



August 2007

Number 497

## ***The Haymaker Autotest!***



**Sunday September 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**New smooth venue!**

Lowfield Stables, Lyne Crossing Road, Lyne, Surrey

Suitable for beginners and experts alike in road cars!

Entry form & regs from Jez Boakes or Malcolm Grubb!

***Enter NOW!***

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**Your Editor Speaking...**

**H**ello and welcome to the August issue of the Sump!

What a lot of weather we've been having recently. I hope there are no WMx members involved in the severe stuff - Nikki and I in Hook got off very lightly indeed...

Needless to say, there is again no progress

on the car or traction engine front, but on a slightly different note the Omega has been traded in against a shiny new(er) MG ZS 180 of the type Nikki used to have. Mine is a rather more sedate metallic BRG though. Reflects my more relaxed driving style I think. Or maybe not...

Have fun!

*Jez Boakes (Editor)*

**A Note from your Chairman**

**I** keep saying "enjoy the summer" – well, I hope you did! It looks like that warm spell that we had in April, normally our wettest month, was it.

Apparently we can blame (choose from) Global Warming, Climate Change, La Nina (the northern hemisphere equivalent of El Nino), cars (but not, it seems, ships, planes or factories) or cows (burping and doing other things) but not all the hot air produced

by the EU in Brussels.

Whatever, I hope it doesn't stop your participation in, and enjoyment of, WMx (and other csma) events – it certainly won't stop us. We have contingency plans (ie a b...y big umbrella!).

See you at some events – bring your own 'contingency plan'.

As ever keep your (Wellington booted) foot in it.....

*Derrick Holden (Chairman)*

**Temp Sec Bit**

**H**ere I am again, this time with my temporary secretary's head on... Yes, I failed to step backwards in time...

So what's been going on in WMx-land?

Well, the July Clubnight was the annual walk - a nice relaxed affair organised by AG and attended by ten people including a new member! Welcome again to you!

July 25<sup>th</sup> saw Malcolm Grubb take eight of us to Brooklands in the morning and a further five to Mercedes Benz World in the afternoon - a fascinating combination!

And yesterday (as I type this!) was the Summer Run and Barbecue. Sadly only six cars took part in the Summer Run - the bike run which was the same day was even less well attended with only one other biker to keep AG company. AG, Derrick and I put

## csma West Middlesex Group

quite a lot of work into these two events and it was therefore a bit sad that the turnout was so low... Those that did take part claimed to have had a good time, finished off at the WMx Group BBQ which was held indoors due to the terrible weather forecast. In the event it was glorious sunshine - the temptation is to send the bill for the room hire to the Met Office!

If anyone has any insights into why the turnout was so low I would be most interested to hear them! We can then attempt to change things for next time...

And what is on the horizon? August of course has no clubnight so the next thing of

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note is the Motorcycle ride-out and Noggin on August 28<sup>th</sup>. Shortly after that there is the Haymaker Autotest - regs are available from either Malcolm Grubb or I - the event is at a new venue which has smooth grass making it *truly* suitable for road cars. Why not come along and give it a try, or otherwise come and marshal to see what it's all about?

If you have any queries about any of the events we run, please don't hesitate to get in touch - we will be very pleased to hear from you!

Have fun (again)!

**Jez Boakes (Secretary)**

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csma Classic Vehicle Group's

# Three Shires Run ~ 2007

## Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September

*The 2007 route will be of a similar type to those used in previous years, seeking out some of the lesser used lanes of Central Southern England. There will be a couple of stops at places of interest, a 2.30pm Finish for tea, and time to enjoy another splendid 'outdoor entertainment' before we leave for home about 5.30pm.*

*There's no speed requirement or competition of any kind, it's just a nice drive, on country roads, using a traditional easy-to-use Road book to help you find your way round the route.*

*As usual, this will be a very good event for 'first-timers' as there will be lots of help on hand to assist and reassure you – all guaranteed to whet your appetite for more! It'll be an excellent day out for both two & four wheel 'Classics' but more modern vehicles will also be very welcome.*

*The Start will be at 9.30am from the New Inn, Heckfield, in Hampshire and a 'Special Deal' for members wanting to B&B the night before is available. A relaxed breakfast and a 'briefing before the 'Off' will continue the theme of a 'Good Route & Good Food' day we began eight years ago. There's the promise of a scenic tour through (at least!) Three Shires; a picturesque morning coffee halt; and once again I'm planning to finish at another rather special venue that will delight fans of both feather & fauna and, of course, all of us who are partial to the traditional English Cream Tea!*

*Finally, please note, you must book your place in advance as it's not possible or practical to turn upon the day and just join in! An Entry form is available from me. If you need to get in touch, I'm on:*

07785 903 000 or e-mail me on [agoddard@csma-netlink.co.uk](mailto:agoddard@csma-netlink.co.uk).

**Allan Goddard ~ csma Captain**

## Peking to Paris - 100 years on

In the June issue the Prince Borghese article ended with Charles Goddard being arrested within sight of Paris. Exactly 100 years later history repeated itself as David and Karen Ayres in the 1907 Itala were also arrested and missed the Gala Prizegiving when they were forced to spend the night in jail after an argument with the French police over a traffic violation.

Mongolia and the Gobi Desert proved to be as daunting a challenge as ever, there are still no roads and the terrain and weather combined to destroy the hopes of many crews who had been expecting the event to be a "motoring tour".



**1907 Itala as driven by Prince Borghese**

Cadillac, Buick, Lagonda, Alvis, Riley, Talbot, Delage, Citroen, Lancia, Itala, and many more were all there.

The first three days in China proved fairly uneventful expect for the sputtering of those cars who had taken on dodgy petrol at a remote single pump garage and for the American crew of the 1916 Lancia Theta. They had a blazing row, the co-driver storming off to fly home. The rules did not allow a change of crew so there was no option but for the driver to carry on for the next 33 days on his own.

Crossing Mongolia took nine days and navigating between waypoints using GPS was the only way to reach the overnight camp sites. Many crews failed to make one or more of these due to problems with their cars and or their navigation, not helped by sand storms which obliterated the route, filled the ruts with sand and blew away the tents. Rocks, ruts, boulders, deep river crossings, soft sand and the continual pounding over rocky corrugations all conspired to bring cars to a halt with split radiators, cracked chassis, broken engine and shock absorber mountings, exhausts and front wings discarded in the desert and multiple punctures. The mechanics in the four mobile workshops were kept busy all night, every night as they struggled to keep everyone moving. Even so it was only 86 cars that crossed the border into Russia under their own power. The remainder were towed or traveled on the backs of trucks as far as the nearest town of Novosibirsk where more permanent repairs could be made.

Only the strongest and best prepared cars and crews were able to take advantage of the timed trials in Mongolia to establish leading positions in their respective categories. At this stage Rolls Royce (pre 1920), Chevrolet (pre-war) and Mercedes (post-war) were the leading contenders.

Due to the tremendous performance differential between cars spread over a 60 year time span there were to be medals rather than an overall winner. A Gold medal for visiting every timing point on route, a Silver for starting and finishing each day and a Bronze for

It had all started so well for the 130 gleaming old cars that set off from the Great Wall of China on their 36 day and 12,000 km adventure to Paris. Entrants of 26 different nationalities had brought a wonderful collection of rare and exotic machinery – 18 vintage Bentleys, 4 Rolls Royce Silver Ghosts, 9 Chevrolet Coupes (the same type as Fangio used to great effect racing across the South American pampas) 5 Mercedes Benz (the oldest 1903 and the youngest 1963), a couple of La France Roadsters with 14 litre engines,

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starting in Peking, visiting Moscow and arriving in Paris on time. By this stage a number of crews had settled for just reaching Paris even if this involved part of the journey by truck or train or playing catch up after waiting days for vital parts to be flown in.

The resourcefulness and determination to finish was impressive. After failing to get the steelworks in Ulaan Bataar to forge a new crankshaft for their 1907 Itala the crew purchased an old Volga lorry and cannibalised it to replace their engine and gearbox.

The lone Lancia driver was hit by an oncoming truck bending the beam axle into a perfect v shape. Things looked bad until it was loaded onto the back of a truck and set off for the next town which had a railway museum and the huge presses in the workshops soon straightened him out. Two luggage straps attached to the front wheels were all the two Dutchmen needed to steer their little Singer Le Mans the last 50 miles into the overnight halt after their steering broke.

The long haul across Russia via Moscow to St Petersburg took 15 days averaging 600 kms per day, an early start each time for the oldest and slowest cars. Although the roads were tarmac they were potholed and rough with heavy lorry traffic. The hotels left a lot to



**1911 Knox type R**

be desired and whilst the locals could not have been more helpful with helping to fix mechanical problems the competitors suffered continual harassment from the police and officials requiring large sums of money to change hands before proceeding. Even this did not seem to work at the border out of Russia where some crews were delayed for up to 11 hours for no apparent reason resulting in the cancellation of some of the time trials in the forests of northern Estonia.



**1938 Chevrolet "Fangio" Coupe**

Four additional marshalling crews had driven out to help man the 20 timed to the second time trials in the Baltic States and Poland. Having managed to get the majority of the cars out of Russia, plus a few extras where the "spare" Bugatti or Bentley had been delivered so that the "retired" crew could complete the run to Paris, these trials would finally decide the medal positions. Those cars and crews who were worn out could stick to the main roads whilst those still up for it could have some fun on the long, 30km, gravel tracks in the forests.

Finally 119 cars made it to the finishing ramp and the champagne in the Place Vendome in the centre of Paris. At the Prizegiving attended by 800 people there were 27 Gold medals awarded and the tales of daring – do continued on late into the night.

Look out for the book, the DVD and the 10 part series on the Travel Channel to find out what it was really like.....

**Alan Smith**

## West Middlesex Group motorcyclists:

Our next mid-week Ride Out will be on

***Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> August***

This is the Ride we had planned to do last month, but we went to Beachy Head instead! For August we WILL be going to Bristol Docks and once again we'll meet at Jack's Café on the A30 at Bagshot *but a little earlier than usual* - at 09.00am, and we'll leave at 09.30am.

We'll then ride Westwards for a day with an Nautical flavour - to the historic Bristol Docks. This will complement our 'Trains & Boats & Planes' trilogy for our May, June, July & August Ride outs. This Ride will include all the usual stuff, coffee stops at interesting places, rural and country riding rather than motorways or 'A' roads, somewhere nice for lunch, and, rumour has it, Alan Mayger is treating us all to afternoon tea as well! Now that can't be a bad day out, can it? Of course, as usual, we'll end up at the Jolly Woodman at Littleworth Common in Burnham Beeches to complete our day out.

We may not arrive at our Noggin' an' Natter venue until after 7pm but there'll still be enough time for a shandy.

We go, come rain or shine and if YOU are planning to join us on this Ride Out a quick call before the day would be much appreciated please.....

**AG ~ July 2007**

H) 0118 934 5726 M) 07785 903 000 [agoddard@csma-netlink.co.uk](mailto:agoddard@csma-netlink.co.uk)

**Next month's Ride-Out will be on the 25<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

# *Prodrive Trip*

A visit to Banbury to view the inner sanctum of Subaru WRC & Aston Martin Le Mans cars, plus a whole lot more!

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 2007

Pre-booking is ESSENTIAL and you'll need to get yourself to Banbury (M40, Junction 11) by 5pm.

Cheques required in advance for £20 payable to: Prodrive Holdings Ltd for onward payment to the Oxford Children's Hospital

**Contact AG for more details – but book quickly, only 15 people can go !**

## A Walk in the Country

It was one of those VERY RARE evenings in this wonderful summer of ours when it didn't rain. AG must have a direct line to the weather Gods because the walk he organised was indeed blessed with wonderful sunshine, even if it was having to find gaps in the (black and ominous) clouds in order to warm us with it's tender golden rays.

Gathering at the Flower Pot public house in Aston, just outside Henley, a small band of us walked down to the Thames, a river that I never tire of seeing, walking by or rowing on and, occasionally, falling into(!) and we ambled beside it towards Hambleton lock. That is, in an up-stream direction for those interested in geography!

Crossing the river took us by Hambleton marina where many fine, and expensive, boats are moored. It is also sometimes home to some of the more unusual crea-



tions that grace(!) this beautiful stretch of river – when we passed there was sandolo in the marina, this is a rowing boat from Venice, which, around Henley Royal Regatta time is often joined by Gondolas and other Venetian style boats. Less gracious is the creation of a local eccentric who built a crude looking but effective steam powered device that rejoiced in the name 'Dreadnought' – it wasn't there when we passed, probably a blessing in disguise....

Our return back across the river by the lock resulted in Alan and Oliver literally being press ganged into the Navy! It was only a short commission however, the 'captain' of The Waterman, a very large floating gin palace, asked if they would be kind enough to operate the lock gate controls so that he wouldn't have to engage in acrobatics to rejoin his ship as it disappeared towards Hurley. That's downstream for those keeping up with the geography lesson.

As we returned we saw some interesting sights in the countryside (no...not THAT interesting!) tiny frogs, beetles carrying bees off to their lair and various birds – Kites, Sparrow Hawks and a large black critter that we are fairly sure was a Cormorant or a Shag. I'm sure there is a rich vein of jokes in there, but I must confess that it's a long time since I've seen a shag in the countryside.

The pub also had Peacocks and Guinea Fowl in the garden, and damn noisy things they are too!

As if all this wasn't enough, AG hit us with a quiz as well, asking questions as we walked along (he'd supplied us with response sheets and pens, so there was no way out of it) – do you know were the Pyrenees Mountains are? Or General George Custer's first name (doh!) and which TV game show had a character called Mr Chips? Well AG does. We all proved less knowledgeable but by scraping in with a stunning 7 out of 10, yours truly managed to take a split decision (not as painful as it sounds) and won a nice new hat, thanks AG.

And so back to the Flower Pot. Now kiddies, what do you think we do in a pub? That's right. We have a drink (or two) which was well earned after all that physical and mental exercise. Many thanks AG for organising yet another fine evening's entertainment, and thank you all to those who came along to enjoy the wonderful countryside and weather and above all, the company!

**Derrick Holden**

## Motor Sport Coordinators' Bulletin

August 2007

Dates	Event (Status)	Club	Type of Event	Champ
Aug	Sun 5 * Photo Phrolic (C)	Harrow CC	Photo Treasure Hunt	
	Mon 13 * Karting Day ()	csma Karting	Range of karting events	
	18/19 * Welsh Enduro (Nat B)	Amman & DMC	Enduro road event	
Sept	Sun 2 * Haymaker A/T (C)	csma WMx	Grass autotest	Centre
	15/16 * Yorkshire Enduro (Nat B)	Ilkley & DMC	Enduro road event	
	Sun 23 * Last Chance T/H (C)	Green Belt MC	Driving Treasure Hunt	
	Fri 28 Greenhorn 12 Car Rally (C)	csma NWL	Navigational rally	
Oct	Thur 4 Hollstar Intergroup Comp ()	csma NEL	Table Top Rally	Centre
	Sun 7 Autumn Autotest (C)	csma NWL	Grass autotest	
	Fri 12 12-car rally (C)	csma WMx	Navigational rally	Centre
Nov	Fri 16 12-car rally (C)	csma NWL	Navigational rally	Centre
Dec	Fri 7 12-car rally (C)	csma NEL	Navigational rally	Centre

**Licence required:** (I/Nat A/Nat B/Cm) = MSA Licence, (C) = Club Card, () = Nothing, \* = Regs available

### Previous Events

**Greenacres Autotest** There were 12 entries out on a very wet field this year but most people I think enjoyed themselves. Shame there was only three people entered from other groups. As I wasn't there this year, Owen Turner took on the role of winning by a big margin, in his diesel Rover, probably very suitable for the conditions. With two tests at a time and 5 changes of layout, there were 10 tests during the day for a go at a good time. Hopefully the event will have better weather next year. I thought Global Warming was supposed to give us hotter weather!

**Grasshopper Autotest** The second of the grass autotests was held at the usual Studd Farm site over near Leighton Buzzard, and Bernard Ward put on 12 tests during the day. Fortunately the weather forecast was correct and there was no rain during the day, just sunny periods. Two of the tests where damp to start with but dried out during the day to be almost fully dry, whilst the third test had a strip of muddy area that we had to go through,



but thankfully the cones got moved around so that we didn't have to slow down in it. Again a very poor turnout in the National B event, with just five entries, but a much better situation in the clubmans section with 16 entries, just six of which were **csma** members. At the end of the day, Gavin Lane again won the Grasshopper event and I again won the Groundhog event.



### Future Events

**Photo Phrolic** This is an invite to a Harrow Car Club event which is similar in format to the Farnborough Topographia, in that you have to work out locations from photos and then visit the location and answer a question. Cath, Ian and I did the event last year and it was a fantastic fun. The whole event takes place on map 165 this year and starts at 10:30am from the northbound services at Toddington, on the M1 (well this bit is on map 166). The event finishes at 5pm at the Black Horse in Great Missenden, Bucks, where a buffet will be available. Entries cost £12.50 per car. I have copies of the regs if you are interested. We have at least two crews from **csma** having a go, so why not join us for a bit of fun.

**csma Karting Day** This event will be held at Rye House, Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire. There will be an opportunity to allow the whole family to experience the fun and thrills of real motor racing and there will be separate sessions for Novices, Ladies, and Juniors aged 4 to 7, and 8 to 12 years. On offer will be special **csma** rates for short motor racing experience sessions, 10 minutes track time for just £10, plus a full day of events for the more adventurous and experienced drivers. Events run from 9:30 in the morning to 21:30 at night and protective clothing & equipment is supplied. Pre-booking is essential and there are both morning and afternoon taster sessions available. Come along to take part, or just to spectate, entrance to the circuit is free. See the website [www.csmakarting.co.uk](http://www.csmakarting.co.uk) where you'll find full details and a booking form, or call Allan Goddard on 07785 903000 or Drew Goodspeed on 01189 403580.

**Welsh Enduro** Just like last year there will be a series of tests on private land during Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning - although the shortest test is 3½ miles long, the longest test is a whopping 18 miles! - plus a traditional road rally of a few hours duration starting late on Saturday evening. The rally will be based around the top of the Neath valley in South Wales. The event will be quite straightforward and is a test of car and crew, with no tricks and no difficult navigation. Most of the tests will use unsurfaced forest roads, but there will be no car-breaker sections. The Entry fee is £250 for the two-day rally, including a buffet dinner on the Saturday evening. For £5 a night, you can even pitch a tent right outside the Rally HQ clubhouse. See [www.ammandmc.co.uk](http://www.ammandmc.co.uk) for regs and more details.



**Haymaker Autotest** This will be held at a new venue which is much closer to the Centre area, so no excuses for not going! The new venue is at Lowfield Stables, Lyne Crossing Road, Lyne, Surrey (MR 175/021670), which is a change from where it was going to be held. On offer will be a smooth grass field and there will be three attempts at each test with the best two times to count. The entry fee is £18 and regs are available from either myself or Jez Boakes on 01256 762865 or 07748 766409.

**Yorkshire Enduro** This is the last round of the enduro championship for this year and consists of a 350 mile route from Saturday lunchtime to breakfast on Sunday morning. The event will be slightly shorter than last year and hopefully the plotting for the night leg will be less time consuming as well. This was a superb event last year and if you want to do these types of events, is a very good one to enter. Entry fee is £199 and regs can be obtained either from myself or from the event website at [www.yorkshirerevivalrally.co.uk](http://www.yorkshirerevivalrally.co.uk)



**Last Chance Treasure Hunt** This is an invite to a Green Belt MC organised treasure hunt on the 23rd September and they are well worth having a go at. The event starts from the Golden Eagle pub (MR 165/976055) at Ashley Green, near Chesham with assemble at 1pm for a 2pm start. Maps 165 & 175 will be required and the entry fees are £7.50 per car (2 person crew) plus £2.50 per extra person. See advert for further contact details. Cath and I will hopefully be out again, so why not try something different; there is usually a cream tea somewhere on the route!

**Greenhorn Novice 12 Car Rally** The Greenhorn has been revived for this year and is aimed at the beginners and novices, prior to the start of the 12 car season. Experts will be allowed to enter if there are any spare places, but won't be eligible for overall awards. The navigation is going to be straightforward and is designed for you to get round the

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route and find out what these events are all about. Cath Woodman will be doing the route and Dave Smith the navigation! Entry forms should be out sometime during this month. See next months article for more details.

**Hollstar Intergroup Table Top Rally** The Hollstar moves to its new date in the autumn and will be run by North East London Group on Thursday the 4th October, at their clubnight venue at Cheshunt. This is an intergroup competition for all Groups in the Centre and there will be some variations on previous events, to try and get more non rally people along, but it will at least involve finding a route on a map. More details next month.

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**Mike Biss:** NLC Motor Sports Coordinator    **Tel:** 01525 720299

**E-mail:** [mike.biss@btinternet.com](mailto:mike.biss@btinternet.com)

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## **Let's go marshalling!**



## **Getting ready**

**Whatever the event – be it race, rally or whatever – some things apply to all of them.**

- Sign on in plenty of time with the chief marshal, stage controller or organiser.
- Be quite clear where you are to marshal and what time you need to be there.
- Be equally clear on what your job is and whether you have all the equipment you need to do it.
- Make yourself known to other marshals and establish who is in charge.
- Make sure you understand any communication systems being used. Clear, unambiguous communications between marshals are vital to avoid confusion.
- Most importantly, enjoy yourself and make your safety and that of others a priority.

**Sunday 12 August Sutton & Cheam MC Tempest Rallysprint, Bramley Camp, near Basingstoke, Hants.**

**Monday 27 August BRDA Rallycross, Lydden Hill, Kent.**

**Sunday 2 September csma West Middlesex Haymaker Autotest, Lowfield Stables, Lyne Crossing Road, Lyne, Surrey.**

For further information on any event or to volunteer your services please contact Graham McLean on 020-8553-4700 (evenings 1900-2130) or e-mail him on [graham.mclean@bt.com](mailto:graham.mclean@bt.com) Do it today and get involved!

The annual WMx golf day took place on Thursday 14 June. AG had again negotiated a day's competition at the Blue Mountain golf club near Bracknell and he was joined by 8 members for the afternoon's round. I understand that competition was close and Richard Whitehouse's mystical handicapping proved fairly accurate.



Honours this year went to Peter Boakes who won the 18 hole trophy on his third visit to this event. In addition to the overall competition, the 9 hole trophy went to Ray Pontet for the best score on the front 9 holes. Nearest the Pin was awarded to a surprised Jez and the Longest Drive was achieved by Peter Boakes.

The golf day was the same date as our June Clubnight and play started later in the day to coincide with the Clubnight attendees arriving for the evening's entertainment. I traveled from work via home to collect Jez's mum and aunt who were staying with us and when we arrived at the golf club, we found a gathering on the putting green in front of the club house.

AG had sourced some extremely short putters and divided us into pairs to negotiate the putting route he had laid out. Watching everybody putting with clubs just a couple of feet long was comical. I was partnering Stephen Grubb and apologised in advance for my complete lack of talent in this area! As it turned out though, a fluke on a couple of holes meant that our score wasn't too bad.

From the putting green, we headed into our room in the clubhouse where a delicious buffet supper was served.

Once refueled, the next games began. Targets had been laid out at one end of the room and, with indoor putters, we had to try and get balls as close to the targets as possible without overshooting. The putters were right and left handed and everybody had a go with all of them.



Natural talent again shone through and, when the points were added up, the winners of the evening games were the pairing of Peter Boakes and Bob Head.

Golf is something that I haven't done much of other than a spot of pitch 'n' putt and crazy golf but it was a really fun Clubnight with everybody joining in. Thanks to all who organised and took part!

***Nikki Wild***

## **csma Karting Festival**

*For beginners and old hands alike!*

*There's something for everyone!*

**Monday August 12<sup>th</sup>, Rye House, Hoddesdon**

**Details from Allan Goddard!**

## How to Have A Motorcycle Accident (Illustrated)

Well, it's finally happened – after 12 years of biking and riding 100,000 trouble free miles around Britain and Europe, my mother's dire predictions of 1994 have come true and I joined the Crash Club on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007. The story of the incident itself is very simple and takes a lot less time to tell than it did to happen. All that talk you've heard about time slowing down when you have an accident is twaddle. Trust me.



It was a lovely dry, sunny day and the temperature was around 20 degrees – perfect biking weather – and I was heading south along the D10 from St. Maixent l'Ecole in the Poitou-Charentes region of France. Just after leaving the village of Souvigné the road went an easy 30 left into a 30 right with a cross-roads after the apex of the right-hander. Visibility was good, there was no other traffic about and I was doing a very relaxed 75 or so. As I came

out of the left hander and set the bike up for the right hander, I felt it slide. Before I even had time to react, the VFR had slid out from under me and deposited me on the road. After the initial surprise (“Sh\*t! I'm having an accident!”) I remembered that there was no traffic about and made myself relax. I rolled and slid for about 65 yards and stopped in the middle of the cross-roads. The VFR was less fortunate and slid about 80 yards, hit one of those white plastic bollards that the Frenchies use to mark junctions and finished up in the left-hand ditch on the far side of the cross roads.

So what was the damage to me, my kit and my bike? I've always worn proper protective kit since the day I passed my test, and the one thing that this episode has demonstrated more than any magazine test could ever do is that it's worth every penny, as I walked away from a high-speed crash with nothing but a few very minor aches and bruises. My Heine Gericke armoured suit had done what it was designed to do, absorbing the initial impact then resisting the abrasion of a 60 yard slide along the tarmac. Apart from some interesting scuff marks, the jacket is fine. The trousers have a hole about the size of a biro cap in the leather beneath the left pocket and a small tear in the elasticated panel behind the right knee and I'm hoping that they can be repaired. I was wearing my favourite Frank Thomas Gore-Tex gloves – the palms are scuffed with a couple of very small holes and somehow the seam that runs over the right knuckles has split. I should bin them, but I'll probably tape them up and keep them for commuting use only. My very old Falco boots were on their last trip prior to retirement anyway – they have Kevlar armour over the ankles, but they had so many scrapes and scratches already that it's difficult to tell if they played a major part in saving my skin. My Caberg Justissimo lid took a big impact on the jaw piece and the visor – a very, very good advert for not wearing open-face helmets when riding a motorbike. There have been several stories in the press about flip-front helmets coming apart in high-speed crashes, so I'm happy to report that mine was fine and the mechanism undamaged. I was able to use it to get home, but it has now gone in the bin as I wouldn't trust it to save me if I came off again.



The bike didn't fare quite as well as me, but it could have been a lot worse. For the first time ever, I was riding with hard luggage fitted to the VFR and this almost certainly saved the bike and enabled me to ride it home. The photos show the extent of the damage to the right hand pannier and frame. The frames were Motohaus, fastened with quick-lok bolts, all of which stayed attached to the bike, and prevented any damage to the exhaust and the right hand fairing panel. However, this meant that the force of the impact was transmitted through the rear of the bike, breaking the tail assembly and undertray and bending the rear subframe. The bike appears to have slid on the pannier, the right hand handlebar and the axle nut, all of which are severely ground down. The front mudguard and nosepiece also split, presumably where the bike found its way into the ditch, and there are two small dents in the petrol tank.



I picked myself up from the middle of the road and a brief check of my bodily parts found them all to be still attached and functioning as intended. I then walked over to the bike, which initially looked to be in a very sorry state. At this point, the first of several excitable Frenchmen then arrived on the scene; I managed to assure them that I wasn't hurt and they helped me to pull the bike out of the ditch and recover what had fallen out of the panniers and from under the seat as the bike had fallen into the ditch. Once this was done I realised that apart from the right hand pannier, most of the damage to the bike was superficial. I pushed the starter and the reassuring noise of Japan's finest V4 sprang forth immediately. I then stood back and checked as best I could that the frame and handlebars were straight, which they seemed to be. That just left fixing up the back end to make the bike rideable, a job which would present no difficulty to any former West Middlesex Service Crew. Four cable ties and five feet of

tank tape later, the bike was once more a going concern. The broken pannier was lashed onto the pillion seat with the cargo net that I always carry, retrieved from the verge by one of my French assistants, and I carried on to my destination, just 15 miles away, for cognac and sympathy.

My downfall was not spotting that the trail of oily drips in the middle of the road were both fresh and plentiful – as I crossed them, the front washed out and the bike went down. Obviously, whoever left an oil slick on a public road was the principal villain of the piece, but I was also at fault for not spotting that the oil was fresh, not dry. It was a bright day, I had my flip-down sun visor lowered and the road was in the shade of a line of trees and I just didn't see it - end of story. I was also on a very old Bridgestone BT50 front tyre, which I had bought about four years ago, put in the loft and forgotten about. Although it had been on the bike for about 5,000 miles without any problems, tyre rubber does 'go off' as it gets older, which would certainly not have helped matters and had I been on a newer tyre I might just have got away with a wobble rather than an off.

Has it put me off biking? Not at all – nobody’s perfect (particularly not me, before you all shout) and it’s just one of those combinations of things that is pretty much bound to happen if you ride for long enough. As everyone knows, only the good die young and I was very fortunate that there were no other vehicles about, particularly oncoming artics, which might have made for far more serious consequences. Other than that, one crash every 12 years and 100,000 miles might be one too many as far as I’m concerned, but it seems to compare favourably with many other riders I’ve spoken to since. By comparison, AG damaged himself more and his bike nearly as much by dropping it in a car-park last year.

I arranged for the panniers to be shipped home by FedEx, rode the 600 miles home from France as scheduled and have been out and about on both the VFR and the Diversion since getting back. Norwich Union have been to inspect the bike, declared it an economic write-off and sent me a cheque for the estimated value, less the salvage value and my excess. This should be just enough for me to get it fixed and back on the road, although probably not in time for what remains of the “summer” of 2007 given that I have to move house too. However, Cuning Plans for 2008 are already being fashioned....watch this space!

*Dave Rillie*

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**The deadline for articles for the  
*September*  
Sump is August 22<sup>nd</sup>!**

**Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors, and not necessarily those of the csma, csma West Middlesex Group Committee or the editor.**

## FOR SALE

### Clio Renaultsport 172 Cup Edition 2.0 Itr 16v



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### Kawasaki ZX-6R, F3 (single headlight) model



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New Bridgestone Battleaxe BT014 (F&R) - literally about 50 miles old. Rear shock rebuilt by Maxtons about 1500 miles ago. New battery at the same time. Bike comes with a sports rack, carbon hugger, double bubble (clear), immobiliser. It also has a road-legal Micron can and is dyna-jetted to suit (the original can is also included). Very quick and smooth, goes like a Stormtrooper on Columbian marching powder. I can also chuck in a tank bag and a pair of black soft panniers (they are square "touring" bags, i.e. not designed for a single side exhaust, but sit high enough on the back not to catch fire!)

The bodywork's all in good condition, a couple of minor scuffs due to the previous owner, but the bike looks good and runs beautifully. I really hate to sell my baby, but living on a canal-boat means I really have nowhere to keep the bike, and still be able to get at it.

**£1750 or near offer.**

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