprise, was just delightful. A Multistrada was ordered. This was the first time in my life that I have paid list price for a motorcycle not to mention a wait of two months for delivery. That's how impressed I was.

The Kawasaki, with only 3900 miles on the clock, was sold at a very minor loss but there was a sting in the tail of the story. The buyer could not collect so I arranged to deliver to his home in Ipswich. After a pleasant enough ride, I stopped about 25 miles from Ipswich to fill up and the beast would not re-start. The keyless ignition would not recognise the presence of the key fob or the spare emergency key. After 2 hours of frustration and unrepeatable language, the bike was collected and taken to Colchester Kawasaki for attention. The next day they fixed the problem under warranty. It was a piece of grit under the micro switch that controls the ignition but it took 4 hours to fix. Whether it was quality control or a design problem didn't matter - it stopped and needed recovery at the worst possible time when under 5 months old! (Yeah - I know the Ducati has keyless ignition - dammit!) Barbara was already at the buyer's house waiting to pick me up so there was no avoiding telling him the gory details. I fully expected him to cancel the sale (I would have) but two days late I delivered it to him and he paid the agreed price. Phew! Just as a final embarrassment, when showing him round his new bike, the crude plastic latch on the glove compartment failed to close for several agonising minutes. I was so relieved to be shot of that disappointing machine! Perhaps I should have reflected longer on why the first owner sold it after only 300 miles.

We come to the second bike in my tale. After I decided to sell the Kawasaki, I did not want to add any more miles to it plus I needed a bike till the Ducati became available. I found a mint year 2000 Bandit 600 with very few miles. Being all original, it had the original tyres, chain and battery, all of which might have served short term but I won't ride anything not in perfect mechanical order so I replaced all three as you can see from last month's advertisement in the Bulletin. I have never owned a current 600cc machine (you know I am not a small guy!) but this has been another pleasant revelation. I found it roomy enough for my 6ft 3" and the adjustable suspension well up to carrying Barbara too. I expected a 600 to be all revs but the Bandit pulls quite happily from 25 mph in top. Of course it needs more revs for fast progress but it is sewing machine smooth and maintains more than motorway speeds with ease while offering 60mpg economy and a 200 mile tank range. Brakes, lights etc. are the accepted Japanese high standard and it is wonderfully light and manageable. What a contrast to the Kawasaki. A small screen and some luggage would complete the picture. I am enjoying it so much that it has forced me to reconsider whether a big machine is absolutely necessary. Best of all, the mechanics and appearance are as new but it cost under £1500. That has to be food for thought. If the much anticipated Ducati fails to meet expectations, I shall probably go looking for a mint example of something a lot more mundane at a lot less money.

Ah, motorcycles. Love 'em or hate 'em, we can't live without them! **Dave Bexley.**