



Tony Dawson explains the mystery of his latest invention, the racing man's optimum-rev gear change impulsator. Absentee, Mike Jackson, suggested 'ping' for upward changes and "pong" for down. TT Rider and guest, Frank Finch, smiles (why?). Power and control cable king, Chris Ventress, absorbs the info while Hugh Palin takes the opportunity to advance camera in hand perhaps to snap the equipment.



Serious discussion or reminiscing? Maurice and Graham confer.



Run leader/organiser/problem solver/money changer/coffee chaser/interpreter/mushroom buyer/wine connoisseur (also public speaker of some eloquence--bookings taken); this man of many parts---Simon Hill---adopts a customary pose for the cameraman. Uninhibited--because this time he isn't the organiser--Peter Sheen beams, while bearded Alan Baker casts a quizzical look. Peer into the background and who do we see but Nick Hopkins and Peter Meek with a waiter (Why and for what?).



Guests, Martin Lambert (Industry public relations) and Kawasaki's, Geoff Selvidge, treat the cameraman in the approved fashion; the dead pan look of those totally disinterested.

The bikes



No doubt about it, the modern motorcycle is an eye-catching device. Centre piece is Keith Davies' Moto Guzzi California good for sustained 100mph in touring format. The Suzie is the 750 GXS-R campaigned by David Hill.



The 49-year old Beesa B31 of Nick. with tank top odometer and rigid rear end



Contrast in Hinckley products: Peter Sheen's twin-headlamp 900 Daytona cheek by jowl with Jim Coreless' RAC 750cc Triumph sporting its BS Kite Mark symbol for quality of service. Little did Jim know it but a WM2 rim and tyre would later tax the ingenuity of both him and partner Bob.



Centre piece:
Dave Martin's hard-
ridden
Pan European
with stereo sound,
ABS and lots of
clocks,digital
things and bits.



David Hill's Suzuki GSX-R750T gains an admirer--Dave himself--plus Geoff and Dave Martin. A really fast bike, much sought after, except if *anno domini* catches one up.



Well if you will park opposite instead of right outside the restaurant there's only one way of getting the bike back--push it. Ludi Beumer manhandles the 850TDM across the busy road. Nice bike, but not a true tourer, and Holland, where home is, is a long way away



Keith Blair, Nick and Chris amid the machinery; Yamaha 850TDM (centre) and Chris's own K1 at right.



The Hon. Treasurer's Yamaha Diversion. Not fast enough for some but comfortable and a good carrier of luggage. Next to it is Wilf's Boxer and behind, Peter's Trophy side-by-side with the Tony Dawson FJ1200 product-tester.

The un-common mushroom



The mind boggled at the highlight of the days' visits, an underground mushroom farm, no less! Secret thoughts among some members was that no such thing exists. But it does. Eight kilometres or so of passages in which the gang was utterly lost within the first 100 yards. Such a labour intensive business as mushroom growing simply wasn't worth the candle as each mushroom had to be carefully picked by hand to avoid damage. So nowadays it is a tourist attraction (more profitable) and with many different varieties grown a most absorbing subject. As Hugh is to road rescue services, so Keith is to the world of science and languages translating the guide's lecture into English on the technology of the champignon. Keith did. His success rate shows on the faces messrs O'Neill, Davies and Hopkins.



This Japanese variety uses horse dung as its basic growing material. The beds have to be cleaned to a very high standard to ensure no dangerous residues survive at the end of the growing period, otherwise the entire operation would be condemned.



The enthralling lecture, needless to say, brought a typical po-faced Norman Hyde riposte. Here Keith (not one to be outdone) has a face to face and the camera's flash implants a dastardly sneer to the nashers *a la* Dr Jekyll, or is it Hyde?



Well, what do you know? Ludi utters a few words (in French, we think) but the Dutch accent is unmistakable and recognised by the wife of the owner of Cave Champignonniere who reveals that she, too, is Dutch. She met her French husband while serving as an air stewardess with British Airways twenty five years ago and now welcomes the British (us and others) to the underground mushroom farm. It called for a picture. The lady in glasses was the guide. The chap with the sweater? We know who HE is, don't we?



For those not tempted underground the alternative beckoned---a glass of vino and a chat in the hot sunshine. Then kitted up members prepare for the final blast back to Blois, bath, reception, dinner which, as always, is to be enhanced with heavy fines for any real or imagined misdemeanours perpetrated during the day.



Going home



Four hundred miles and three days of serene motoring then; woosh! Good English air escaped from the rear boot to enrich the French countryside. Labouring intensely, sweatily, and against the clock the RAC crew persevered. Local dignitaries observed, but with only four hours to cover 180 miles to Le Havre onto the trailer went the BSA and Nick squeezed into the rescue unit. The saga of the puncture would continue in Southsea-- see run report.



Wisdom prevails because time marches on. Out comes the trailer, on goes the BSA and Bill Colquhoun lends a hand. They made the boat, the puncture was repaired in the RAC dock office goodbyes, were said. One hundred yards down the road it happened all over again. Nick got home with Bill's invaluable help, but by what means must be a story worth hearing.



Coffee en route for some of the homeward bound members. On the quay faces show the pleasurable memories of a good day's run, around 180 miles, from Blois to Le Havre. Alan had a ride clear of trouble, hence the smile. The clear blue sky stayed with us throughout the four days--perfection

