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Inspiration

As I'm sure many of my colleagues will agree, writing the editorial column is one of the most difficult parts of putting a magazine together.

For a start it usually sits at the front of the page plan and is one of the first things a reader sees. It is a stand-alone piece, devoid of illustrative pictures, information panels and specification sheets, and has no fellow scribes offering second opinions to back up your viewpoint.

One gets the idea that the reader makes a bee-line for the editorial column and reads it with all the intensity of a literary critic, looking for flaws, hidden agendas, trying to weigh up the person behind the pen.

All this aside, the most difficult part of writing an editorial is choosing a subject matter; and not through like of choice, quite the opposite. The

latest machine, a gripping news issue, an inspiring touring tale, or a reflective look at our motorcycling past? The choice is seemingly endless, but once in a while something simply stands out and inspires one to put pen to paper.

This month it wasn't an amazing technical development, a spectacular machine or inspiring journey, simply a letter.

The correspondence in question is this month's star letter, from Wynn and Barbara Morris. It concerns their journey home from a tour of Portugal and their rather sickly FJR1300.

I'll not ruin the surprise by relaying the full tale here, but what captured my imagination was the kindness and selflessness of those who came to their aid. The fellow FJR owner who donated a spare part, the anonymous Firestorm rider going out of his way to guide them through an unfamiliar place and a dealer who rearranged a work

schedule to make sure they were on their way home in good time.

As Wynn and Barbara point out, it acts like these that make us proud to be motorcyclists and perhaps more importantly reassure us.

The fact that fellow riders are willing to go out of their way to help others in distress makes me feel a little safer in the somewhat harsh and unforgiving times we live in. To know that even if you're not a part of a specific club or group, people are looking out for you. To know that no matter who you are, where you're from or what motorcycle you're riding someone is there to help.

I for one will be taking inspiration from their tale and keeping an extra eye out for others, I hope you'll all do the same.

Phil Turner



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Ducati Monster S4RS

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Compiled by: Phil Turner

Stafford launch for Ducati GT1000



The third model in Ducati's new Sport Classic range, the GT1000, will be officially unveiled in production form at the 26th International Classic Motorcycle Show.

The GT1000 has only previously been seen in prototype form in the UK and is being tested by the world's press just days before the show opens on 22 April.

Ducati has also confirmed that Paul Smart, winner of the 1972 Imola 200 race, will be at Stafford to unveil the GT1000 in person.

Like the two currently available Sport Classic models, the Paul Smart 1000 LE and the Sport 1000, the GT takes its styling clues from an iconic Ducati model from the 70s, the GT750.

The new model uses a two valve, 992cc, L-twin engine and six-speed gearbox, and is aimed at the classic enthusiast who wants the style of yesteryear, but the reliability and performance of modern technology.

The bike will be unveiled on the Ducati stand, in the main hall, on Saturday 22 April, and displayed all weekend alongside the Paul Smart 1000LE and Sport 1000.

Mortons Media Group Ltd publishing director Malcolm Wheeler said: 'It is a great honour for us to be able to host the UK premiere of a brand new model at our show.

"It is especially exciting that it is Ducati, a marque that I have great affection for and affinity



with. I am sure the GT1000 will hold great appeal for classic enthusiasts who visit the International Classic Motorcycle Show."

Ducati UK managing director Tim Maccabee also commented: "We are confident that the new GT1000 will prove to be very popular and the International Classic Motorcycle Show seemed like the ideal opportunity to introduce this new model to the UK market."

The GT1000 has an SRP of £6995 on the road, and is due in showrooms in May.

The 26th International Classic Motorcycle Show, the largest show of its kind in the world, takes place at Stafford County Showground, from 22-23 April. Gates open at 9am each day.

For further information or advance tickets call 01507 529300 or email jwardlow@mortons.co.uk.

DUCATI GT 1000

Engine: 992cc, Desmodromic, air-cooled, L-twin, two valves per cylinder

Maximum power: TBA

Maximum torque: TBA

Bore x stroke: 94x71.5mm

Fuel system: Marelli electronic injection

Ignition: electronic

Transmission: six-speed, hydraulic dry multiplate clutch, chain final drive

Chassis: tubular steel trellis

Suspension: Front – 43mm diameter upside-down fork

Rear – Twin shock absorber with adjustable spring pre-load

Brakes: Front – twin floating disc, 320 mm diameter, with two piston caliper

Rear – single disc, 245mm, with single piston caliper

Wheels: aluminium rim, spoked

Front 350x17. Rear 550x17

Tyres: Tubeless, radial. Front 120/70 x 17

Rear 180/55 x 17

Wheelbase: 1424mm

Seat height: TBC

Weight: 183kg

Fuel capacity: TBC

Price TBA

Free World of Ducati CD

Welcome to the World of Ducati with your free CD.

The CD is packed with information that will help you navigate your way around the World of Ducati, including the 2006 range from the flagship Superbikes of the 999 and the 749, the iconic Monsters, the timeless beauty of the Sport Classics through to the ground-breaking and versatile Multistrada and the two new Monsters, the 695 and the S4RS.

Buying a Ducati is only the beginning of the dream.

Also featured on the CD is a host of Ducati Performance accessories that can enhance your unique motorcycle.

Termignoni exhausts, carbon fibre huggers, titanium rear sets, Ohlins suspension, Marchesini wheels – the accessory catalogue is a catwalk of

high quality components for your Ducati.

To complete the dream, Ducati produces a wide range of clothing for all types of occasions. There are leathers, helmets, gloves and boots – everything you need to keep yourself protected, while for the more casual rider, there are fashion jackets, t-shirts, fleeces, caps, sweatshirts and much more, catering not only for adults but also for kids.

It also details a full range of watches, pens, wallets and much more.

Many of these items can be found at www.ducati.com, where you will also find all the latest news, special offers, event information and racing news. The site is updated regularly and is the best way to keep up to date with the world of Ducati in the UK.



M1800R cruises into showrooms



Suzuki has announced the arrival of the Intruder M1800R cruiser, which features the most powerful engine in its class and the biggest ever to have powered a Suzuki motorcycle.

Suzuki claims the 1783cc, V-twin, dohc, liquid-cooled engine produces 116bhp and 117lbft of torque. The new model also features the digital, dual throttle-valve fuel injection system developed on the GSX-R range.

Suzuki GB's sales and marketing director, Nick Palmer, said: "The large capacity cruiser market is fiercely competitive and customers are very particular about their requirements.

"Big on both power and style, the Intruder M1800R answers those requirements perfectly and represents excellent value."

Priced £8999 on the road, it is available now in limited numbers, from Suzuki dealers throughout the UK.

Call 0845 850 8800 or visit www.suzuki.co.uk for details.

Guzzi Griso goes on sale

Moto Guzzi have announced the Griso 1100 is on sale in dealerships across the UK now.

The naked machine uses an updated version of the traditional 90 degree, V-twin engine layout, updates include: electronic fuel injection, twin spark ignition and improved weight distribution throughout. Maximum power and torque are quoted at 87bhp and 66lbft.

A host of additional extras are also available, including: 25-litre semi-rigid panniers, chrome-plated luggage rack, transparent nose fairing, a tank bag, and a series of exclusive Ergal parts including adjustable brake and clutch levers, rear brake reservoir and number plate holder.

The Griso comes in midnight black, racing red or pearly blue and is 7499 on the road.

For details call Moto Guzzi 01293 823890, or visit www.motoguzzi.it.



Bikesafe Gwent

Heddlu Gwent Police has announced the dates of its popular Bikesafe workshop events for 2006.

Workshops include a mix of theory, motorcycle related first aid, maintenance issues and security; as well as extensive on-road assessment rides, with police motorcyclists.

Penny Thorpe, principal road safety officer with Capita Symonds said: "Police motorcyclists are the most highly skilled riders on the road and participants appreciate the opportunity to share some of that experience."

All the two-day events take place at Cwmbran. Places cost £80, which includes a hot meal and refreshments both days. To book a place, contact Jan Bibby at RoSPA Cardiff on 02920 250600 or email jbibby@rospa.com

Workshop dates are: 27-28 May, 24-25 June, 22-23 July and 16-17 September.

Ducati agree share terms



Ducati Motor Holding SpA and Borsa Italiana SpA have expressed satisfaction at the signing of the definitive contract between Texas Pacific Group and InvestIndustrial Holding SA for the transfer of 30 per cent of shares in the Italian manufacturer. The company has also signed a preliminary contract with UniCredit Banca Mobiliare, to establish a syndicate of underwriters relating to the proposed capital increase for a maximum of €80 million in ordinary shares, to be offered by way of subscription rights.

Ducati has also obtained a new credit line of €35 million from UniCredit Banca d'Impresa, which is guaranteed for a period of five years. Negotiations are continuing with other banks for a further €25 million financing.

Federico Minoli, Ducati's chairman and chief executive officer, said: "We are very satisfied that the change of ownership is drawing to the desired close, thereby ensuring the company's relaunch."

GM to sell entire Suzuki stake

General Motors has finalised plans to sell its entire 20 per cent equity stake in Suzuki Motor Corp. The US car maker is the largest shareholder. Suzuki Motor is also in talks with GM about selling its interest of about 11 per cent in South Korea's GM Daewoo Auto & Technology Co.

If the deals are agreed, they will end a capital partnership that has continued since 1981. In October 2004, GM sold its shares in Fuji Heavy

Industries Ltd. Under pressure from its shareholders to sell assets, GM may also sell its 7.9 per cent stake in Isuzu Motors Ltd, industry observers said.

GM's stake in Suzuki is worth about 270 billion yen based on the market value of the Japanese firm's outstanding shares, which stood at 1.34 trillion yen last month. GM appears to have requested Suzuki to buy back the shares.

Ride 2 Work Day

The Motorcycle Industry Association (MCI) has announced that this year's Ride-2-Work Day will take place on 19 July.

This annual, international campaign aims to promote motorcycling, highlighting the many social and environmental benefits associated with riding a motorcycle, scooter or moped.

The Association is encouraging all motorcyclists and even non-motorcyclists to participate in an activity to demonstrate to the public, press and politicians the number of people who enjoy riding motorcycles and scooters and to show that people from all walks of life are represented.

Samantha Tyson-Evans, press and PR officer for MCI, said: "Ride-2-Work Day promotes the diversity of motorcycling and the many benefits associated with riding on a bike or scooter, not least the congestion busting and journey time-reducing potential of motorcycling in congested urban areas."

The MCI would like to hear from people who may be considering running a local event, so it can be promoted to the media and added onto the website.

Anyone who is interested in organising an event can find out more information on the MCI's website www.mcia.co.uk.

New Bullet under development

Royal Enfield is rumoured to be developing a 600cc version of its air-cooled, ohv, pushrod single, to meet strict Euro Three regulations.

The future viability of the range of air-cooled pushrod ohv single-cylinder Bullet retrobikes, produced at their Chennai factory by India's Royal Enfield company, had been called into question by the tough new Euro Three noise and

emission regulations due to come into force for the EU in 2007.

It has been revealed that the Eicher Transport Conglomerate, which owns Enfield, has taken steps to protect the growing market for its products in the EU and has commissioned British development company, Ricardo, to produce a 600cc Euro 3 compliant version of the existing ohv motor.

Stafford show is go!

Preparations are almost complete for the 26th International Classic Motorcycle show at Staffordshire County Showground, 22-23 April.

Trade space has already sold out, auto-jumble stalls are selling fast, and entries for the concours have filled up in record time, with the majority of the entrants being of the highest quality yet.

Machines include: Tom McNeil's 1958 Velocette Viper that has been modified to 250cc and Alan Furnival's 1956 James Captain.

Bill Bewley will also be showcasing his 1953 350cc Norton International, which was one of the first bolt-up Featherbed Internationals found in Australia. John Lawrence has also been confirmed as displaying his fine array of ex-GPO BSAs ranging, from a 1933 BSA B33 to a 1971 BSA B175, a fine collection with a great deal of history.

The club stands promise to be of the highest calibre as they vie for the coveted best

club stand award – and the winner's cheque for £1000.

As well as being able to rub shoulders with the likes of Colin Seeley, Tommy Robb and Sammy Miller, visitors will get twice-daily opportunities to see and hear the bikes from yesteryear, as motorcycles such as our very own publishing director Malcolm Wheeler's Seeley are fired up for your pleasure.

Central Wheel Components Ltd, sponsors of the event, will be looking to repeat the success it enjoyed at the Classic Motorcycle Mechanics show in October by again taking a record number of orders for wheel rebuilds.

Gates open 9am to 5pm, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are £8.50 adults, £6.50 for senior citizens and £2 for under-15s. Parking is free. Call the discount ticket hotline 01507 529300 or visit www.classicbikeshows.com to receive a discount off of the advertised entry fee.

Win Win Win

MSL has a pair of tickets to the show to give away this month, but you'll have to be quick as your entry must be in by Friday 14 April.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question and send your answer on a postcard to: Stafford Ticket Comp, MSL, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Lincs, LN9 6JR.

The international Classic Motorcycle Show takes place where?

a) Stafford b) Silloth c) Saturn

Sheene memorial challenge

Ex-Formula 1 owner Eddie Jordan has joined BBC sports commentator Steve Parrish to encourage people to take part in the Barry Sheene Memorial Motorcycle challenge.

The 1900-mile motorcycling event takes place over six days from 17-25 June and aims to raise will raise £100,000 for CLIC Sargent, the UK's leading children's cancer charity - Barry's favourite cause.

The ride will start at Brands Hatch and continue across Europe to the finish at Assen, reportedly one of Barry's favourite circuits, in time for riders to watch the hugely popular Dutch MotoGP.

Places are limited, so riders wishing to participate should sign up as soon as possible.

For more information or to register, contact the CLIC Sargent Events team on 0845 124 1188 or visit www.clicsargent.org.uk.

Low seat for Bullet

Royal Enfield has developed a low seat option for the Bullet Electra-X, in response to demand from the British public.

The low seat option reduces the seat height to 72cm. Owners wishing to lower the seat on existing machines can purchase the kit for £130.

Details are available from Watsonian-Squire on 01386 700907, or www.royal-enfield.com



Calling all Wingers

The UK Region of the Gold Wing Road Riders' Association is currently looking for new members.

The GWRRA is the world's largest single marque social organisation for owners and riders of Honda's Gold Wing motorcycles and was founded in the USA in 1977. It has more than 82,000 members and over 1000 chapters in 52 countries.

The UK Region became an affiliated member of the BMF in 2003 and has more than 300 members.

Both existing UK chapters of GWRRA have active social calendars, with regular monthly meetings, weekends away, ride-outs and much more.

If you are interested in joining, contact the England district director, Peter Donoghue 01474 361748, Chapter director EN-A, Mark Bright 01733 750161 or visit www.gwrra.org.uk.

IN BRIEF

Triumph in France

Triumph has recorded yet another record rise in European sales figures, this time in France.

According to figures released by the FIEV organisation, Triumph sales increased by 56 per cent in 2005, with more than 3000 bikes sold in France – their most successful export market in the EU.

Calling all surfers

BMW Motorrad has launched an internet site called Enduro World, in the build-up to the launch of the R1200 GS Adventure this month.

The site – www.bmw-motorrad.com/enduroworld – is an online magazine for the enduro community, intended to give riders regularly updated travel, sport, adventure and touring articles.

Discover Iceland

The British Lung Foundation (BLF) is calling for dynamic and adventurous motorcyclists to take part in a charity ride to Iceland.

Icecap Trek takes place between 26 August and 3 September.

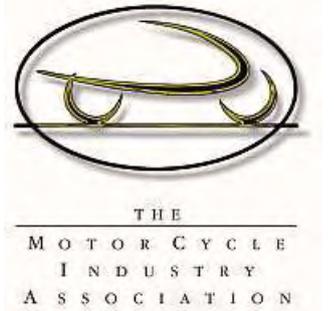
Starting in Reykjavik, the route takes in Mount Hekla to Landmannalaugar and then to the icecaps of Myrdals and Eyjafjalla.

Call 020 7688 5581 or email events@blf-uk.org

WORD ON THE STREET



Catch up on all the latest bike industry news and gossip with the motorcycle Industry Association's Director of Public Affairs, Craig Carey-Clinch



Attitude fundamentals

RoSPA is a highly respected road safety organisation, which maintains a strong voice on motorcycle safety issues. It does a large amount of road safety work and enjoys support from Government for much of this. The newsletter makes interesting reading and the motorcycle sections of this are generally balanced, being written by motorcyclists, not from the safetycratic end of the motorcycle safety argument. From time to time, MCI may comment on the approach to rider safety, but generally speaking the industry enjoys a positive relationship with this chartered organisation.

Each year road safety practitioners look forward to the RoSPA conference. It's a two to three day affair, which normally focuses on certain aspects of road safety as major themes, though the scope of presentations do cover a wide range of safety related topics. Eminent researchers present papers, ministers make speeches and a lively debate is held, both during the conference itself and at the formal dinners at the end of each day.

This year, MCI looked forward with anticipation to the RoSPA conference, which was held in a windswept and cold Blackpool and majored on 'safer behaviour'. Last year's conference had been marred by a session of biker-bashing from an ill-informed speaker and it was hoped for something more productive for 2006. After a long journey to the north-east, everyone was looking forward to making new contacts among the safety community and renewing old ones. Attendees included large number of local authority road safety officer, academics, policymakers, police forces and safety organisations.

Proceedings opened with the Transport Minister, Stephen Ladyman. He majored on the changes to the funding and administration arrangements for speed cameras, changes that have been broadly welcomed by industry. Then he went and spoiled it all by saying "now let's get something straight; safety cameras work!" following this by trotting out a set of statistics which he immediately qualified by adding another set of statistics from 'regression to the mean' research. This shows that speed cameras are not quite as effective as is often claimed – a confusing experience for the listener.

No matter though, the audience was transfixed. Ladyman had already hit the correct 'go' button with this lot and one could feel the 'safety cameras work' mantra moving around the room in waves. There wasn't exactly chanting, but I did start to wonder if I had accidentally stumbled into an Amway motivational session.

For the rest of the day, the audience heard dissertations on driver attitudes, the attitudes of young people towards road use and more praise for speed cameras. Mostly interesting stuff. Ladyman quietly vanished, before he could be waylaid, and beat a path back to London.

The following afternoon, the conference heard speeches on motorcycle safety. The subjects covered included an update on collisions in North Yorkshire, how to influence Powered Two Wheeler Behaviour, a session about accidents among Portuguese moped riders and an outline of the forthcoming 'Ride' programme which will be offered to offending riders in many areas as an alternative to prosecution for minor offences.

The problem was that each presentation took as its basic premise that motorcyclists are irresponsible, need controlling and restricting and that anti-social behaviour is a regular facet of the flawed biker mentality. Words such as 'suicidal', 'criminally inclined' 'socially unacceptable' crept into the presentations. A respected academic, who co-presented a presentation, combined incoherency of delivery with snippy and patronising little comments about what he saw as the negative motivation behind motorcycling. This was the same chap who a couple of years back condemned post-test motorcycle skills assessment as merely being a way of showing riders how to kill themselves at higher speeds.

I made an intervention designed to broaden the debate away from high speed solo accidents and onto other accident types, which are much more prevalent and often the fault of other vehicle users. I pointed out that biker friendly infrastructure and positive regard for the role of motorcycling can help to reduce rider casualties, that motorcycle safety is a shared responsibility, not just an issue involving a largely fictional kind of psychopathic nutter.

A waste of breath. Sniggers from the Amway audience revealed that more rational views would be wasted on this day. One of the speakers responded to my intervention by stating that any measure, which takes even one bike off the road, would be welcome.

This staggering display of ignorance and bias reveals just how far we still have to go in shifting negative attitude fundamentals that exist about motorcycling among people who have influence. Many major gains have been made regarding a positive policy for motorcycling at Government level, but development is still being hamstrung in the academic and road safety field by people who seem unable to leave aside their personal views about the nature of motorcyclists.

RoSPA facilitate this kind of rubbish, but cannot be directly blamed for the content of speeches. However, it is clear that a more balanced agenda needs to be presented at events such as this – the RoSPA conference is not the only event where 'academic' speakers, dripping with condescension or hostility towards motorcycling, set out their stalls.

As for next year's event? I look forward to presenting a paper.