



# Chronicle

Issue 3  
Spring  
2022

## Talking Chairs



Well, that was that then. In the blink of an eye my Chairmanship ends – well the blink of a very lazy eye thanks to a worldwide pandemic... some people will do anything to cling on to power, just ask Vladimir.

From my perspective, Ben is the right man and at the right time to help The Club remain the vibrant and convivial enterprise that we all enjoy and cherish. Of course, there will be challenges ahead and our desire to attract new members of the right type and quality is a subject of continuing debate but, as we saw at Tavistock and I am sure as numbers swell for Scotland, there is no shortage of commitment from the current membership.

Sounding like the proverbial broken record, I must once more highlight the breadth and depth of support offered to me as Chairman on a day-to-day basis by the Committee and, when requested, by just about anyone who could be of assistance. The fund of experience we have as a group and our universal desire for The Club to

thrive is humbling. Rest assured I will now do for Ben what you all did for me and help him as much as I can to perform his role as Chairman. Gentlemen, I leave you in safe hands!

*Martin*

Well, what can I say? I am very honoured to be given the opportunity to become chairman of this wonderful Club. That said, I am also a little nervous and apprehensive, so please be gentle!

Firstly, I would like to extend my thanks to Martin, who has done an absolutely sterling job as Chairman, originally in fairly 'normal' times, but then carrying on manning the post during the pandemic. Not only did he keep members informed and updated, he was also instrumental in getting the Chronicle up and running, as well as making history in the process, becoming the Club's longest standing Chairman EVER!

As the new Chairman, I am very much of the mind that 'If it ain't broke – don't try and fix it!'. We have a very special Club, which is a real credit to ALL members, with your individual characters, interests and experiences that you bring.

With that in mind, the most important task is to ensure that our Club has a future for many years to come. We don't need a massive recruitment campaign, but an eye must be kept on the 'active' member numbers that attend runs. Tavistock was very well attended (thank you Craig and Ian for a cracking weekend). It was the first proper run for over 30 months and that will have had some positive impact on the numbers.

The number of members attending runs needs to average out between 30-40 people and some focus will be put on ensuring those numbers remain that way. We ought to have a target of two new members per year. Some controversial points will need discussion with the Committee, including possible changes to the criteria for membership, as well as opening the membership to female industry executives. I may regret saying this, but if you have any views on these subjects, please let me know, and I will include them in discussions.

Finally, to end on a lighter note, the Friday Night Raffle will be reinstated from the next run. I have spoken to the run organisers to confirm that's OK with them and they share my view that it adds a little extra fun to the weekend. Remembering to bring a raffle prize is all part of the preparation for the run and an £8 cap on the value of each prize is proposed.

That's it from me for now. If any of you want to drop me a line regarding Club issues, please feel free to do so. My contact details are on the Club Website.

*Ben*



## Diary Dates

**Peter Sheen Memorial Service** at 2.00pm on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July in St Marys Church, Staverton, Northants NN11 6JJ  
**Reminder!** If you haven't already done so, please let Andrew know you will be attending [andrew.smith0160@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.smith0160@gmail.com)  
**NO LATER THAN 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE** so that he can pass on the numbers to Peter's daughters.

**Autumn Run** 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September at the Ben Nevis Hotel in Fort William. With optional Thursday stopover and post run tour.  
Organisers are Andrew Smith and Bob McMillan.

**If you have not completed Andrew's recent Run Questionnaire please do so as soon as possible.**

## And Breathe..!



Finally, after two and a half years and two postponements, Club members and guests were able to gather for a formal Club Run, reprising the 3 Moors Run of Spring 2015, based in Tavistock. Our heartfelt thanks go to organisers Craig Carey-Clinch and Ian Kerr for not only putting on a damned good show but also dealing with all the planning problems that the pandemic threw at them.

The run was very well attended with 34 bikes, a car and an RAC patrol and though there was the odd sprinkle of rain, it did nothing to dampen the joy of meeting up with old friends, riding bikes and talking bollocks; as this picture sums up perfectly!

A full report will follow soon(ish) where you will be able to read how Dave Martin's invitation to a 'Go Dutch' lunch resulted in a boost to his clothing sales; the strange tale of the Hare and the Tortoise route to Tavistock and, what happens when two groups of riders, each using the despatch rider system, meet on the same road at the same time...

## From our Far East Correspondent... *Simon Hill gives us an insight into riding in Thailand*

Just before Christmas, over thirty five years ago, I landed at Bangkok airport for the first time, not at all sure what to expect. I was there on the grounds that Thailand had to be better than Basingstoke in January, where nobody wanted any panniers and my business was steadily haemorrhaging what little cash it had made during the previous summer. The intervening years, here and throughout the region, have always involved motorcycles; using them and, on occasion, marketing them. I now spend most of my time here.



To Thais, profound faith in Buddha is considered enough to override basics such as traffic laws, gravity, licences and general caution. Belief in reincarnation is completely at odds with the concept of road safety. Driving on the left is more popular but not to be taken for granted. Any self-respecting Thai will take the shortest possible route, between where he is and where he wants to be, provided the buffaloes are tied up and the water isn't too deep. If it's quicker to go the wrong way up a dual carriageway, fair enough. Mirrors are used once stationary, primarily to squeeze spots or to apply makeup. Helmets are compulsory but in reality remain optional. Face masks on the other hand, since Covid, are universal. Figure that out!

Enforcement of the law is entirely arbitrary and usually, the only document required by police folds easily and bears an image of the King...

The sole means of transport for most families is two wheeled, so from birth, motorcycle travel is the norm. Natural balance and coordination are inbuilt in Thais, I wish I could match the ability to weave through traffic whilst carrying a small child, dog, flat screen television, step ladder, mobile phone or whatever in the left hand. Amongst the more surprising things I've seen transported include a Rottweiler and, in Vietnam, two pigs strapped to the pillion in a crate. Alan Halford will affirm the latter if asked! If all you have is a motorcycle, it has to carry whatever you wish to carry. A family of five on a bike is commonplace and why not? Applications such as mobile food shops, builders' trucks and burger vans are all common.

The accident rate is alarming, the major reason being a generally lawless attitude (which is one of the reasons I like it) and widely available dreadful cheap rice whisky. Last year 22,930 people died in road accidents. In the UK the number was 1,516, both countries have a similar size population.

Licences do exist but are considered a bit of an unnecessary bind. I took my Thai driving test: it was basic in the extreme. I was largely given a bye as neither the examiner nor I could understand each other. The most demanding bit was pushing a button when a red light illuminated. The compulsory safety film, a Police, Camera, Action sort of thing, lasted twenty minutes. I was the only one awake at the end of it.

Alcohol is very cheap, couple this fact with minimal policing and the outcome is obvious. Standard riding gear of T-shirt, shorts and flip flops simply escalates the outcome.

The generally easy-going polite nature of Thai people makes road rage very rare; they simply aren't territorial and freely use each other's space to maintain progress. I have to make a big mental adjustment in order to avoid conflict when returning to the west. On the grounds that around half the vehicles have no insurance, much care is taken to avoid actual collision. If, as a foreigner, I have an accident it will be my fault, the underlying logic being that had I stayed in my own country it wouldn't have happened. My car has been rear ended twice and, somehow, it was my fault- both times.



Many of you will have been here and witnessed the sheer density of two wheeled traffic. They seep through any gap left between other road users. At traffic lights they ooze to the front, in cities as many as thirty motorcycles can line up and when the lights change it's like the start of a Moto 3 race.

The bikes do last though. A network of one man repair shops fix anything at tiny cost and keep them all rolling. Our family Honda is twenty one years old, has survived two teenagers and my considerable weight and gentle riding technique. It has covered 46,000km without venturing more than 20km from home. It still starts every time, the lights cast a vague glow and the brakes arrive eventually. Forget Model T, Beetle, or Mini, it's the Honda Cub and it's derivatives which mobilised the world!

I now ride a 400cc 'big scooter'. It carries all my liquid groceries with ease and has a comfy seat. Perfect for a gentleman in his eighth decade.

I hope that you have found this brief insight to be of interest. Wouldn't it be great if motorcycles held a similar place in life in the West?

*"Simon Hill: The Chronicle, Sri Racha, Thailand."*

## The Restrosexual Revolution - *Dan Sager considers the burgeoning popularity of retro styled bikes...*



Retro bikes used to be nice but dull. The Hinckley Bonneville, launched in 2000, was overweight, underpowered and poorly braked. It was Triumph's response to Kawasaki's cheeky T120 lookalike the W650 (above) launched the previous year. Now James Bond rides a Triumph Scrambler.

Twenty years ago, the Royal Enfield Bullet 350 Classic was not so much retro as relic - a design considered obsolete here as long ago as 1962. Fast forward and the new Royal Enfield Interceptor 650 is one of the Top 10 sellers in the UK charts.

Twenty years ago, other than the aforementioned W650, the Japanese 'Big Four' hadn't recognised the potential of their back catalogue, being preoccupied chasing the lucrative sports bike market. That too has changed, with the Kawasaki Z1 reimagined as the 900 RS and Suzuki Katana making a comeback, while the new Yamaha R7 is available in 1960s 'Speed Block' red and white.

What's going on?

There appear to be two main drivers for the increased popularity, and availability, of retro machines. First, the market is evolving. The average age of riders continues to increase and, just as adventure sport bikes replaced the exciting, but uncomfortable (for ageing joints), sports bikes, now retro designs are in turn taking their place. Motorcyclists

are looking for bikes that evoke the models they lusted after in their youth; but couldn't afford at the time.

Then there's the issue of size and weight. A BMW R1250GS weighs in at a hefty 249kg, before adding the obligatory metal luggage, while an Interceptor 650 tips the scales at 202 kg, with a much more accessible seat height. As we got older, heaving big bikes around petrol forecourts and manoeuvring in and out of cluttered garages becomes increasingly challenging.

Retro bikes also tend to be less expensive, because they tend to be simpler. This matters more as annual mileage drops - who wants a £20k motorcycle depreciating in the garage when you barely cover 1,000 miles a year? Certainly not the 'significant other'!

Secondly, perhaps surprisingly, younger riders are attracted to retro bikes, because they not only look cool, but also generally have decent performance on modern roads. This has been one of the benefits of the much-derided hipster craze for Bobbers and the like. It made traditional style motorcycles desirable.

From a marketing viewpoint the next stage could be a retro race series. Royal Enfield are already testing the water, using their 650 twins for a flat track school (*right*).



Kawasaki also enjoyed success on the American dirt tracks. Just imagine a support series in BSB, featuring bikes that appear to have time travelled from the Sixties and Seventies. Sounds crazy, but it might happen.

Anyone know where I can find a serviceable Commer van?



## Mods and Restos...

*Ian Kerr does some minor buffing to bring a 'Practical not-so-classic' back into service...*

Recently a good friend went under the chequered flag leaving a collection of classic motorcycles, some of which I purchased. Although two were desirable, the third was more interesting than collectable.

I doubt that any Club members were involved with the Tomos moped that was originally sold through Woolworths. This 1988 model, with full service history, was supplied by Highway Motorcycles in Wolverhampton. Not only does it still have the original toolkit, including the mixing bottle for the pre-mix, but it also has its own Haynes manual.

In remarkably good condition apart from some pitting on the chrome, it was a less than an hours work to have it chuffing up and down the road and a 10 mile road test showed it was capable of pulling my porcine weight up the steepest of local hills. The motor even generates enough electrical power for the full size indicators and the headlight to operate at the same time!

Starting is a first kick affair using the strange choke that is combined with the throttle. After a minute or so of warming up it is all systems go: well up to 30 flat out anyway, so no chance of camera flash unless I venture into a 20 zone! Bizarrely my neighbours have got quite excited about this machine, which as non-motorcyclists, they seem to have more affinity with than my other bikes, but I have to say it does put a smile on your face when you ride it!

Tomos were established in Koper, on the Adriatic coast, by the Yugoslavian Government (now Slovenia) back in 1954, initially making Puch motorcycles and Citroen cars under

licence. Although they became well-known for moped and mofas they also made 50cc motorcycles and 175cc commuter machines.

In the early sixties they entered the FIM 50cc race series and finished second to the German Kriedler team. The factory went on to produce a 50cc race bike with seven speed gearbox ; this works bike was ridden by Italian, Gilberto Parlotti who managed sixth in the championship in 1968 before moving onto Morbidelli in 1970. Tomos continued to race into the early eighties with a bike giving 20bhp at 17,000rpm.

But with only small success, they pulled out to concentrate on their mopeds.

The 1960s were very productive for



Tomos with the mainly flat Holland emerging as an important market. The only manufacturing plant outside of Slovenia was built here in 1966 and it was this factory that supplied my bike.

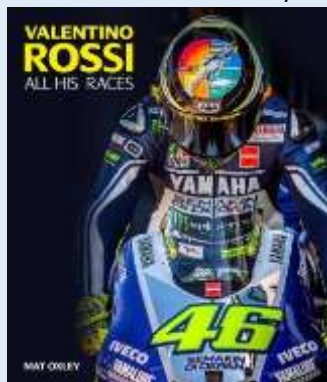
Although perhaps not on most people's radar, the firm continued through the 70's, 80's, and 90's developing modern and easy-to-maintain mopeds with a distinctive design, building markets throughout Europe, Africa and the USA. Since 1991, manufacturing has been solely in Slovenia. Interestingly Tomos mopeds are now back in the UK with a head office in East Sussex and a nationwide network of dealers as Woolworths are no more!

## Valentino Rossi – All His Races

*Ian Kerr reviews a hefty tome for your summer reading...*

One subject always hotly debated is 'who is the greatest racer ever?' Realistically of course, it's impossible to

compare riders of different eras: the machines have changed, the speeds they attain too. And some tracks have been changed for safety. Then of course there are the different disciplines, the various classes and the debate expands with no clear winner.



Since the late 1990's, Valentino Rossi has transformed the world of Moto GP and brought the sport to the attention of the mainstream media and public alike. In a 26-season career he has gained nine titles, seven in the premier class, and has been called 'The Goat' (Greatest Of All Time).

Whether you agree is beside the point, he has been charming fans since his first win aged 17. As well as winning on the track, he has brought humour and showmanship to the paddock and become a media personality that the sport will miss now that he has retired at the age of 42.

Rossi's retirement does though bring down the curtain on an

incredible career which needed to be chronicled. There is no-one better to analyse this and look behind the racer than Mat Oxley who has been reporting on Rossi since 1996 and wrote his authorised biography in 2001.

Himself no mean rider (having won an IOM TT) Mat understands the racer mentality and in this 336 page coffee table book puts all of Rossi's races under the microscope; looking at his achievements, some of the controversies surrounding him and also the various bikes ridden, to paint the picture of someone many regard as racing genius. As you would expect it is liberally illustrated with 280 colour images from the best motorcycle photographers in the world and it is worth buying just for those alone.

Oxley's analysis of Rossi makes very interesting reading and helps you understand how he managed a top flight career longer than anyone else ever has in motorsport - on two or four wheels.

If you want to enter the debate as to who is the greatest you need this book and, having read it, you may change your number one position! Definitely a quality purchase and well worth the £50.00 cover price.

ISBN: - 978-1-910505-21-2

Available from all good bookshops or direct from the publishers [www.evropublishing.com](http://www.evropublishing.com)

## ERNST DEGNER – lies, myths and pride...

**Ray Battersby** writes: *In 1978 I conceived a book about Suzuki's factory Grand Prix motorcycle racing team. The East German rider Ernst Degner was top of my '1960s' interview hit-list. Degner was a clever engineer and a brilliant rider, performing well above his rivals.*

*In 1961, Degner led the 125cc World Championship for the East German MZ team managed by Walter Kaaden. He led the penultimate Swedish round until an engine failure forced retirement. After the race, instead of returning to East Germany, Degner drove to West Germany where his wife and children awaited having escaped across the East-West border the previous evening.*

*With polarised views, communist hard-liners said Degner had stolen MZ components; he was a traitor to his colleagues, his team and his country. Others said the Degners had only done what tens of thousands of East Germans had been doing for the last ten years.*

*I interviewed Degner in March 1980 in ARAL's mobile race support machine shop at the Nürburgring, he was the manager. It was ten years before German reunification. A week earlier Degner had stood me up for an interview at his Dusseldorf home. At the Nürburgring however, he was extremely welcoming.*

*Degner was a gracious host, even when I cheekily asked if he'd stolen any MZ parts when he fled to the West. I asked exactly how he and his family (wife Gerda and two baby boys) had escaped and he surprisingly gave intimate details. "Time has passed - twenty years now - why shouldn't I tell you?"*

-----

For 20 years, I have been researching and writing a book about Degner's defection. My primary sources include Degner's family and friends from that time, his Stasi file and other printed contemporaneous materials.

*I constructed an escape chronology showing that Degner's account was at best a falsehood and at worst downright lies. He had misled me about the method and the timing of his family's escape and made little of his co-conspirator Paul Petry. He also failed to mention his stay in a West German refugee centre.*

Degner knew Petry through racing, the latter owning a motorcycle shop at Dillingen/Saar. He was an excellent engineer. When Degner needed West German help with his family's escape, he called Petry.

Degner's Stasi file reveals that before leaving for Sweden on 9 September, he met Petry in a Leipzig car park. There they agreed the minutiae of the family's escape. Petry agreed to call Degner's Swedish hotel leaving a code word indicating the success, or otherwise, of the family's escape.

Petry explained his plans for an East-West people smuggling business using the method he had devised for the Degner family. When the border police (Grenze Polizei or Grepo) learned of new smuggling methods, they plugged the hole with specialised actions. To prevent this, the pair agreed never to reveal the family's escape method. *In extremis*, they agreed to say that the Degners escaped in the boot of a Mercury car driven by Petry. This pact explains why Degner lied to me in 1980.

*Yet the Mercury car story could never be true. None of Petry's cohorts - wife, shop manager, friends - can recall him ever owning or driving an American car. Petry habitually drove a Peugeot 404 saloon.*



The family's escape happened just five weeks after East Germany built the Berlin Wall. The Grepos were on high security alert. The most obvious method of people smuggling was to hide them inside a vehicle. The Grepos thoroughly searched all vehicles and used pits, probes and mirrors to check underneath.

The not inconspicuous 1960 Mercury was certain to receive the most exhaustive search when it crossed a border. It was the epitomic Grepo SEARCH magnet. Yet this crazy notion originally fooled me and has since fooled many journalists the world over.

Petry's clever plan for the family's escape was to hide them within a load of tree trunks carried on an articulated forestry truck (a *langholztransporter*). East Germany was keen to export timber to West Germany to satisfy its hunger for Western currency. To speed-up timber exports, they built exclusive mid-forest border crossings.

The *langholztransporter* drivers each crossed the border many times a day; they became friendly with the Grepos. Petry hired a regular East German driver at great risk to the driver and at great cost to Degner. Petry's master stroke was his realisation that border crossings lacked heavy lifting gear; they could not dismantle a load of logs for a thorough search.

Keeping a low profile during the escape with no direct involvement; when the Degner family escaped, Petry was safe on the West German side of the border, waiting to welcome the fugitives. He certainly didn't drive the family across the border. The family had to escape just before the Swedish GP to prevent Gerda being spotted in West Germany before Degner's defection. This meant they must stay out of sight for four days in East Germany before their escape. Petry arranged this at the truck-driver's home deep in the Thuringian Forest.

Meanwhile, Degner arrived at the Hotel Turisten where the MZ team stayed in Kristianstad.

In the early evening of Saturday 16 September, before the mandatory Sunday truck ban started in East Germany and barely 15 hours before the start of Degner's last race for MZ, the family uneventfully slipped into West Germany using the Wartha-Herleshausen crossing.

Degner would not defect until his family were safe in West Germany - otherwise they would pay a heavy price for his defection. All he needed was Petry's coded confirmation...

The Stasi files state that on Sunday 17 September, before leaving his hotel for the circuit, Degner received a telephone message to urgently call Berlin (no name or number was provided). Berlin was the agreed codeword for *Success*. Degner could now escape.

In the Swedish GP paddock, Degner stupidly told his news to many of his friends who recall his happiness that his family were safe in West Germany.

Degner started the 125 GP on pole. After two laps his lead was over ¼ mile. This was expected from the man whose slowest official practice lap was faster than the fastest laps of his team-mates Walter Brehme and Werner Musiol. Degner was also 7.2 seconds per lap faster than his team-mate Alan Shepherd. Degner was on fire and meant to win the world title there. Despite this, on the last corner of the third lap he missed a gear. His MZ over-revved and a piston ring snagged in a port, wrecking his engine. He pushed his stricken MZ to the paddock and began to think of his own defection...

At 6.30pm, he left the circuit and headed for Malmö where he boarded a ferry to Denmark then south to Gedser for the ferry to West Germany. His visa, valid for all Scandinavian countries, was not recognised by West Germany so he told the Danish officials of his intention to claim asylum on arrival at Großenbrode in West Germany.

Once there, he was taken to the Uelzen-Bohldamm refugee centre where he entered the well-proven German refugee handling process. German immigrant records confirm Degner's arrival on 18 September 1961 as an East German refugee and his departure on 26 September as a fully documented West German citizen.

Why did Ernst Degner not tell me of his stopover in the Refugee Centre? I suspect this was the pride of a famous East German celebrity, unable to cut through stubborn West German red tape...



Aboard the Suzuki RM62 at Nürburgring 1962

*After winning Suzuki's first World Championship in 1962, Degner's life went downhill. Serious accidents - including a fiery crash at Suzuka in 1963 - cut his racing successes and ruined his appearance. Many concussions (one whilst testing a factory Kawasaki 125 in 1966) made him quite changeable; not helped by a dependency on morphine, prescribed to reduce the pain of 56 skin grafts (one allegedly using skin from his scrotum to rebuild his eyelids). He quit racing; his marriage failed. He worked in racing's suburbia for ARAL, SOLEX and others. By the mid-1970s, he was Suzuki Deutschland's service manager. In 1981 he retired and bought a Tenerife car rental company. He lived there until he died in 1983, aged just 51 years.*

**Out and About...** Spotted at last Saturday's Andover Norton open day, **Nick Jeffery** writes:

Here's a picture of young NH with his latest restorations. The two are the ex-Keneth Blair BSA B31 in front and hiding behind, the Trusty All British Tractor owned by Andover Norton. Quiz question is why would Andover Norton want a Trusty? Answer: It has a Norton Big 4 engine!



**If you have any interesting 'Out and About' items, please forward them to [scribe@the-club.org.uk](mailto:scribe@the-club.org.uk)**



## My Other Bike is a...

*Red, hot hatch. Adam Kelley writes: Having been obsessed with two wheels since the age of 14, my interest in 4 wheels soon followed and in the early 80's I got into road rallying MK1 Escorts. Over the years my need for track speed has evolved into a German addiction...*

I became obsessed with the Nürburgring (Nordschleife) in the early 00's, regularly visiting on sports bikes with friends. With the Ring becoming busier every year, I turned my fascination for the notorious 'Green Hell' onto 4 wheels. On my many trips I noticed 3 cars that were common place, Porsche 911s and BMW M3s of course but also Renault Meganas. I knew there would be good reason. Commonly recognised as a 'hot hatch', in standard form the *Renault Megane RS250 Cup* is a front wheel drive 250BHP turbo charged 3 door that is perfectly suited to such a track.



Modifications are however a necessity given the Nordschleife's challenging undulations, corners and 'flat out' elements. Realising I needed more speed, less roll and better stopping power, I made a number of modifications including an exhaust, panel air filter and a full remap; the car now makes 300BHP. High Carbon Brembo discs with race pads, racing brake fluid and braided brake lines all reflect mods common on motorcycles. Lowered and uprated suspension helps with corner speed and the soft, track based tyres hugely increase grip, although they're not great when it rains on one side of the circuit as this YouTube clip shows



<https://youtu.be/zvFwdMhFISA> fast forward to just before 6 minutes to see me slide off the track and nearly hit the barrier! (Ed: click the Settings cog bottom right and slow the playback speed to 0.25 for extra drama!)

All these mods help shave off a few seconds a lap. However, one thing I have learned about the Nordschleife: knowledge is power. With 154 corners, carrying corner speed is the most valuable element to getting round the circuit in a reasonable time. I've taken the Megane 6 or 7 times now and despite its French build quality, there really is a good reason why you see so many at the Nürburgring it's great value, very capable and fantastic fun.

Every motoring enthusiast should experience the undulating 13 mile 'Green Hell' toll road in their lifetime. If you haven't been yet, take the time to visit, even if for just one lap – you won't ever forget it!

## The Scribe's Last Word

With precious little rain these last few weeks, at least down here in the South East, is it possible we may be looking at a 'scorchio' motorcycling summer? We could certainly use a release valve from the daily news round of the Ukraine conflict, cost of living rises and the still rolling around 'just how many candles were there on that cake?'

By the time you read this, the TT will most likely have kicked off after its Covid enforced break. I am sure that many of you will be making the trek across to Mona's Isle so let's be having your recollections, highlights and pictures for the next issue of the Chronicle. An odd box of kippers would also be gratefully received!



Before we know it, the Autumn Run will be with us: back across the border in the Peoples Republic of Scotland. Is it just me who thinks that time has speeded up these last few years? As things stand, I am extremely disappointed to have to give this one a miss, I'm sure it will be epic and a grand time will be had by all. And, if that sweltering summer does materialise, let's hope the Scottish 'clegs and horseflies' have migrated to damper climes by then.

Stay safe chums!

*Geoff*

END