



Suffolk Riders

Best wishes for 2020



In this issue

Chairman's update	p1
December Events	p2
Group Training Rides	p2
Breakfast Run	p3
AGM	p5
January Events	p6
Technical Corner	p6
Restoring a windshield	p6
Later in the year	p8
2020 Challenge	p8
Easter Trip	p8
Member's Forum	p9
Mission in Namibia	p9
Smells	p14
Date for your diary	p15
The Last Word	p16

Chairman's Update



In December we had our AGM which saw me voted in to serve the group as Chairman for another year. It is a role I have grown into and continue to enjoy but it is my opinion that the role should not be held for more than 4 years for the sake of the group and the

chairman's sanity. We will be looking for a suitable replacement over the next few months who will take the group forward from the next AGM. The AGM also saw Ray standing down as treasurer and 2 new members voted in. I look forward to working with James & Phil along with the rest of the committee over the next year. The AGM presentation was only 1 hour long so it was great to see the evening was mainly spent socialising around the food on offer. Thanks to all those who contributed.

The Twixt Breakfast run on 28th had a good turnout of around a dozen riders. I would have liked to be able to report on the quality of the breakfast and the route but my bike decided it didn't want to join the run and I was left waiting for recovery at Tesco, though I gather the ride and breakfast were OK.

I hope you all had a great Christmas and wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous 2020, during which I look forward to seeing you at a group night or ride out, *cheers, Jon*

December Events

2019 Group Training Rides (GTRs) – an over the shoulder check!

The last ride of the year took place on the 15th December and finished at Jimmy's Cafe, Old Buckingham Airfield, Norfolk. There was a good turnout for a ride so late in the season. Some regular faces and a few fresher faces. A great route put together by Stephen R, but then who-else would you expect to know the most enjoyable roads on the way to an airfield! Jimmy's Cafe is also the benchmark cafe for next years Suffolk Riders Challenge, announced by Keith at the AGM, so some of us have a head start!

There was a lot of standing water en-route, often fully covering the road, but nobody got their feet wet, in-spite of the best efforts of several oncoming car drivers to drown us out! There were also a lot of horse riders out for a jaunt. Their friendly waves to considerate

motorcyclists were duly acknowledged. We share much in common with horse riders, an unenviable vulnerability to injury, and the knowledge that we are both sat astride something we do not always feel in full control off!

So, have we helped anyone feel more in control of their ride?

We would like to think so! We never stop learning, and that applies to tutors as much as anyone. The GTRs are very different to a one-to-one tutored ride. They are a *group* ride, with fellow associates and members, sharing thoughts and 360 degree feedback. The tutors do their best to facilitate this process.

By our nature bikers are individuals; we are on our own once we engage gear and ride off; we are responsible for our own actions. Who would want it any other way! But we are also one of the most sociable and gregarious groups of individuals you are likely to meet anywhere. Sharing the riding experience is a great joy, together with a mug of tea and a full english breakfast ("but you can get your own breakfast, I'm not sharing mine!")

You could say GTRs are a way of sharing the experience of advanced riding, whilst getting to know other individuals in the group. Each individual will take away their own learning, and hopefully feel more able to join in other Group activities, to further develop their individual ride. So it is down to us all to contribute to the GTRs, we the tutors will do our best to help you.



What have the tutors learnt? That grouping together riders at the start of a ride is quite a challenge!



Trying to match individual ride expectations so that groups share a worthwhile learning experience relies on participants helping us out with feedback. But this also highlights one of the key learning opportunities for each rider – how to ride safely and progressively in a group of individual riders, or, *how not to ride on your own!* If you are riding in a group you need to ride for the group as much as for yourself.

That GPS systems don't all treat the same route in the same way! You need to get to know the idiosyncrasies of your GPS. Practice plotting and transferring routes between your bits of hardware, learn how your system treats GPX files (we post them on the MyRoute website), and know how to correct a malfunctioning route on the road. Remember to keep your digital maps up to date, and ensure you are using the same route calculation settings on your phone/laptop and your GPS receiver. In preparing the GTR programme we do the best we can to offer an interesting route, just sometimes the technology makes it more interesting than we anticipated!

That not everyone likes to ride down single track lanes! Sometimes to avoid 30mph speed

limits or to link up sections of a route we do take you down an 'unclassified road'! It is our opinion that an advanced rider should be able to ride on all road surfaces, safely if not willingly! Who knows, you may discover you have an 'unclassified' green-laner within you!

2020 vision – looking forward!

The programme starts again in March next year. We will try and get a full programme of routes posted as early in the season as we can. Re-run some of the most enjoyable routes of 2019, but also explore some new routes and new parts of the eastern counties. We ventured into Essex and Norfolk in 2019, and will seek out some more unusual destinations to encourage a greater rider take-up for 2020. If you have a favourite cafe, or there is a part of the county you think makes a challenging ride, we want to hear about it. If it's as good as you say we might build a GTR around your personal recommendation! So it had better be good!

Belated Season's Greetings!

The GTR team hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and wish you a rewarding New Year on two wheels! Remember, the GTRs only run if you support us. So how about a New Year resolution to join as many GTRs as you can, and make the most of your membership!

Stephen Russell and Stephen Worrall



The Breakfast Run.

I do like a dash of history, and devote a fair bit of spare time reading about it, usually in the form of a historical novel. However, I'm pretty poor at remembering detail. So for the November Breakfast Run, it was a pleasure to return to a place I had visited with my wife and friends some time ago. Although then, we ended up at the The Old Ship, while the Breakfast Run was to [The Lock Tea Room](#) at Heybridge Basin. As you walk toward the tearoom, if you turn right and cross the lock and stay alongside the shore, after a short while you will see across the Chelmer river a causeway linking Northey Island on the left with Maldon on the right. It was there on the 11th August 991 Earl [Byrhtnoth](#) and his thegns led the English against a Viking invasion. The Battle of Maldon didn't end well for the Saxons! On the Maldon side there's a statue to Byrhtnoth. OK history bit over.



Keith Gilbert was the organiser of this run: meeting at Tesco Ipswich, eight of us went off in two groups. My bike had developed (another) fault, leaving me without signals, so I stayed between Keith and Neil Burley on his winter Honda. After a bit of tedium on the A12, the Maldon Road (B1022) was a pleasure, marvelling at some of the money in Essex property. From the carpark up to the tea room you

walk a short way along the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation (canal) where old boats are laid up for the winter, or until they rot, then alongside the Blackwater Estuary. The tea room, part of the Tiptree Farms organisation, was heaving with people enjoying Sunday breakfast, so there was nowhere to sit for the last three arrivals out of the loo, until a lovely lady seeing our plight offered to move to a two place table and gave us hers.

We were provided with an excellent breakfast and great value for £8.95! Chatting over a meal



offers insight into members' fascinating stories that you would not get any where else. After we finished and had the de rigueur photograph we all went our (windy) way home. *Ed.*



The AGM

It's a must, it's in our constitution and Jon, Rachel and the team have worked hard to make it as enjoyable as possible, and it was. The first hour we reviewed 2019 and were then introduced to the objectives of 2020. In 2019, as well as all our usual activities of training, ride-outs and social events, we built on fortifying the Suffolk Riders brand with social media platforms and the newsletter. For 2020 Jon wants to grow the group to 140, up from our current 119; to become self sufficient and to be the choice of local riders who want to improve their skills. NB in the treasurer's report we made a small loss last year, so we are well on our way. Also, to make the group more cohesive, so that more members come on board in the running of the club.

After the official side we descended on the refreshments to eat and chat to each other. *Ed.*



January Events.

Important.

Please note that the latest information on future events can be found on the club

Group Night – Monday 27th January, 19:30

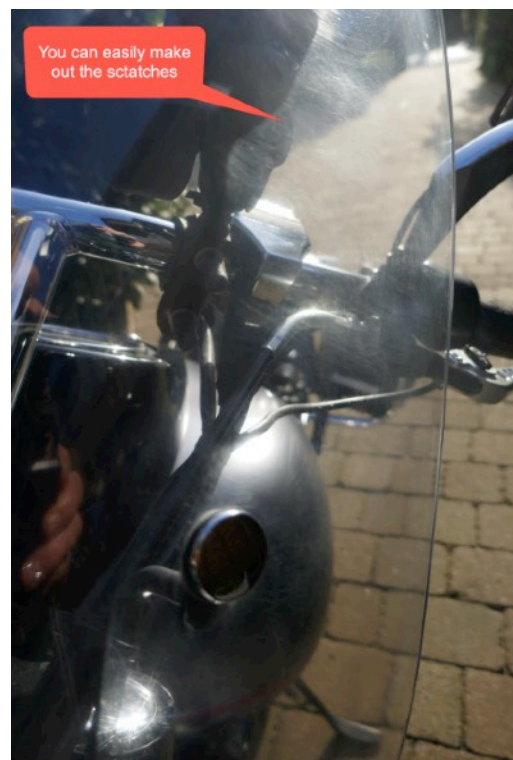
Group Night is quiz night, come along and test your knowledge against questions set by last year's winners.

Technical Corner

Restoring a windshield.

It was almost the last comment at the club meeting: in reply to a question Chris Broughton said he intended investigating polishing out scratches on windshields. What an opportunity? I turned around and offered mine.

As an engineer you'd think I'd know better, but over four years I had not looked after my windshield very well. Each time I parked the bike in the garage, I'd spray window cleaner on the front and back, then using the soft side of a kitchen scourer wipe it clean and rinse off with a soft sponge. Spot the mistake? Oh how I wished I had rinsed off any road dirt with running water before putting the bike in the garage. Even better, checking with my hand for cleanliness. It didn't take me long to realise that I had effectively been abrading the surface with fine grit. Over the years, the opacity had



reduced, not enough to impair vision, but enough to be annoying.

I realised Chris wanted an old windscreen he could test to destruction – not mine. He sent me a couple of URLs to check out what others had done.

The first: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTMJ6OShaG4> by a gentleman going by the name of Sweet Scoots, used a mop on a 4.5" angle grinder and Mothers Aluminium and Magnesium polish. I have some left over from renovating my BSA B31. The second: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkPHtHkPUvw>



used Meguire's PlastX, put on and taken off by hand. In for a penny, in for a pound. I bought the Meguire's, actually PlastRx. Needless to say the hand polishing made no apparent difference for an awful lot of effort. After an email conversation with Chris I lashed out on a car

polisher from Argos, to increase the heat generated while polishing. I justified the



expense telling myself I could use it on the car! This was an angle grinder with a gearbox to create an orbital movement: the investment was rising, would the reward? Well, not with the Meguire's.

I must have polished for 20 minutes, but

could see no apparent improvement.

Back to Chris and we devise a strategy: mask off a corner, then polish with increasing grit size until an improvement is evident. So, next polish was Mothers Al & Mag, could I detect an improvement, not really. Then I tried a couple of 'engineered diminishing abrasive particles' rubbing pastes. The first, Farécla's G3 didn't produce any obvious improvement,



but Halfords Rubbing Compound did: there it was, a visible improvement.

For each polish I started with slow speed, before moving to maximum (some thousands or rpm) for 5 minute intervals. NB debris from the paste is hurled from the edge of the disc to spatter everything in its path. I had a recipe, 5 minutes with Halfords, and 5 minutes with Meguire's. A result – a significant improvement



on the original.

Final comment from Chris, when he gets a windscreen he can work on, he will try 1000 grit, 2000 grit and 3000 grit. Do you have an old windscreen you don't want? If so, please contact Chris. Ed.

PS had a go in some black plastic, not perfect, but not too shabby.

Later in the year

2020 CHALLENGE

Same rules as 2019 except you can start as soon as you receive January's Newsletter, due out 1st February, which will include the four sections.

Those who wish to compete must have completed 3 of the four sections, either with a photograph of them or their bike at the waypoint or a receipt from the café or venue. One photograph only please from each location.

All entries must be in by end of September.

Just a taster from Route 1 2020 -

1. [Royal Gunpowder Mills](#)
2. [Rye House Raceway](#)
3. [High Beach Bikers Tea Stall](#)

Suffolk Riders' Easter Trip

2020

Good Friday 10th April to Easter Monday 13th April

The plan is to stay in Ripon. This gives access to Yorks Dales, N York Moors and a bit further even Trough of Bowland, Lancs in east and Scarborough in west. It's about 215 miles or 5 hours from Ipswich with comfort stops for food and rest. Locally it has cathedral and nearby places to visit include

Fountains Abbey, Harrogate (with RHS garden) and Knaresborough (with castle, viaduct, Our Lady in Crag).

When: Check in Good Friday 10th April, check out Easter Monday 13th April (3 nights)

Where: Wetherspoons **Unicorn Hotel**, Market Place East, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 1BP, tel: [01765 643410](tel:01765643410). There are 32 en-suite rooms. See <https://www.jdwetherspoon.com/hotels/england/north-yorkshire/the-unicorn-hotel>.

Cost: Double Room or Twin Room £177 (£64+74+39) room only for three nights, flexible booking, which allows cancellation up to midday on day of arrival. Looks like only one or two single rooms.

Book: If you wish to join trip, go onto Wetherspoons website and book your rooms direct.

There will be a group planned route and breaks and while we are there, an evening social dinner. However, daytime activities are at your discretion and self-organised.

When you have booked, please email me ([David Wood](#)) so that I can note numbers and keep you informed of plans.

Contact me with any questions as necessary.

[David Wood](#)

Member's Forum

Bike recovery mission in Namibia

The first time that I met Axel was in July 2017 when Alex Richter and I were touring in Namibia. We were at a lodge alongside the Cunene river on the Namibian border with Angola when I received a mail from Hans in Dubai that Axel had broken down in Africa and could we help? But Axel was somewhere in Tanzania, rather a long way from where we were. He sorted himself in the end and sent an iconic picture of his 1200GS strapped upright on the back of a 40 foot flatbed artic on its way to Dar es Salam. (see www.myworldmylife.de) There, he had a man install another engine for a mere \$1500 which was a good recovery from a blown engine scenario.

Some of you may be wondering at this point how this came about. I surmise as follows. He dropped the bike in northern Namibia and so it was running for a while lain on its side. Under such circumstances the oil drains away from the oil pickups in the sump and they will suck air. Damage may well be caused to the plain metal big end bearings. Further hard riding (Axel is known for such) will allow the now damaged white metal bearing shells to get worn away and clearances will increase until the engine is sounding like a rattle gun.



Mike, Axel and Alex at Windhoek July 2017.

We met in Windhoek some time later for one night and went our separate ways. Axel returned to Capetown and shipped his bike back to Dubai later selling it, buying a 2017 water cooled R1200GSA. During 2018 he did an epic tour of Saudi Arabia with this bike. And in March of 2019 he again set off for Africa, this time air-freighting the bike to Capetown.

A few days later he was about 120km north of Aus in Namibia when he dropped the bike on a sand road and ended up underneath it. He struggled to get his left leg out from under but gave up when he realized that his foot was facing the wrong way. He lay there under the bike for some time until some tourists came along and lifted the machine off him and loaded him into their car. At this point his luck changed as the tiny settlement of Helmeringhausen some 40km further on has a hotel run by expatriate Germans. They organised a Cessna to fly him to a doctor in Windhoek where his leg was straightened out and strapped up so he could fly back to Dubai. Meanwhile the hotelier recovered his bike to the hotel.

Axel, Hans and I met in Dubai during August. We saw the latest X-ray showing the titanium rod and the partial re-fusion of his tibia; it was clear though that the bone still required some time to make itself

whole again. We discussed the possible plans to continue with the ride all the way up the western coast line of Africa to Morocco – depending upon what the doctors were telling him the following month. I did some planning after that of the route and the not inconsiderable cost of the necessary visas (£1420!) not to mention shipping one of my bikes to Capetown.

On 3 October Axel sent a mail to the effect that he needed to get his bike back from Africa so we started looking at shippers and how this might be effected. By mid November this was still not resolved and so with the potential costs being already quite high of a yet incomplete solution, I made the suggestion to just get myself to the bike and ride it back to the shipper in Capetown. Meanwhile Alex back in Germany was in on this conversation and he was also very keen to help.

And so it was I got on a plane to Capetown arriving early morning on 3 December. The connection to get to Helmeringhausen was to be by Intercape bus from Capetown to Keetmanshoop in Namibia and then by a hired car for the remaining 220km to Helmeringhausen.

On Thursday 5 December I got on the bus heading for Namibia. I was sat next to a Namibian with an interesting job. He is an ROV pilot for De Beers. They have 3 ships sat offshore the Skeleton coast and they are mining the seabed for diamonds using dynamic positioning for the vessel. The ROV is the size of a truck and has caterpillar tracks and a long arm projecting forward that can be swept through 90 degrees. In this way they can vacuum up the sediments from the sea floor in a 60m wide swathe and send the material up the dredge pipe to the vessel. On board they screen in stages and finally through a cyclone to recover the diamonds and depending upon their success, a helicopter picks up the diamonds one to two times a week. Fascinating!

The coach is very comfortable and by midnight we were at the RSA/Namibia border posts where the customs at both sides delayed things awhile. And by about 3am the next day the bus stopped for 15minutes at an Engen petrol station 5km before

Keetmanshoop. Some passengers got off here but we were clearly not yet to the town itself and with the advice of the ROV man I stayed on the bus expecting it to make a further stop at another Engen station in the town. It was then with some alarm that I realised the bus was heading northwards into the dark leaving the lights of the town behind. I went forward and hammered on the driver's compartment. They eventually managed to find somewhere to turn the bus and its luggage trailer around and drop me back again where they had stopped before. I got a ride to the hotel which was closed and the security guard asleep, so I dozed on the concrete forecourt of a nearby lit up petrol station until dawn when I went back to the hotel slept on a bench until the staff arrived.

At 10am the driver of the hire car came looking for me and he turned out to be a local teacher of English and a fast driver. I bought some bungies to tie on my case and we set off on the last leg of the journey to Helmeringhausen. This goes by way of a good tar road, the B4, to the turn off for Bethanie. Beyond that village the last 80km is a gravel road.



80 km of gravel/sand road

Some 2 hours of travel brought us to the hotel just after midday and I presented myself at the desk only to be advised that check-in was not until 2pm! So I ordered a beer and sat down to wait, shortly to be presented with an envelope containing the bike key and various documents including the Customs Carnet. The Net was working so I corresponded with Axel and others that I had made it to the bike that was parked under a shade across the street.



Axel's bike parked here since March

I checked the bike out and then caught up with some sleep. I went to see the man at the garage whom I had asked to start the bike. He said that his son had started it and all was good but I was still worried that the battery would be well down so I did not try to start it just yet.

Saturday dawned with the noises of what turned out to be geese outside my window. Breakfast was served at 7am and after that I got on the gear and loaded up. Now the panniers were full and the bike was parked in sand so it was quite a struggle to get it backed up and turned around to get it out of the gate onto the road. Tyres were at 1.3 and 1.5bar so that was good, also the range was 414km so the tank was full. I ran it up the tarmac to the T junction.



The street in Helmeringhausen

All felt normal so it was back to the hotel for some water in the camel bac and then I set off down the gravel road. I was a little cautious to start with as some of the track was loose but as I

gained confidence with the front end I was soon spinning along at 80-90kph. At around the 45km mark there were softened areas of the track due the overnight rain. It was a little tricky getting through this next 5km or so but after that the track was mostly dry and shortly I saw the spire of the church in Bethanie in the distance. I eventually located an air line, the man explained that the power was out but there might be enough in the tank to inflate the tyres.

And so back to Keetmanshoop at 130kph. By 11am I was on the way again having refuelled and sent messages that all was well and I was back on the tar. Another 300km got me to the petrol station at Noordoewer which is the Namibian border post and by just after 2pm I was on the way south on the N7 in RSA to Springbok by 3pm and Annie's B&B which is some 120km south of the border. The first day was done and the bike successfully re-imported into RSA with the entry stamp in the carnet. I adjourned to the Springbok hotel where the proportions are more than generous and refuelled myself.

Sunday morning brought a power cut during breakfast but a full English was served including the famous boerwurst (literally, farmers sausage). Annie herself turned up and we had quite a chat. I set off again at 9.30 having persuaded an ATM to part with money; most were out due to the power cut. And then ran down the N7 until Vanrhynsdorp where I refuelled with only 9km left on the range. Cutting it a bit fine! Continuing, you get to Clanwilliam and the Olifants river. Here the road sweeps down and across a bridge



Bridge over the Olifants river

and up again and passes by the Clanwilliam dam site where the road has recently been realigned and work is in progress to raise the dam.



The Clanwilliam dam

All along the eastern side now you see orange trees and an irrigation canal after the big lake behind the dam as you travel down the valley. Next was Citrusdal and I turned off here to have a look as we stayed here last time. Rejoining the N7, the road climbs steeply up the Piekenierskloof pass and after the summit there are some excellent views of the plain below to the west. After getting down some 500m in altitude I turned off down the R44 passing Porterville, through Wellington then Paarl to arrive at Franschhoek by early afternoon. Day 2 was done by 3pm or so with the bike parked up at Centreville B&B.

After a brief rest I set off on foot for the main street, saw a microbrewery that was not there last time and sat down and engaged in people watching for a while whilst sampling the beers. Thereafter adjourned to the Allora Italian restaurant where the frutti di mare with pasta and a white wine and garlic sauce was divine. Accompanied of course by superb white wines for a mere £18!

Monday morning and I had breakfast in the garden and a chat with the daughter of the owners. I had read about the motor museum and a Manx Norton so I had to see that as it was only just down the road. I went to the museum and found that there are four buildings containing a very extensive collection of cars

from the very beginnings onwards and the occasional bikes.



The”

Manx Norton”

turned out to be a bitza Norton made from a wideline featherbed frame and long roadholders. It had an early laydown Norton gearbox powered by a probably '60s ES2 500cc pushrod engine. The front brake was early Commando as was the speedometer. The petrol tank was a work of art. A short megaphone stopped by the rear wheel so it must sound quite nice. So it was not a Manx but a nicely prepared bike possibly for local vintage racing events. All of this is in the far reaches of a large estate which is a winery of course. There was even a race track.

And so to the last leg of 70km of the journey to Paardon Eiland which is an industrial area just north of the Capetown container terminal to Econotrans in Milner road. Here I handed over the bike to the shipper with whom prior arrangements had been made. I removed the screen, the mirrors and the panniers just to lessen the size of the beast. They have then to make a crate around the bike and weigh it and measure it to be able to compute the

final cost of the shipping.



Partially dismantled ready for crating

For the curious, costs were £1570.28: Transport including airfares £1087.82, B&Bs £298.32, phone roaming £50.00, petrol £52.88 and food and beer was £81.26. Distance ridden was 1292km broken down as below.

Helmeringhausen to Bethanie 82 km on dirt average 60kph.

Bethanie to Keetmanshoop 139km on tar average 105kph

Keetmanshoop to Noordoewer 305km average 112kph

Vioolsdrift to Springbok 119km average 117kph on the N7

Springbok to Franschhoek 565km average 101kph

And the final leg was 73km from Franschhoek to the shipper in Capetown

Please also see Axelgross.wordpress.com and www.myworldmylife.de for other details and journeys.

Post script: Arriving back at Heathrow after the overnight flight from Capetown I was feeling a bit muzzy as you do after such a flight and very little sleep. There was the usual scrummage of passengers standing up and grabbing luggage whilst we waited in vain to the air bridge. Turned out that it was broken so steps had to be ordered. When people finally start to move and I

had some room I gathered my bag and my helmet and then tried to put on the bike jacket. This was not going too well until I realised that I was trying to put it on upside down! Several minutes later I am edging my way towards the E-gate and put my hand to the inside pocket of my jacket to get out my passport. Momentary concern set in as I discovered that the zip was open then a full blown panic as I did not find the passport. Rapidly thinking, I correctly concluded that I had forgotten to do up the zip upon boarding and that my passport was still on the plane. I called Immigration officials and was taken aside where presentation of my UK driving licence established my identity. Details were copied and a man came and took the paper away to return saying yes, I could enter the country – we know who you are! Next stop was the BA desk where four persons told contradictory tales about what might happen next. No picking up of the phone directing someone to search. I was not impressed by their attitude. Ultimately I found the lost luggage office and reported the circumstances. Today I finally got through on the phone and they had it! So my wife then went to my daughter's and sent them money online. Our internet is down here for the moment but hopefully DHL will deliver my passport next week.

Mike Anthony

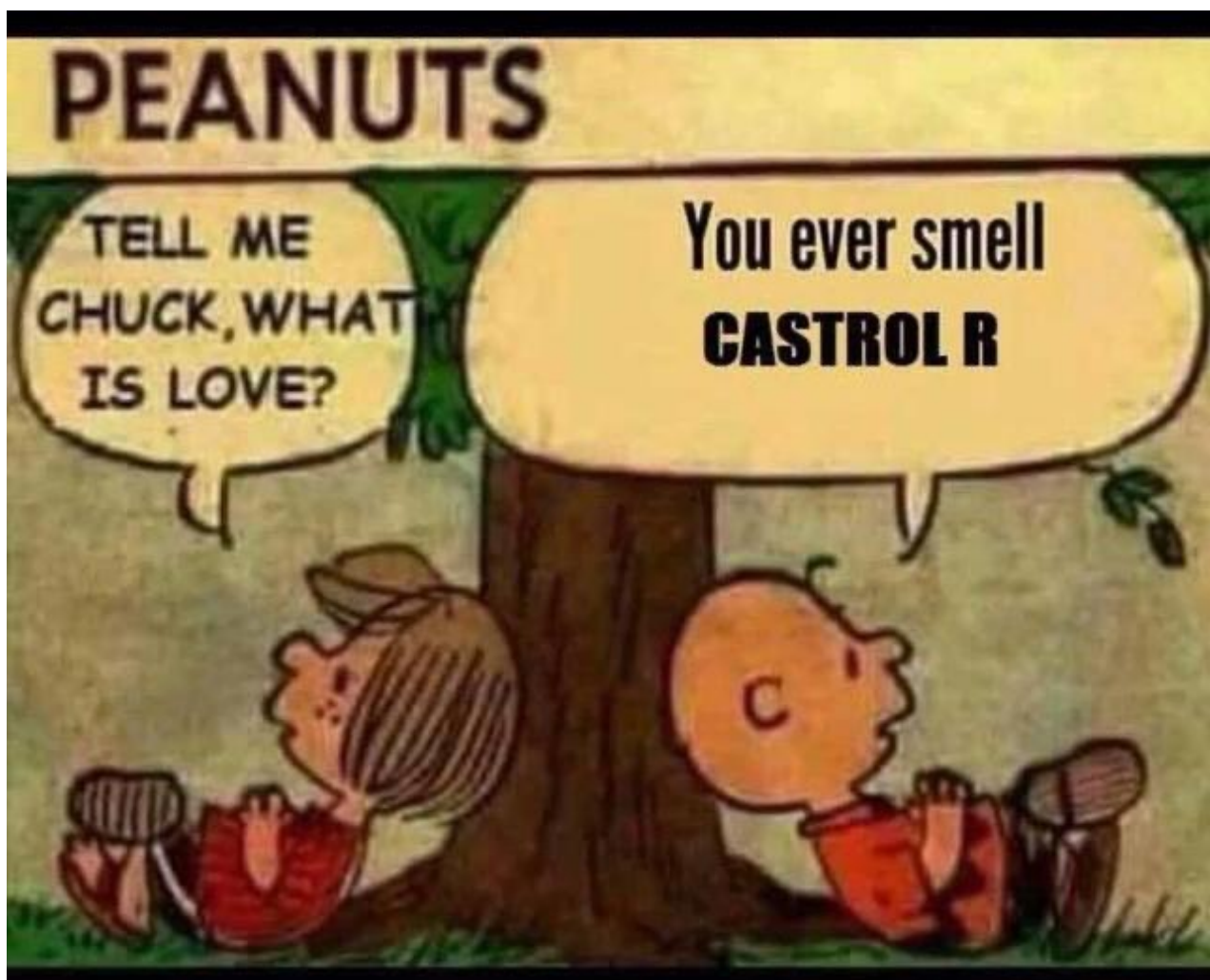
An epic journey Mike, Axel is lucky to have such a friend. Ed.

Smells

I have smelt the tang of rain on dry land in England, America, and Australia, but wherever I smell it I am taken to Johannesburg and my six acre smallholding which at the end of winter would not have seen rain for three or four months. The scent of the rain on the dusty land covered in tinder dry grass would overpower me and always gave me the promise of Spring on the way and delivered with small green shoots within days. The never-ending boring blue skies of Winter with the morning frosts of 4° below zero would soon be gone, as would the ability to plan a lunch-time barbeque months ahead knowing the weather would be sunny and the afternoon temperature would have risen to a pleasant 18°.

It is extraordinary how smells recall people, places and events from almost a lifetime away. Ozone on an English seashore reminds me of being taken to Brighton for a ride on a speedboat giving trips from the pier: wet varnish reminds me of painting my little 12 ft boat that we kept on moorings in Dar es Salaam in tropical Africa: fresh cut grass remind me of the perfume of a particular girlfriend: garlic butter takes me back to Cape Town and eating freshly picked mussels, barbequed and dipped in the sauce in the warmth of a long Summer's evening whilst drinking copious quantities of ice cold wine.

By far exceeding all these is the waft of Castrol 'R'. For the uninitiated, motor racing on the late 50s was still a blood-and-guts affair where drivers were frequently killed, ordinary sports cars that



had been 'souped-up' were raced with little more modification than a bigger down-draft carburettor, the training class cars were Formula 500 with motorcycle engines and motorbikes were ridden by gods. I am not talking Grand Prix level here because Brands Hatch in those days was a nice little local circuit in Kent from where you could see nearly all the track no matter where you stood, especially if you happened to be a small boy perched on the shoulders of his 6 ft Dad. I remember the names of the up and coming stars like Mike Hawthorn, Rory Salvadori, Stuart Lewis Evans and, crowning glories, we were once graced by the presence of Geoff Duke on his Norton and later by John Surtees, also Norton mounted. Those were that days of AJS, Matchless, BSA and, of course, Norton, and nobody had yet heard of the Japanese.

What was so special about all these bikes? Their smell! Exhaust emissions were a foreign concept, which was just as well because they all burnt oil and if they weren't burning it they were leaking it to the extent that my decision to buy Japanese for my first bike some 10 years later was based on

the concept that they didn't leak and so I wouldn't have to clean my father's garage floor. The racers all used the same engine oil, Castrol 'R', which has a particular odour that I swear I can still detect from a mile away and it was heaven to a young petrol-head's nose. The aces in their leathers, the noise of the bikes, the smell of the oil, the spills and the thrills of the racing were excitement personified.

Much later in life it occurred to me that Castrol had missed a marketing trick, because if they had captured that smell and put it in a perfume bottle then hopeful young men would surely have flocked to buy it for their girlfriends. What could be more cool and more confirming of true love than having one's beloved smell of Castrol 'R'? And now, even later, I think that maybe they did and sold a bottle to every lad for at least a month and then realised that there was no repeat business as for some unfathomable reason girls said that they didn't want to smell of dirty motor bikes. What did a biker have to do to attract his object of desire? *Bakson*

A date for your 2020 diary -

[Welsh National Rally](#) - 2nd may 2020 - 9.00 am start from Welshpool Livestock Market

It is some years since Maureen and I competed in the Welsh Rally. We have done it as a single bike entry and also as a team entry. You can chose which award you wish to go for, e.g. number of checkpoints. What I will guarantee is that it will take you to places you didn't know existed. **How about a Suffolk Riders Team?** Entry forms are available on line now. *Keith Gilbert (NB we would need a volunteer to organise a team! Ed.)*



The Last Laugh Word

So 2019 has come to a close and we're on the 5th Issue of the Newsletter. When I volunteered to start the process off, it was impossible to imagine how many members would be willing to contribute their stories or articles, and even be guest editor. My thanks go out to all who did, it made my job both interesting and rewarding. There was a saying that every soldier has a story in his knapsack, I'm sure every member must also have a story. In this issue we even have the pleasure of a laugh from *Bakson* - more please. By way of a small contribution in the same vein, I came across this joke over the Christmas holidays:

Pete was going on an early Sunday runout with the lads (could be on a GS). He went into the next bedroom and quietly got his bike gear on, then into the garage to check the tyres, oil and petrol, but when he opened the garage door the weather was terrible. He checked the forecast on his phone and found it was going to be like that all day. He went back inside, took his clothes off and slipped into bed. He then cuddled his wife and said, "The weather out there is terrible." To which she gave a sleepy reply, "I know, and my daft husband's gone out on his bike!"

A bit of housekeeping. The keeper of the club's MyRouteApp database received a 'friend' request from someone with the username 'S-RAM Routes'. There is no way of verifying who in the club the friend request came from, and being slightly paranoid about scammers and hackers our webmaster (a.k.a me) has not granted access. NB anyone in the world could ask to be a friend. Could the member who initiated this request make himself known to webmaster@suffolkriders.co.uk then access will be granted.



On a personal note, I've also enjoyed the committee meetings, with the usual banter, barracking and occasional argument. We had our last meeting on the 12th Dec. which must go down in the record books for being completed within an hour. Could it be something to do with two members sending their apologies for absence? Two members are leaving and I look forward to seeing their replacements on the 14th Jan. At the AGM Jon J put out a plea for more members to become involved with the running of the

club. It can be very rewarding, so please think about it.

Next month's guest editor will be Keith Gilbert, so please send your copy to him. It just remains for me to wish all who read this letter a very enjoyable and safe New Year. *Ed.*

