

Mar-Apr '03

Volume

20

Number

2

A Newsletter for the Members of the San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club

Contents

- ◆ Bike Books—————page three
- ◆ Static Balancing for Singles——page five
- ◆ Home Buffing on Alloy—————page six
- ◆ Gary Nichols tours Big Sur——page seven
- ◆ Greg MacDonald tours Baja——page ten
- ◆ David Collins in the Fens——page thirteen
- ◆ Club Events Calendar——page fourteen
- ◆ Membership Apps—————page fifteen

NEWS AND STUFF

Some new stuff for club members comes up this issue. Jon Saltz has started an email notification list for all current SDMAC members. The list is a 'one way' announcement-only list for disbursing club info...rides, events, etc. Be sure to add your email address to your membership app to assure your inclusion. Responses to this list will come to the club email account and will be dealt with accordingly.

Since we are on the topic of membership, all renewals must be in club hands before the next Herald is mailed. Failure to do so will result in a discontinuation of club privileges. Please fill out the app included in every issue and mail it to the new address with your check. Check all appropriate boxes.

We have lots of fun stuff planned for the new year...you don't want to miss out. Rides, lunches, breakfasts...lets RIDE!

SDAMC OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:

Kevin Sisterson 619-925-8808
stablemates@earthlink.net

VICE-PRESIDENT:

Joe Michaud 858-278-0476
triumph@fda.net

SECRETARY:

Chris Wykoff 858-613-1146
chriswy@san.rr.com

TREASURER:

Jon Saltz 619-583-5236
jonsaltz@cox.net

SDAMC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Art Bishop 619-298-5061
art@sautomuseum.org
Ron Caudillo 619-938-9732
roncaudillo@hotmail.com
Bob Felter 858-483-1806
bfelter@cts.com

Mike Loper 619-222-7029
mikeloper@cox.net
John Mulrean 619-443-9169
jmulrean@cox.net

EDITORIAL STAFF:

EDITOR-AT-LARGE:

Joe Michaud 858-278-0476
triumph@fda.net

EDITORS:

Jim Weseman 858-481-1338
jweseman@pacbell.net
Mike Loper 619-222-7029
mikeloper@cox.net

SDAMC ADDRESSES:

**C/O San Diego Automotive Museum
2080 Pan American Plaza
San Diego, CA 92101
858.277.6408
www.sdamc.net
sdamc@fda.net**

Monthly Meetings

Are held at:

**The San Diego Automotive Museum
In Balboa Park**

On

**The Second Monday of Each Month
At 7:30 P.M.**

**Enter at Door to North
of Main Museum Entrance**

Herald Policies & Editorial Statement

The Herald promises to provide an interesting forum for all antique, vintage, and classic motorcycle related information and will attempt to do so in a timely manner. Since we publish bi-monthly, please present any items for publication early enough for inclusion. We accept no responsibility for items furnished after the deadline.

As a volunteer staff, we expect other members to help by providing items from time to time. We have a large club membership base with a varied interest in all aspects of motorcycling and, as such, we believe all members have stories of interest.

Let us hear from the garages, sheds and shops of the membership. This publication will remain viable only with the help and consideration of all. Our Editorial phones and e-mail addresses are available. We look forward to publishing your stories.

SDAMC CHARTER

The San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club is a non-profit mutual benefit corporation organized and dedicated to the preservation of antique motorcycles, and in furtherance of such purposes, the sponsorship of antique motorcycle rides, exhibitions and related activities, and the encouragement of social, fraternal and educational activities among its members and the public, with membership open to all persons having an interest in antique motorcycles.

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

IDEAS AND THOUGHTS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER REFLECT ONLY THE VIEWS OF ITS EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS. IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE, CONTENT OR ANY OTHER PART OF THE HERALD, PLEASE LET US KNOW. ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF OUR CLUB IS THE SHARING OF EACH OF YOUR IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES; THEN WE ALL LEARN MORE.

Please send your contributions to any of the Editors as listed above.

I'm always curious about what other folks read. I dunno about everyone else in the club but my room, office AND garage are littered with piles of books, magazines, catalogues, etc.

Non-fiction, too. Mostly, they're all—well, ummm—"gear head" kinda books. I'm certain that there's no fiction on *my* side of the bedroom...however, I can't speak for SWMBO.

She pales at the vast panorama of stuff stacked next to my night table.

Manuals of all sorts, parts lists, tech explanations, "Do-it-yourself" books. Catalogues of all sorts— tools, mail order parts, auto accessories, weird-tools-for-which-I-have-no-use, car-stuff-I-can't-afford, tons of magazines of all sorts. I once had 24 concurrent magazine subscriptions. Sadly, there are no Twelve-Step groups for folks like me...only a fear that all will never be read. Or, if read, never remembered.

I do have a few favorites that I will share in the hopes that others may share back. We may discover a common thread.

- ◆ **"Nuts, Bolts, Fasteners, and Plumbing Handbook,"** by Carroll Smith. ISBN 0-87938-406-9. The man is opinionated but this book is THE handbook on race car prep. The "how, why, where, and when" of every type of fastener is covered in detail. A fine book and worth a reread.
- ◆ **"Engineer To Win,"** by Carroll Smith. ISBN 0-87938-166-8. This book covers types of material and appropriate use of technology. See above for the authors opinionated credentials.
- ◆ **"Tuning For Speed,"** by Phil Irving. ISBN 0-908031-29-7. Australian Phil Irving was responsible for the design of the

Vincent and F1 racing engines. The Eric Clapton of vintage motorcycle performance...God, himself.

- ◆ **"Triumph Speed Secrets,"** by Stan Shenton. ISBN 0-933078-09-9. Late '60's skunk works Triumph stuff. Most is applicable to street-motor use...whoohoooo. A nice dream book.
- ◆ **"Scientific Design of Intake and Exhaust Systems,"** by Phillip Smith and John Morrison. ISBN 0-837603-09-9. A tough and chewy book. I've never been able to finish it due to the math but I can now understand the principles of scavenge, cam overlap, swirl, squish bands, tuned headers, intake plenums/air-boxes, and why 99% of after-market Harley pipes aren't worth crap.
- ◆ **"The Fiberglass Repair and Construction Handbook,"** by Jack Wiley. ISBN 0-8306-2779-0. Learn to fix anything made from fiberglass. Have you ever wanted to make your own café bike gas-tank, or fix a seat pan? With this book and some fearless daring, you may be able to.
- ◆ **"Mechanics Guide To Precision Measuring Tools,"** by Forbes Aird. ISBN 0-7603-0545-5. Performance begins with precision parts...make 'em fit by understanding the tools needed. If for no other reason, you will be able to have an intelligent conversation with your mechanic.
- ◆ **"Norton Service Release,"** Norton Villiers, Ltd. A reprint and compilation of all the Norton service bulletins sent to dealers by Norton Villiers. It's nice to see that consumers were *a/ways* considered to be beta-testers. "Ohh, the main bearings in those Combat motors self-destruct, eh? We'd better tell the dealers what to do, Nigel." Nonetheless, a necessary read for any Commando owner. One assumes that all brands have similar

(Continued on page 4)

ya do
read,
doncha?
© Joe Michaud 2003

(Continued from page 3)

compilations, if one is lucky.

- ◆ **“She’s A Bad Motorcycle...Writers On Riding,”** edited by Geno Zanetti. ISBN 1-56025-317-7. A nice collection of fine prose concerning our own little sickness. Contributions range from Sonny Barger, Che Guevera, Hunter Thompson, Tom Wolfe, Robert Pirsig and many others. Some articles will thrill you, some—like the outlaw ones—may have a far different effect. However, all are related by the one common thread that we all understand...it leans, it corners, and it thrills us.
- ◆ **“The Perfect Vehicle...What It Is About Motorcycles,”** by Melissa Holbrook Pierson. ISBN 0-39331-80-95. The first ten pages of this book will immediately hook you as a rider. If it doesn’t...well... you have lost your soul. Pierson hits the mark with the *thing*, the *spirit*, the *what-ever-it-is* about bikes that addicts folks to this experience. Nice work.
- ◆ **“Zen And The Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance”** Robert Pirsig. ISBN 0-553-27747-2. It’s either a reconciliation of Eastern mindfulness/nonrationalism with Western subject/object dualism. Or it’s a literary mishmash of psychobabble...you be the judge. I’ve not read it since I was a pipe smoking college student but as a rider I feel I gotta own at least one copy.
- ◆ **“Jupiter’s Travels,”** by Ted Simon. ISBN 0-9654785-0-5. Ted is on the road again these days attempting to duplicate his semi-heroic 75,000 mile circumnavigation of the globe in ‘73-’74. Triumph dropped the ball by not giving him a bike, we think. Ted may have bitten off more than he can chew these 28 years later. We wish him well.
- ◆ **ClassicBike,”** an expensive monthly mag imported from England. They must fly it over on the bloody Concorde to cost \$44/year but what’s a Brit bike guy gonna do? It is *the* essential vintage bike mag for my interests, anyway. Nice photos, nice blend of newer/older machines.
- ◆ **“CycleWorld,”** the 800-pound gorilla of American motorcycle magazines. In my opinion, a fine and balanced blend of the new, the old and the future. I never miss the columns by Dave Edwards, Kevin Cameron or Peter Egan. Always a good read.
- ◆ **“American Iron,”** the ONLY Harley magazine that I would have on my coffee table. No tattoos, no naked skanks draped over bikes, and no letters from convicts sharing what kinda Hog they’re gonna acquire right after they’re paroled out...just a nice collection of vintage and modern American bikes with well-written tech. Plus, they pay me.
- ◆ **“Vintage Bike”** a quarterly publication by John Healey at Triumph International Owners Club, stuffed with Triumph tips, products, and excellent tech stuff. See their website at <http://members.aol.com/johntioc/tioc.htm> Well worth the money if you own a Triumph.
- ◆ **Factory shop, parts manuals, restoration guides, pictorial histories.** Do yourselves a large favor and acquire every available factory-authorized shop and parts manual as well as any Clymer or Haynes manual for every bike that you have. Some marques have had reprints of long-out-of-print works done by clubs that support them. Find them. Cherish them. Use them. Any book with period photos or any collection of period bike reviews can be a very nice source of info when your elbow-deep in an obscure bike restoration. There is no substitute for more information.

© Joe Michaud 2003

static single cylinder crankshaft balancing

To balance a single cylinder roller bearing crankshaft, you need a good set of scales and a pair of knife-edges or horizontal bars.

Find out the weight of the con-rod and the small end (wrist pin end) by holding the rod horizontal with the small-end resting on the scales with the flywheels assembled. The piston weight with rings, pin and circlips need to be known, you will also need to know what balance factor the whole assemble needs to be balanced too.

The following is an example of a BSA Gold Star with 58% balance factor however all Gold



350cc Sealey Gold Star short-stroke 82X66. 34 BHP @ 8600RPM, lapped Isle of Man at 90.16 MPH. Oval flywheels increased revs 600 over circular wheels.

Stars have different factors. Early ZB models use 54%, CB models 65%, and the DBD 58%...different size flywheels, longer rods and engine frame fittings may require different balance factors, so if a Gold Star engine was fitted in a different frame a different balance factor may be required. Some Gold Stars are fitted with head steadies this could improve or worsen any vibration problems.

Example: If the piston weight is 475 grams, and the rod and small-end equal 125 grams, adding this together = 600 grams; now find 58% of 600 grams = 348 grams. We then subtract the rod weight of 125 grams = 223 grams. This is the weight which needs to be attached to the small end.

Place the whole assembly on the knife-edges with the computed weight attached. If the flywheel falls with the big end resting at the bottom, weight needs to be removed from this area. If weight is removed by drilling holes, these holes should be of the same size and must be located at an equal distance/depth above or on either side of the big-end pin. The objective is to remove weight so the crank will rest in any position whilst on the knife-edges. Incidentally any holes drilled @ 90° or 270° to the big-end pin does not effect balance, it just lightens the whole assembly.

So many things come into play with crankshaft balancing and vibration may occur somewhere in the rev range, larger wheels seem to dampen vibration if balanced correctly. The whole assembly must be aligned within 0.002 before attempting to balance, and the crank assembly must sit horizontal on the knife-edges.

©Phil Pearson 2003

For Sale

- ◆ **1968 Triumph Bonneville:** Great condition, matching numbers, fresh paint on the tank (1968 color: Hi-fi Scarlet w/silver stripe down the middle), several parts recently powder coated (fork tubes, chain guard, fender & muffler braces), carbs resleeved, forks overhauled, odometer shows 6,975 miles & although I have no proof, I believe this to be the true mileage, maintenance records as far back as 1996. This bike has never been restored or modified; runs really well and needs nothing. Asking \$5,150. Contact Mike @ 619-222-7029.
- ◆ **1966 Norton Atlas:** Bike was stored for 12 years and recently brought back to life at GP Motorcycles. New pistons, rings, valve job, battery, front tire. Freshly painted gas tank. Only needs small bit of work to make a fine vintage ride. Here's your chance to own an authentic featherbed frame with Roadholder forks. Call Joe at (858) 278-0476. I just put \$1000 into it...\$3500 is rock-bottom price for locals before it goes on Ebay.
- ◆ **1973 T140V Triumph:** frame and swing-arm only. California in-op title. \$150. <willspeer2@yahoo.com> or phone (858) 735-5098. Will Speer2.

Recently, at the Big 3 Swap Meet, I picked up some felt buffs that can be used with any variable-speed drill motor. I figured that I could refresh the bright work on the '68 Triumph without having to pull the bike out of service to send the parts to the polisher man. Whatthehell...I have lots of metal polish And I have lots of time.

likes it. I failed to do that the first time and had to re-install mine after a test ride.

Once all the parts are removed, thoroughly degrease the work area. It's imperative that no oil remain to contaminate the felt buff. I use PJ-1 Super Clean, a highly-

Home Buffing

evaporative, no-residue, spray product.

Wear nitrile gloves since these volatile cleaners can pass through the skin carrying whatever they have dissolved with them.

I put on the Mothers with a clean toothbrush covering an area of three to four inches square with a nice coat. I run the buff briskly on the variable speed and try not to stay in one place too long. Avoid extra pressure. It's a good idea to experiment in a hidden area then clean it well with fresh rags to check your technique...in other words, don't start on an obvious, well-seen area. Practice a bit, although it's pretty easy.

I try to buff my "paths" in long horizontal lines rather than in circles. I think a circular pattern makes any scratches far more visible. The long lines tend to reflect light better.

Since we have skipped a few steps, this will not make your bike look like it was disassembled and professionally polished nor will it work on heavily-oxidized alloy but it will make a noticeable difference.

It's nice once a year to detail the shiny parts of the cases.



Timing and transmission outer cover prior to polishing. Shift lever, foot peg, exhaust, and kicker removed

I've used these sort of buffs before but on a teeny Dremel and the work was quite tedious. I was looking forward to using the larger 2 inch diameter by 1 inch thick ones in a faster motor.

Using these drill-motor polishers, it is important to remove all impediments to access, including the foot peg, shift/brake levers, and pipes. The beauty of polishing "on the bike" lies in doing a complete job. If the area behind the pegs and levers are not polished as brightly as the rest, it will show. Detail work is—well—detail-oriented, darn it. Spend a few minutes tending with the details, it's worth it.

I stripped the ancillary bits off the motor, it's now a quick routine for the primary side since I've done the clutch on this bike four times in the last month...I can now drop the left peg, brake rod, exhaust pipe AND primary cover in less than 5 minutes.

The timing side is a bit more work since it requires that the kicker and the shift lever be removed as well as the right peg and the exhaust.

The right peg nut on a unit Triumph lies behind the oil lines so this side is a bit more work. It's a good idea to now mark the splines on the shift shaft so the lever can be replaced where the rider



Same area after a ten minute session with a 3/8ths drill motor, a felt buff and some Mothers Aluminum Polish. Notice the transmission cover.

Great motorcycle roads abound in California. Among them, the best is California Highway 1 between San Luis Obispo and Monterey, the Big Sur area. If you haven't ridden Hwy 1--or haven't ridden it in a while--move it to the top of your list and start planning. I've refined my favorite way to do this trip and will share it with you. Feel free to innovate; after all, that's the fun of a motorcycle trip. It makes a truly memorable three to five day trip depending on how you like to travel and what you want to do besides ride.

San Luis Obispo is the jumping-off point for travelers heading north for Big Sur. How you get to San Luis Obispo is up to you. Since I hate riding the Super Slab, I regularly truck my bikes through the urban sprawl. My usual routine is to leave after work and haul the bikes to Buelton. It's a 5-hour drive from San Diego and I can get there about 11 p.m. Cheap motels abound in Buelton and I have never failed to secure an inexpensive room even without reservations. I take I-15 to I-10, to 210 into Pasadena, and then the Ventura Fwy. (134 becoming the 101) is the quickest and easiest way to go and misses the horrendous traffic of the I-5 or 405 routes.

Solvang is an interesting side trip from Buelton since it's only about 5 miles east. If you haven't seen Solvang, it is a Danish village with more gift shops and Danish bakeries stuffed into one square mile than you ever thought possible. A real Danish pastry is a good way to start the day and the bakeries open early and have good coffee too. I usually drive through Solvang on the way home, pick up a bucket of Olsen's Bakery's assorted Danish butter cookies, take Hwy 154 past Lake Cachuma and slide in the back door to Santa Barbara...but we're not on the way home yet.

San Luis Obispo is about two hours up Hwy 101 from Buelton. You can get off the 101 and start up Hwy 1, which is what I usually do or enjoy the high speed sweepers on Hwy 46 West to the 1 just south of San Simeon. Hwy 46 is a glorious high speed road which twists down a long canyon to the coast. One Guzzi rider I know

probably averaged The Ton on a recent trip down Hwy 46. The CHP know the lure of Hwy 46 too, and are a frequent presence there--as they are all around Paso Robles. You have been warned.

I have discovered a great place to unload the bikes in Morro Bay and that's what I usually do. The spot is behind the Buoy Bar along the Highway, and one block north. There is a vacant lot on the corner which is perfect for

Gary Does Big Sur

© gary nichols 2003

unloading bikes. There is little traffic on the street and my truck has never been molested even when left for several days. The Buoy Bar is also convenient for a cold beer and musing about the trip after loading up the bikes on the way home.

Cambria is 15 miles North of Morro Bay. I always stop for gas at the Shell station along the highway even if I had a full tank when I unloaded the bike. It's about 125 miles to Monterey, and while gas is available, it is close to \$3 a gallon up the road. You will be heavy on the throttle so watch the gas. Cambria is a charming little village and worth a ride-through.

Another 15 or so miles up the road is Sam Simeon, home of Hearst Castle and motels catering to the Castle tourists. I hadn't taken the Hearst Castle tour since I was a kid so recently when I made the trip with my girlfriend, she talked me into it. If you have never been, definitely plan on it. Make reservations ahead of time so you get the time slot you want. It takes about two hours and will amaze you at its opulence.

North of San Simeon, the highway rolls along with the ocean immediately on your left and vast pasture land to your right. There are a couple of beaches on which huge sea lions sun themselves but the gently twisting, rising, and falling road will make you not want to stop. Start

(Continued on page 8)

gassing it a bit.

About 15 miles North of San Simeon, the road narrows and starts climbing rapidly. You are entering the Big Sur area. For a mile or so, the turns are very tight as you climb into the pines. Soon, you level off and almost immediately encounter Ragged Point. Stop here. Ragged Point is one of my favorite places on Earth. It is about 200 feet above the ocean and hosts a delightful motel, restaurant, burger stand, gas station, espresso bar, nature trail...an all around lovely place. Time your arrival around lunch time because the restaurant (not the outside burger bar) makes the best chicken breast sandwich ever! If it's not too cool, sit on the patio next to the lily pond and watch the birds play in the water while you relax and feel special. Be sure to walk the path around the point,



under the pines, and enjoy the spectacular view. There is a very steep trail down to a beach if you are up to it and want to take the time. Ragged Point is thoughtfully crafted, well landscaped, and is the perfect welcome to the Big Sur area.

Now the road begins to get good. Much of it is carved into the side of cliffs high above

the ocean below and is twisty-heaven for the next 100 miles. There are rivers and streams running into the ocean spanned by beautiful concrete arch bridges traversing the gorges. The road climbs and drops from sea level to 200-300 feet above. The curves run the gamut from tight first gear combinations to mile-long sweepers following the coastline around coves and inlets. Even a confirmed throttle junkie just has to slow down and admire the views from time-to-time.

The views and the road, as spectacular as both are, comprise only the major theme of this symphony. All your senses are in for a treat along Hwy 1. This is wilderness meeting the ocean. The smell and the temperature and the density of the atmosphere change as often as often as the road. There are delightful transitions from thick, cool sea air into pockets of sun-warmed scents of

sage, anise, or pine.

Whether you ride like a demon or cruise like a tourist, you will be glad for the nicely spaced, outstanding spots to stop along the route. Every 20 or 25 miles, there are places to park and enjoy the quiet view, get a cup of coffee or a soda, or just stretch your legs and savor that last stretch of tarmac..

The first stop north of Ragged

Point is Gorda. There is a café and gas at Gorda but I rarely stop there because it's only about 15 miles from Ragged Point and I usually have eaten and rested already and am now ready to ride.

Lucia is 25 miles up the road and I *always* stop there. The location is as lovely as its name.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Lucia sits atop a great huge cove and on a clear day offers a view of the coast curving south for dozens of miles. A delightfully rustic-chic restaurant offers gourmet soups, salads, sandwiches, and entrées served in the cozy, stone fireplace-warmed dining room or on the wooden decks cantilevered off the back. There is a small store where you can get a cup of coffee or bottled drink or snack. Restrooms are accessible from the outside.

Big Sur itself is about 25 miles North of Lucia. Big Sur proper is nestled just inland behind a big hill (or small mountain) and is a haven of conifer-filtered sunlight even when the road south along the ocean is overcast. Big Sur stretches for several miles and the road is lined with shops, galleries, restaurants, hotels, motels, campgrounds, and two gas stations. Accommodations range from extremely upscale—like Nepenthe—to primitive campgrounds. I won't pretend to have sampled all of the local offerings I but can recommend

lunch on the deck at the River Inn which overlooks the Big Sur river. If you stop at the River Inn, be sure to check out the little gas station next door -- the "office" is an old psychedelic-painted hippie bus, a relic of the Summer of Love.

Heading North from Big Sur, you rejoin the coastline. I always get slightly nostalgic here because I know this fantastic ride is nearly over -- but not quite yet. While much of the final leg into Carmel and Monterey becomes less twisty and more populated, there are still several stretches of good rising and falling tight curves to remind you of the previous 75 miles.

The Monterey Peninsula is a vacationers paradise. There are guide books spelling out the

overwhelming array of attractions and I won't even try to be your guide to them. I will, however, offer three suggestions. Visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium -- allow half a day, you won't regret it. Eat sand dabs and beer-battered shrimp at the Sand Bar & Grill on the wooden, working Fisherman's Wharf, not the new, concrete, tourist Fisherman's Wharf. You *will* be thankful for this suggestion. Finally, make this trip at least once in conjunction with the Superbike races held every July at Laguna Seca. Race weekend



is gear head nirvana. Plan to be on Cannery Row on Saturday evening for a motorcyclist street party of the first order. Hike up the hill, sit under the oak trees, and be astounded by the pros negotiating The Corkscrew. Make hotel reservations as far in advance as you can (like a year) and just suck up the outrageous gouging the hotel operators revel in (lower-priced gouging is available 30 miles East in Salinas). Just do it at least once!

Highway 1 is one of the best motorcycle roads in California. Your credentials as a motorcyclist are in serious doubt if haven't ridden it. Ride it once, and it will lure you back again and again. What a marvelous addiction!

© Gary Nichols 2003

Thirty years ago I took a solo motorcycle ride down the Baja Peninsula, Tijuana to Cabo San Lucas. I remember being in a rush to do this because they were starting to build the highway that was to tame this last frontier once and for all...or so I thought. More on that later.

Traveling by myself I thought I'd buy a dependable new bike and I chose a Honda 350 CL "scrambler" model. This machine had serious off-road capabilities, as you could tell by the high-

pipes and the...well, you could tell by the high-

pipes, I guess. The first day I cut through the remote hills of Tecate, Tijuana, and Ensenada and then out from the Santa Tomas Valley to run south along the cliffs and beaches. My second day, I got to El Rosario which was on the main dirt road through Baja. Mama Espinoza had a small restaurant and bunkhouse there. I remember the kerosene lantern by my bed and I also remember a giant Mexican breakfast with some local farm hands. All gathered close to a wood-burning stove.

It was south and inland from El Rosario, and it

became very easy to lose direction. At forks in the road, the obvious route was, as a rule, not the one to pursue. Every now and then there would be a bullet-ridden Auto Club sign from a by-gone era. My little Honda had come along before the days of after-market accessories and I sure could have used a big fat Vesco gas tank. Instead I had a web belt around my waist with can-teens of gas, rather like a roll-

ing Molotov Cocktail.
by Greg Mac Donald

baja---thirty years later

Somewhere around Lake Chapala (dust instead of water) I was running low on gas and spotted a small ranch off to the right. As I went up the trail, a cowboy rode down to meet me on an elderly swayback. He had an inoperable tractor and we siphoned gas out of it with my fuel transfer kit: plastic hose and a Standard Brands paint filter. He would not take money of course, but would take a cigarette or two or three. We sat on our haunches on the front porch smoking one after another in total silence.

Bahia de Los Angeles was my first stop on the Sea of Cortez and the contrast from the Pacific was as startling as ever. Crossing a narrow peninsula one went from cold currents and barren

shores of the Pacific to a tropical paradise, complete with coconut palms and thatched huts! And in between was a desert full of the weirdest cactus and spiny run-amoks that even



(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Dr Seuss could imagine! I stopped in El Arco one night, coming across a ranch where they would let wayfarers sleep in the barn. I had no flashlight and felt my way around in the dark for a place to unload my gear and lay my head. I awoke to the smell of coffee, bacon, and eggs. I got dressed and packed for the day and went for breakfast. Turns out the big supply truck had just arrived and everyone was up to unload it: it was midnight.

In the oasis of San Ignacio, there were drums of fuel at the town plaza by the mission. These drums were elevated on

stands not unlike a religious shrine. Gasoline was my religion and I felt like falling to my knees after refueling. Over to the Sea of Cortez again, it was south to the charming town of Mulege. They had a territorial prison there where the inmates would leave for the day and work in-and-around the town then return to the prison at night!

Just south of Mulege, I rode along Conception Bay and it was one of the most breathtaking experiences of my life. Smooth dirt road, pure white sand, azure sea, brilliant blue sky. I remember thinking to myself, "Now here's a place that can get ruined real quick."

Below La Paz, I went to the airport and checked on the possibility of flying my tired machine and carcass back to Ensenada. The bike had performed without a single problem but the lack of suspension had left me without feeling in either hand. There was no problem getting two tickets, one for me and one for the bike, \$25.00 each, for the cargo plane. The problem lay in exactly *when* the cargo plane might show up. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday went by at the airport and the guys in the tower said I may as well forget it because the plane *never* came on Friday. Back where I was camping at the "RV" park (actually his backyard) said I must go back to the airport on Friday. Sure enough, mid-morning a lumbering DC6 came bouncing down the runway. Oil streaked the fuselage. They had nothing to unload and nothing to tie down except me. There were no forklifts or pallets or tiedowns. Six or eight of us *lifted* the bike into the airplane. As we took off the co-pilot yelled from his pressurized cabin, "Get on the bike and hold on to the brakes, el mismo when we land in Ensenada." Turns out the latter was good advice, because the landing strip at Ensenada was dirt and very bumpy. Good thing I was on a "dirt" bike!

Later, arriving at the Tijuana border, the immigration officer asked me where I had been in Mexico "Just saying good bye to a friend," I said.

During the past two years, I've spent lots of time riding in the Baja and revisiting the peninsula, fascinated by the changes wrought by the 1000 mile asphalt ribbon. Yes, in some ways, Baja has changed forever, but in other ways it has changed not at all.

Ensenada was a funky tourist town then; now it is a big sprawling dusty city. South to San Quentin,

(Continued on page 12)





(Continued from page 11)

the highway has resulted in an explosion of agriculture and the resultant farm-worker population. However directly paralleling the highway along the coast, it takes some work but you can still ride the plateaus and beaches just like back then with no hint of encroaching civilization. In El Rosario, Mama Espinoza's is still there! Her daughter is running the place. I spent three hours there not for sentimental reasons but because they had a parade and closed the highway for three hours, no way around! The once-feared highway that was going to connect the north and the south and exploit everything in its path had more or less come and gone, at least through Central Baja. The highway has fallen into disrepair and all but one of the government tourist center/hotels have closed. I have more of a feeling of eerie desolation on the highway today than I did on the dirt road way back then. There were supposed to be thousands of tourists poring through there now. Instead of tourists, there are just some large trucks and a few travelers. It doesn't help having the military road blocks every hundred miles with uniformed boys with loaded automatic weapons, searching through your belongings.

Bahia de Los Angeles now has a paved road down to it, but the town is less-prosperous than it was thirty years ago. All the sport fishing has been wiped out and they now take Americans out for bottom-fishing—real exciting,

The highway doesn't even go close to El Arco. Mulege is still a delightful place. Didn't see any prisoners strolling along, though. La Paz is just more of what it had been. But Cabo and San Jose del Cabo....Whoa! Wait a minute! The place has been transformed into a world-class mega resort up scaling even the mainland "Mexican Riviera." It is hard to imagine all this happening in thirty years.

La Paz has a modern "new" airport and I didn't waste my time seeing if I could still fly myself and my bike to Ensenada for \$50.00!

Oh, I almost forgot, there are still two Baja constants to which I can personally attest from recent adventures down there: 1.) you are going to have either a very good time or a very bad time, with nothing in between. 2.) You will be excited to get there...and you will be excited to leave there.

©2003 Greg MacDonald

The Fens are England's lowlands, situated around the Wash, a shallow twelve by fifteen mile square bay situated about one third of the way up England's East coast. In ancient times the Wash extended inland as far as Peterborough and Cambridge. It became gradually filled in by silt coming down the rivers, and the Fens were created. The land, being barely above sea level, was subject to tidal flooding, and so dikes, canals, and windmill driven pumps were constructed to make it habitable. Technical help in this project was obtained from the Dutch, whose homeland has similar terrain. The Wash's claim to fame in history is that one of England's early kings, in a fit of pique, threw the crown jewels into it.

The area is thus quite flat, but, to me, has a strangely precarious, and beautiful Land's-End feel about it, as though it might be reclaimed by the sea if sufficient care is not taken.

While this might seem an unlikely spot for anything of interest to motorcyclists, such is not the case, for in one of the Fen towns, Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire, resides an avid motorcycle collector, Albert Leeson.

It happens that Albert is a friend of a friend of ours, Jim Coleman, who is a retired member of the Lincolnshire Constabulary, headquartered in nearby Spalding. Jim took me over to see Albert (who runs a large garage), and his collection a few years ago, in the evening.

We spent about an hour poking around a large shed and a garage, completely packed with Brit-bikes of wildly varying age and appearance, but all in running order. I recall a big Sunbeam, with a fixed headlight/fairing, a beautiful little Douglas with horizontally opposed cylinders, similar to the one that Robert Fulton rode around the world in the early thirties, and a Ner-A-Car, an American invention, which were made at a branch factory in England for a while.

The light was poor, and the bikes were leaning against each other, so that it was difficult to really appreciate them as much as they deserved. Albert suggested that we come during daylight hours the next time.

The opportunity arose two years ago, when Tom Scanlon and I were taking part in the AMA-

sponsored motorcycle tour of England and the Isle of Man (Manx Grand Prix, which takes place in the autumn). I would recommend this tour to one and all, by the way. We stopped the first night, a Saturday, at Peterborough, north of London, and close to the Fens.

The next morning, after attending services in the beautiful Peterborough Cathedral, Tom and I rode to Spalding, called on Jim, who took us to Albert's house, where a rare treat was in store.

Although the bikes are not licensed or insured for the road, Albert has a large lawn, and unbelievably said we could ride any of them around the garden to our heart's content. Inwardly cursing our failure to bring cameras, we helped him roll several of them out, and he got them started up for us. I rode several, but recall only the Ner-A-Car and the Douglas.

The former is a little hard to describe to those who haven't seen one, or a picture thereof. The concept was that it would combine the maneuverability of a motorcycle with 2 wheels, and the stability of a car. It has a platform-like floor with the engine situated somewhere beneath and utilizes hub-center steering. The advertising emphasized the low center of gravity, said to contribute to excellent handling.

Albert got it started on about the third pull of a power lawnmower-like rope, and I mounted and set off. The handling was atrocious, and I barely staggered around one circuit of the lawn on it, confirming what I once read in an article by Kevin Cameron, that the center of gravity can be too low.

Next was the Douglas, which was in pristine condition, glittering in the sun, with its beautiful opposed cylinders, and its exposed chromed flywheel. (I wonder where BMW got the idea-I think the Douglas preceded them).

It started right up, and was very easy to ride around the yard. I wanted it. Albert, however, doesn't seem to have any interest in selling, or really doing anything much with his collection. I got the impression he just likes having them around-I know just how he feels.

If I ever get to visit the Fens again, I promise to take a fully-equipped Hollywood cinematographer along!

Doctor David Collins©2003

doctor dave tours the fens

SDAMC Rides, Reminders & Upcoming Events

- ◆ **February 22 and 23 (Saturday and Sunday) Big 3 swap meet at Qualcomm Stadium.** The big kahuna of auto and bike swaps in the local area. A two day tour is necessary to see every thing. Be there or miss out on rusty, greasy stuff.
- ◆ **February 27 to March 2 (Thursday to Sunday) Antique Motorcycle Club of America, Borrego Springs gathering and ride**—pre-68 motorcycles only. Any interest SDAMC? This sounds like a fun event and would compliment our rides, like the GS 400 and our own Borrego outings. Contact Tim Graber of the AMCA at socalmc@pacbell.net or (949) 642-9682.
- ◆ **March 1 (Saturday) Annual “Teardrop Trailer Rally”** at Sweetwater campground. SDMAC will ride to this Mulrean-sponsored event...whoohooo.
- ◆ **March 28-30 (Thursday to Sunday) Phoenix Bike Fest** See Paul Lima ride his newly-acquired Manx in vintage racing. This bike was second overall in the World GP circuit in 1963, loosing to Mike Hailwood. A must see event. Call toll-free at (866) 563-MOTO or see the web at www.phxbikefest.com
- ◆ **April 12 (Saturday) SDAMC “Oldies Ride”** Bikes must be 25 years or older. Meet up at the “Copper Kettle” in Lakeside at 8am.
- ◆ **April 26 and 27 (Saturday and Sunday) “Springtime at Stanlunds”** SDAMCs annual overnighiter in Borrego Springs at Stanlunds Motel. We have rented ALL the rooms, food, beer, and bike lies. Be there or miss onna the premiere events on our club calendar. All rooms are booked but alternative lodging can be found at “The Oasis” (760) 767-65409 and the “Hacienda Del Sol” at (760) 767-5442. Tents may also be pitched on the property.
- ◆ **May 2 to 4 (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) “Wings Over Gillespie”** Club ride on May 4 to the air show. A very cool event...big war birds.
- ◆ **May 10 (Saturday) Car Club Council Car and Bike Show** SDAMC will participate by fielding some bikes for this one day show. Food and frivolity is promised.
- ◆ **May 23-26 (Friday to Monday) Cachuma Lake Rally** The BIG one...200 people on 400 acres of campground near Solvang. Rides every day, great food, bike show, big name legends in attendance. More fun than should be legal. Contact John Mulrean at (619) 443-9169. Do NOT miss this event....this year featuring the legendary Vincent. \$100 gets you food, soft-drinks and a camping spot. Come see us at the SDAMC/Perros Viejos MASH Unit tent. (MASH=“Martinis Are Served Here”...hehehehe)
- ◆ **June 14 (Saturday) “Luau in Lakeside”** a SDAMC production. A Luau in Lakeside, wutthehell?? See prominent club members wearing coconut brassieres. Will Gilligan attend...MaryAnne and Ginger? More news will follow.
- ◆ **June 28 and 29 Ventura Races and Swap Meet** This event was cancelled last year but we expect it to return this year provided “the boys” behave themselves at Laughlin. More news will follow.
- ◆ **July 11-13 Laguna Seca Superbike** Pierre and Gary will attend , will you? More news will follow.
- ◆ **July 27 (Sunday) AMA Boot Hill Ride** A Dennis Reamer production to commemorate fallen riders. More news will follow as the event date gets closer.
- ◆ **August 9 (Saturday) The Annual SDAMC T-Shirt Ride.** We promise new-style shirts and lotsa fun...always a crowd pleaser. Another event NOT to miss. More news to follow,
- ◆ **November 27 Pierres Turkey Day Ride Up Palomar.** A bit of vehicular exercise prior to stuffing yourself fulla turkey.




BRITISH CONNECTION

JOHN MULREAN

9530 CYPRESS STREET, LAKESIDE, CA 92040

FAX#619-443-1839 PH#619-443-9169 1-888-MC RALLY

EMAIL: jmulrean@cox.net

<http://britishconnection.org>

SHOP MANUALS & PARTS BOOKS

AND PARTS FOR MOST
BRITISH MOTORCYCLES






San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club

Membership Application

Purpose of Club

The San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club, Inc. is a non-profit mutual benefit corporation organized and dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and enjoyment of antique, vintage, and classic motorcycles, and in furtherance of such purposes, the sponsorship of antique motorcycle rides, exhibitions, and related activities, and the encouragement of social, fraternal, and educational activities among its members and the public.

NAME: _____

SIGNIFICANT OTHER _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

PHONE: (H) _____ **(W)** _____ **(Cell)** _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ **(FAX)** _____

**May we include your name, phone numbers, and e-mail address in our Club Roster,
sent only to members? YES NO Note: Home address excluded**

NOTE: THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY. DO NOT SIGN UNLESS YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS RELEASE. The San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club, Inc. Hereinafter referred to as SDAMC, Inc. its board of directors and members shall not be liable or responsible for damage to property or any injury to persons, including myself, during any SDAMC, Inc. meeting, activity, or event even where the damage or injury is caused by negligence (except willful neglect). I understand and agree that all SDAMC, Inc. members and their guests participate voluntarily and at their own risks in all SDAMC, Inc. meetings, activities, and events. *I RELEASE* and hold SDAMC, Inc., it's board of directors and members harmless for any injury or loss to my person or property which may result there from. I understand this means I agree not to sue SDAMC, Inc., its board of directors or members for any injury resulting to myself or my property in connection with any SDAMC, Inc. meeting, activity or event.

Applicant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**Note: Annual Dues are \$25.00 Mail To: SDAMC c/o SDAM
2080 Pan American Plaza
San Diego, CA 92101**

