

Issue No 9 - August 2009



Legion Rider

Newsletter of the Royal British Legion Riders Branch



The Legion's mission is to safeguard the welfare, interests and memory of those who are serving or have served in the Armed Forces - Registered Charity Number: 219279



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Careers Advice - 0800 1694073 (Freephone)

Website

We were pleased to announce the release of a fully redesigned rblr.co.uk website earlier this year. The redesigned site incorporates a completely new look and feel, layout, and navigation structure.

We now are receiving an average of 280 unique visitors to the site on a daily basis with approximately half of these being first time visitors.

So you haven't seen the new website? Well all your old favourites are still there including your photos and branch calendar page but some new features have been added. There are now multimedia items such as videos, music and radio interviews as well as desktop wallpapers for you to download. You can also purchase wristbands directly from the site

However this is only the start, we have plans to release more elements including an online shop to allow non-members to buy merchandise to help boost our Poppy Appeal collection as well as an internal merchandise page, which will also be released within the next month, to simplify online orders using PayPal for members of the forum.

However I still need your help, I am constantly looking for good quality images and video of the Riders Branch to keep our site up to date. You can send them to me along with any comments or suggestions on how we can further improve the site. Please send an email to webmaster@rblr.co.uk.

So what are you waiting for, logon to www.rblr.co.uk and remember if you haven't got a forum account apply for one now. Entrance to the forum is free to all members you just need to sign up for an account. See the website for more information.

Mark Keeling

RBLR Webmonster

Chairmans Dit

End of July already and the year has flown by. This year has so far seen some extraordinary events with The RBLR1000 right out in front. BZ's to Paddy McCreanor, and those who took part, raising a very significant amount for the Poppy Appeal.

The National Rally, again a big success and well done to the Midlands for exemplary organisation – can the South cap it next year and will it rain? Many little Branch run events all over the country, showing our versatility and doing what most of us enjoy – camping/beer/riding and meeting friends.

And at the end of this year we celebrate 5 years of existence with a party on 28th November – will you be there? More details inside.

So new friends, new horizons, more things to do than you can afford not to. Where next? Remember that 1500+ bikes on the road dream? Well, we can dream bigger with over 2200 of us – so let's set a date for the meet of all meets next year – one destination – many departures - one aim – RIDE AND ENJOY. I'll be there.

Ride Safe, Rubber Side Down

Paul

Chairman "The Riders"



Know your Committee & Forum

Riders Branch - Committee members Quiz - Vice Chairman

Name: JJ

Location: Upavon/Wareham

Service Career (if applicable): 24 and counting

Age: 44

Occupation: Forces

Do you have a nickname and how did you obtain it?: When I went through training Ray Winston was playing a character called Johnny Jarvis, as my surname is Jarvis I acquired that name, later to be shortened to JJ.

How long have you been riding and what is your current bike(s)? 28 Years, Pan European 1100

How many bikes have you owned and what were they?: Puch Maxi, Honda C50, Yamy 50, RD125, Wetdream, CBR1000, CBR600 x 3, RSV mille, VFR800(non vtec), Blackbird, Pan. I'm a Honda Freak.

Best ever biking experience. Every RBLR Event.

What is the most ridiculous biking related thing you have done?: Acquired 3 Pan Europeans in a week. (Apart from joining the RBLR)

What is your dream motorcycle. MV Augusta

Most likely to say?: Ram it!

Least likely to say?: Of Course your right Paul, I agree with everything you say.

What are your non-motorcycling pastimes (apart from drinking and partying)? Family

Favourite:

Film(s): Any Action

Book(s): Tom Clancy

Food(s): Beans

Quotation(s): If it's not broke.....

TV Programme(s): CSI

Music: Soft Rock

Drinks(s): Jamesons

Place(s) to visit: Australia

When you were young what did you want Jim to Fix for you?: "Didn't have a telly"

Tell us THREE things about yourself that we wouldn't know. BUT TWO of these should be true, but ONE should be totally made up:

1. I have a cap badge collection of over 500 Cavalry/Glengarry Badges. 2. I have a 4 foot 1 eyed snake. 3. I once had 6 numbers on the National Lottery

JJ Jarvis

Vice Chairman

The RBLR Forum

Welcome to the RBLR forum my name is Garry Edwards I am the Forum Administrator. I am a member of the Riders Branch the same as any other member, I just volunteered to administer the forum on behalf of the Branch Committee. I do this job in my spare time the same way all members of the branch committee do, so if any members of the branch committee does takes a little time to get back to you please be patient.

As we are a national branch the easiest way for us to keep in touch with each other is via the forum. The forum is where our members post what events are going on in their areas or ask questions on numerous subjects, from How do I fix this to is any one up for a ride out this weekend ?

To register on the forum you need go to www.rblr.co.uk click on the Membership Forum Login, it is on the top right hand side of the main screen. You will then see the Login screen, at the top of this screen you will see the register tab, Click that and follow the on screen instructions. When it comes to the screen where you fill in your personal details please include your First, Nick and Surnames in your Username Eg; Ian (JJ) Jarvis. We found that it helps us to identify who is who slightly easier, and that it makes the administration much quicker.

I will then get an e-mail telling me that a new account has been registered. I will then check the persons details against the branch register to see if they are a member, if they are I will activate the account and they will have full access to the forum, if I can not find them on the register I send them an e-mail asking where/when they joined the branch.

New members, please be patient, as we have to check membership details prior to giving you full access, normally your name will not appear on the branch register until you have received your welcome pack from the Branch secretary.

Once you have joined the forum please go to the "New Members Introduction" section and read through the announcements and what other members have wrote about themselves, and write up an introduction about yourself.

A couple of points to note are that the forum will not let you type swear words and pictures with full nudity in them are not allowed, this is because we do have junior members on the forum. We are a friendly lot, but be warned the squaddie's sick sense of humour is very prevalent within the forum, and mickey taking is the norm, so please do not take offence it is mostly said in good humour. I hope to see you on the forum soon and my Did you know ? through out the rest of this news letter will give you some help along the way.

Garry Edwards

Forum Administrator - forum@rblr.co.uk

It's what we do.....



My dad is Irish and my mum is Iranian, which meant that we spent most of our family holidays in Customs.

5th Year Party.....& Sponsorship

5 Years and 2200 members on

As explained on the Home Page of The Royal British Legion Riders Branch web site (under history), the inaugural meeting of the Riders Branch took place on the 24th Nov 2004. At that meeting a committee was set up of 14 and the rest, as they say is history.

In 2009 someone realised that this was the fifth year of the branch and that it would be an ideal opportunity to mark the anniversary with a party. As the inaugural meeting took place in Cheltenham and Cheltenham is in Gloucestershire and I am the Gloucestershire rep', this big finger poked out of the sky and said "it will be you". Tony Lewis (sponsorship rep') leapt into action finding a big sponsor for the event. Not only did they promise a shed load of money but helped find a location near Cheltenham for the party to take place.

So, the details are:

- **Saturday 28th November 2009 at the Hatherly Manor, Down Hatherly Lane, Gloucester and for SAT Navs GL2 9QA.**
- **Tickets will cost £10 per person which includes a meal. Each member may bring one guest. Additional guests may be invited nearer the time depending on how the tickets sell.**
- **Detailed information is via the members' forum or through me Marcus, by using a special email address fifthbirthday@rblr.co.uk .**
- **Dress is essential. If you must have direction on what to wear then anything from pyjamas to evening dress, you decide.**
- **Numbers: We need a minimum of 200 which includes official guests and a maximum of 350. Tickets are already being sent out in groups as the cheques come in so best not to leave it too late.**
- **Food will be three hot choices including a vegetarian option.**
- **Entertainment is two rock groups, one of which was so impressed with us when they played for us at a regional rally half of them joined the Branch. Currently we are organising a cake; or two so bring some small containers because it's all got to go.**
- **A limited amount of camping is available but with no facilities. Details via me.**

The planning goes on and updates will be found on the forum. If you have not got excited about this idea of a branch party, then the staff at the Manor are. One receptionist was heard to say to another, "those are three of the bikers who are coming in November". The other replied "but bikers are all old, their not". Bless her.

Marcus Bristow

Gloucestershire Representative

I am delighted to report that our main corporate sponsors have continued their staunch support of the Branch.

White Dalton Motorcycle Solicitors continue to fund the cost of producing this magazine. They also entered 3 members into our RBLR 1000, 2 of them completed the run in under 22 hours, sadly their colleague suffered a punctured oil cooler and had to be recovered. They were so impressed with Paddy's efforts in putting this together that "negotiations" are in progress for something next year – keep watching the Forum.

Blade Motorcycle Group recently opened their new Victory showroom in Swindon, next door to their Triumph dealership. We had an excellent time at their open-event day in May to mark the opening of this showroom. Great fun was had by those that took part in the escorted ride-outs. Blade Group have generously come forward and made a considerable contribution as sole sponsors of our 5th Birthday Celebration at Hatherley Manor Hotel on Saturday 28th November. This should prove to be one excellent party, make sure you get your tickets, as numbers are capped at 350 for this prestigious event.

Finally as a breath of fresh air, our Mr Secretary was approached by the Director of **Dorset Canopy Sales & Hire** to "pop down and see him" – whereupon he was donated 2 brand new Gazebos/Tents worth £500 each. But it gets even better, he then went back to his storage area, opened up and asked if we could make use of this.....

You will see this bike at some events/shows that we attend as we intend to use it as a crowd-puller to our stand. This sort of thing completely restores your faith in the good of some people. May it continue.



Graham Barber - (Dorset Rep) puts The chopper under some pressure!

Tony Lewis

National Sponsorship Co-ordinator.

Did you know ?

follows:

0 - 9	Pte	400 - 499	2/Lt	1100 - 1199	Maj/Gen
10 - 24	L/Cpl	500 - 599	Lt	1200 - 1299	Lt/Gen
25 - 49	Cpl	600 - 699	Capt	1300 - 1399	Gen
50 - 99	Sgt	700 - 799	Maj	1400 +	Field Marshal
100 - 199	S/Sgt	800 - 899	Lt/Col		
200 - 299	WOII	900 - 999	Col		
300 - 399	WOI	1000-1099	Brig		

Battle of Singapore

Battle of Singapore 1-15 Feb 1942

Ah it's that time of year again when Pete asks us to put pen to paper. Since most of my articles have been about Battle field tours I thought it only prudent to write about my most recent opportunity to visit the site of one of Britain's not so finest hours.

This year work has taken me as far a field as Singapore where I was fortunate enough on one trip to actually get to spend a weekend out there and get some me time in rather than sitting in a factory board room or hotel lobby.



Very little remains of the old city now as the Singaporeans have quite rightly modernised their country with a communications infrastructure that would be the envy of many commuters around the globe. Singapore is a very modern vibrant city that is still very much the gateway to the Far East due in the main to its deep water ports. What does remain from the 1940's is the government buildings, the Chapel at Changi jail, the Commonwealth war graves and the Ford motor factory the site of the surrender of both Commonwealth forces and the Japanese.

I had always known of the fall of Singapore by the commonwealth forces during the Second World War. But what shocked me were the circumstances

surrounding this surrender and the great bluff by the Japanese commander that led to this capitulation. Singapore was considered to be impenetrable with its huge coastal defences and large garrison unfortunately the Japanese thought otherwise and this led to the surrender of 100,000 Commonwealth soldiers to 30,000 Japanese soldiers who were down to their last rounds of ammunition.

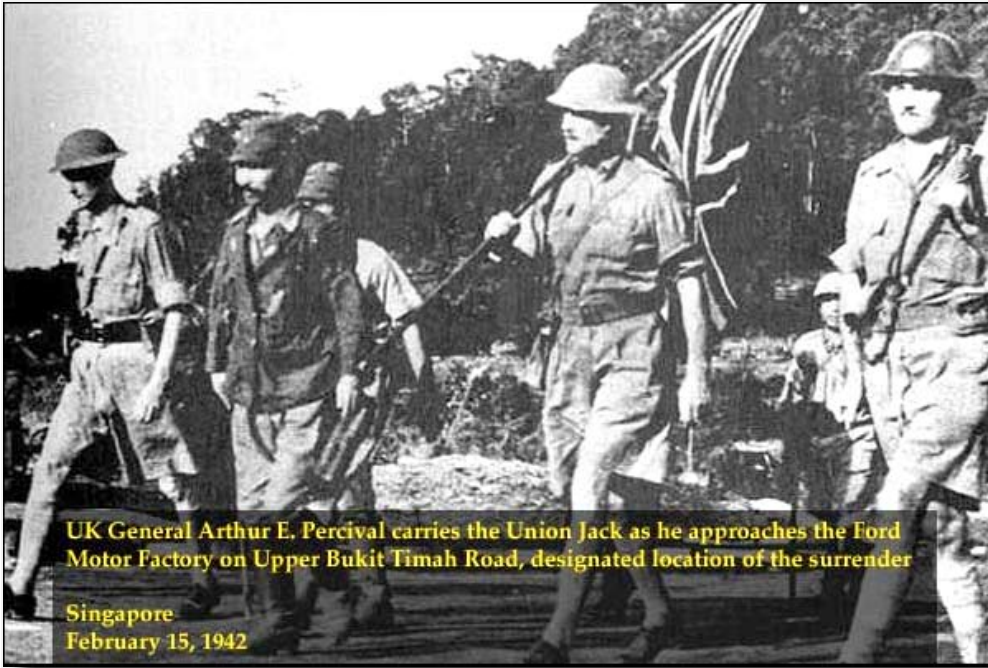
On 1 Feb 1942, having fought through Malaya the Japanese reached Singapore island after overrunning British, Australian, and Indian troops. On 5 Feb, down to 18 tanks and lacking ammunition and food, the smaller force commanded by General Yamashita attacked the island of Pulau Ubin on the east, creating a bluff that another Japanese force was attacking from the east. This deceived General Percival commander Commonwealth forces, who moved his major ammunition stores to the east when the actual Japanese attack came down from the northwest. On 8 Feb, the actual attack on Singapore started with landing of troops on Singapore's northwest coast. Australian troops fought off initial landing attempts while inflicting enormous casualties on the part of the Japanese. However, the Australian troops retreated unnecessarily amidst the confusion of battle, allowing Japanese troops to gain a strong foothold at the shore defence installations. Subsequent landings would be unopposed. From very early on, British commander Percival had his troops destroy docks and fuel dumps to prevent enemy capture. While it indeed took away Japan's ability to have readily available infrastructure and various resources, the early destruction of such facilities further destroyed the defenders morale. Such moves instilled the soldiers with the notion that the battle had already been lost.

On 10 Feb, the Japanese 5th and 18th Divisions routed the 22nd Australian Brigade, who retreated further into the city and turned on its citizens, pillaging the city of its food and liquor. By this time, Japanese tanks were also in Singapore in force, first routing Indian troops at the hills of Bukit Timah then denying a successful counterattack by British Brigadier Coates. While RAF fighter pilots bravely downed several Japanese bombers early in the assault, most of them were picked off one by one in dogfights by the superior Zero fighters. Singapore citizens continued to evacuate the city as they had done earlier, though at this stage many boats out of the city faced strafing by Japanese fighters. On 13 Feb, Japanese troops would seize or damage most city reservoirs, attempting to cause chaos by drying up the city. "While there's water," Lieutenant General Arthur Percival says, "We fight on." On 14 Feb, Japanese troops closed into the city, and atrocities ensued. Lt. Western, a British medical officer, surrendered with a white flag but was bayoneted to death. Then, the Japanese troops entered the Alexandra Hospital, killing over 300 doctors, nurses, and patients, most by bayonets. When Yamashita heard about the incident, he had the Japanese soldiers responsible for the attack executed at the hospital.

Other reports of atrocities including gruesome accounts where Japanese troops emasculated captured British soldiers and sewed their penises to their lips before hanging them in trees where Allied patrols would find them; signs on their necks read "he took a long time to die". Such displays were meant to, and were successful to a certain degree, to demoralize Allied soldiers.

At 1400 hours on Sunday, 15 Feb, Percival decided that he only had enough supplies for two more days of fighting, and surrendered. Yamashita asked Percival, who wore the baggy British tropical uniform shorts that date, "do you wish to surrender unconditionally?", and Percival answered "Yes we do", and that marked the fall of the "Impregnable Fortress" of Singapore to Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita. Yamashita's troops had only enough ammunition to fight a few more days, but Percival did not have that intelligence. Singapore, the Gibraltar of the East, would remain under Japanese control until the end of the war. Until the last moment of battle, the British shore batteries of 15" and 19" guns pointed southward, waiting for the naval assault expected but never came.

Battle of Singapore (continued)



UK General Arthur E. Percival carries the Union Jack as he approaches the Ford Motor Factory on Upper Bukit Timah Road, designated location of the surrender

Singapore
February 15, 1942

Conclusion of the Campaign

At the conclusion of the Japanese campaign at Malaya, all Allied troops at the peninsula, numbered at over 138,000, were killed or captured. Many of the captured would endure a four-year long brutal captivity as forced labour in Indo-China. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill considered the British defeat at Singapore one of the most humiliating British defeats of all time. Many historians suggested similarly.

Epilogue: Sook Ching Massacre

16 Feb-2 Mar 1942

After Percival's surrender that concluded the military campaign, the Japanese Army became concerned about both moral and monetary support from Malayan and Singaporean Chinese to Chiang Kaishek's Nationalist government in China. In a process that the Japanese

called Daikensho ("the Great Inspection") and the Chinese called Sook Ching ("the Purge", coined in 1946), Yamashita authorized his men to cooperate with the Kempeitai on a purge of Chinese groups that were likely to undermine Japanese occupation. Some of the groups targeted were known supporters of the China Relief Fund, Chinese men with tattoos (believed to be members of secret societies), communists, and politicians, among others. The purge soon expanded to cover almost all Chinese men, many of whom had nothing to do with any of the anti-Japanese groups. During the purge, Singaporean Chinese men were sent to remote sites such as Changi, Ponggol, Blakang Mati, and Bedok and executed by drowning or by machine gunning; in Penang, indiscriminate killings took place, where entire villages of Chinese were imprisoned and executed. The purge was called off on 3 Mar 1942. Because of the lack of records, death tolls were not certain. Post-war Japanese authority recognized the figure of 5,000 killed, while Singaporean estimated upwards of 100,000. Most historians agreed that the number was likely somewhere between 25,000 and 50,000, based on evidence provided during post-war trials. The massacre deprived the Japanese of any cooperation from Malaysians and Singaporeans, Chinese or otherwise. Consequently, significant amount of troops became tied-down in Malaya and Singapore to maintain order.

Alex Poole Committee Member



Singapore today; left the Ford Factory, and right the Singapore Cemetary

Legion Values

- Reflection - through Remembrance of past sacrifice in the cause of freedom
- Hope - by remembering the past, a younger generation has the chance of a better future
- Comradeship - through shared experience and mutual support
- Selflessness - by putting others first
- Service - to those in need and in support of the whole community



Ladies, Gents. Welcome to yet another issue of the Legion Rider magazine and please let me thank you in advance for spending the next few minutes musing through my witterings.

The first six months of 2009 have been a tad hectic for the Branch and all the Regions. The Southern Region has also been a major player with many events having been attended by Legion Riders in support of local RBL branches/clubs and indeed at RBL county level. This has helped to cement our standing as a national branch which is willing to assist branches at village fetes/military shows through to supporting counties at major shows / Armed Forces Day events and indeed everywhere in between. We have also had our own high profile events such as the Poppy Bike Show in Plymouth and WSM bike nights amongst others, and then there are some of the smaller events such as an Armed Forces Day charity bowling night and static stands in town centres raising awareness of Legion in the Community. We also supported the Ace Café at the Margate Meltdown and raised in excess of £1000 for the Appeal in the process. Obviously I cannot name every event organised / attended nor every member that has taken part, but I would like to personally thank every Legion Rider who has supported at least one event and suggest to those that haven't, to do so. The sense of satisfaction, knowing that your little bit of effort has gone some way to assisting those serving and ex-serving members of our Fantastic Armed Forces who require a wee bit of help, is a huge reward in itself which normally results in individuals getting the bug to do more. Please help wherever/whenever/however you can – your bit really DOES make a difference.

Well, that more or less summarised what we have done within the Region, but what about north of the M4/M25? I know that we provided a bit of a spectacle arriving at the NMA as part of the Memorial Run in May, as well as attending some of the other Regional rallies and at the National Rally (BZ to the Midlands Mob). Another event which was a huge hit with Southern members was the RBLR1000 Saddlesore (BZ to Paddy and Team).

The last word on events for this issue has to go to Wootton Bassett. Tommo and his team's ongoing liaison with the local RBL branch has ensured our continued high profile involvement in honouring our fallen Heroes as they pass through this small town on their final journey home. I have only been able to attend twice and both occasions were very emotional and respectful. Seeing big burley bikers fighting to hold back tears is a sobering sight which very nearly set me off as well. An event is due in Aug/Sep (date tbc so please check the forum) whereby the Riders Branch has been asked to put on a static motorcycle display in the town, in support of the local branch's Poppy Appeal and as part of the Beautiful Bassett summer of events. Please attend if possible to show support to the town and to recognise their efforts in honouring lost comrades. As I write this article for our magazine, there is much comment in the press about the renaming of the town to ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT. I can see both sides of the debate about whether or not the word ROYAL should be added. I agree it is the Fallen Few that should be remembered and not the town they pass through but to rename the town with a Royal title does bestow an honour onto our Heroes as Royal recognition is given as they pass through. Both arguments are valid, and whatever happens I do hope that everyone will be able to accept the reasoning behind the outcome.

Moving on to what is coming up... Well, the two most important events on the calendar's horizon are the Bunny Bash at Bordon (Hampshire) on 25-27 Sep. Tks to those whom have already bought your tickets in advance to allow the organisers to start settling some advance invoices. To those who intend attending, but have not yet purchased tickets, please do so for 2 reasons. 1, you get a ticket (we are limited to an absolute maximum of 150 ticket sales due to Fire Regs) and 2, it will help the organisers to confirm budgets and settle invoices as they arrive. You can get your tickets in person from Dave Gibson or Dave Moore, or by post as per the BB4 thread on the forum. Paypal payment is also available via the BB4 thread but costs an extra 50p. The other important event is the AGM/Remembrance Parade 7/8 Nov respectively. These events are due to take place in Oldbury (West Midlands) with a bit of a shindig on the Sat night after the AGM. It would be great to see as many members of the Southern Region attending as possible.

On a personal note, let me keep you uptodate on my bike front. Alison's XVS1100A Trike has just been sold so she has now become a professional pillion rider after having given up her own 2 wheels in 2006. She has been riding her own bikes since 1993 so is an accomplished rider in her own right. My Midnight Warrior has two seriously-interested parties and it should be sold by the time you read this. It will be sad to see it go but practicality has finally won the day. I have just purchased an XVZ1300TF for VSOC, RBLR and pillion events which now sits alongside my diddy little CBF Chicken Fricassee (so Christened by Little Plum as he doesn't like Chicken Chasseur) This bike is used for short runs like nipping around town and doing the Saddlesore.

To finish, please note the slight re-structuring of the Southern Region set-up which has been trialled since May. This should hopefully be ratified in October prior to the AGM. We now have an extra layer between the County Reps and myself due to the ever increasing membership numbers and events happening in the South. (I suppose this is proof that we are successful at what we do).

Your Reps currently are:

Regional Rep: Dave Gibson - Vice Rep: Bob Anderson - SE Sub-Area Rep: Razz Collins - SW Sub-Area Rep: Kev Tompkins

Berks:	Currently Vacant	Bristol:	Hilary Bloor	Hants/IoW:	Tracker Hanson
Cornwall:	Aidy Shears	Kent:	Bob Parker	Devon:	Dil Roberts
Surrey:	Pete Ticehurst	Dorset:	Graham Barber	Sussex E:	Tazz Taylor
Somerset:	Adam Brown	Sussex W:	Tazz Taylor	Wiltshire:	Bill Hailey

The two Sub-Area Reps each hold a full set of RBLR display equipment, marquee and merchandise for each Sub-Area. Event planners should coordinate via their County Rep to the Sub-Area Rep for the booking / collection / return of this equipment, etc. With the occasional exceptions of particular events, the County Reps are responsible for events in their respective County but please note that any member can run an event however common courtesy dictates that you should keep your County Rep 'in the loop' so to speak. Please, have fun for the rest of 2009 and enjoy YOUR Branch of the RBL and if not yet accomplished, I hope to meet and have a beer with everyone from our Region (and further afield) during 09 / 10.

Ride fast, ride safe and please remember that whilst the destination may be the goal, the journey is the real prize.

Dave (Bohu) Gibson

Northern Region - Nick

Well, where do I start? Much has happened since the last newsletter in January. Firstly, I must mention my predecessor Paddy McCreanor, who single-handedly prevented yellow from becoming a popular colour for motorcycles! May I extend a personal vote of thanks to Paddy for all the tireless work he has put in as Northern Rep, he has relinquished the post due to a new job down south in the smoke and I wish him well in his new post. I have a large physical presence to fill, but also a large reputation to live up to, though I dare say I will be unable to compete in the consumption stakes!!!

Paddy's swansong as the Regional Rep was to be, what those of us who had the privilege to be part of, one of the finest weekends any of us has had. The RBLR 1000. Those of you who were there, you know, those who were unable to be there, words cannot do the event justice, it was a masterful piece of organisation from Paddy and his team. On a personal level, I was so pleased that everything seemed to go to plan for Paddy in his last big hurrah as Regional Rep. Thank you Paddy and his team of volunteers.

Elsewhere we have had another notable first, the 'We've Not Forgotten' rally held at Chorley Rugby Club. This was the brainchild of a group of drunkards led by the Lancashire Rep Jimmy T and ably assisted by Doc Moite & Iddy who at a rally in deepest winter decided we should have a crack at our own rally. It was also decided that it should be an open rally to show the wider biking community what we are about as a branch and to get some new recruits. One of the highlights being a master class by Jackie Wilson on how to stop a trike using only grim determination and a rugby club wall!!! It must be pointed out however that this particular beast did have previous as was witnessed at the Mud Bath.

Elsewhere, membership has been increasing reasonably well due to the efforts of a hardcore element of assorted lunatics prepared to pitch up at various events including the Houghton Towers Hill Sprint, Manchester Bike Show, Southport Veterans Day and a few more. These locations are mainly in the Northwest where activity is quite high. Hopefully in the coming year we can direct some of this enthusiasm across the Pennines to assist Roly Powell in Yorkshire and Paul Adams in the Northeast.

We are also about to send a recruiting kit north of the border to the major Harley rally at Aviemore called Thunder in the Glen, aptly named I think judging by the pipes that seemed to be fitted to most of them. Our Scottish 'county' rep Ron Bloomfield helps to organise this event and has asked for any RBLR members to make themselves known there to help Neil James with recruitment at this event. This event is August Bank Holiday weekend so if you are not otherwise engaged go and help! Our other recruiting kit is about to embark on a tour of Yorkshire starting at Driffeld Steam Rally weekend on August 15/16. It will then be moving on to The Pyeratz MCC open day at Woodbottom WMC in Shipley on bank holiday Monday and ending up at the Castleford bike day on September 13th. Paul Adams in the Northeast will hopefully receive some support next year when we will be at 'Storming the Castle' rally with one of the recruitment kits.

Lastly we have our second rally of the year on the weekend of 12/13 of September called the Northern Bash, which is being held at Haverigg Rugby Club near Millom. This event under the command of Terry and Jackie Wilson has been upgraded this year from a weekend drinking and social do to a full blown rally with Lazy Susan guesting on the Friday night and Rubicon on the Saturday night. Also of note, and a first I believe for the RBLR, is on Sunday morning when there will be a Drum Head service held. The Duke of Lancaster Regimental Band will provide the music and pageantry whilst the Lord Bishop of Burnley will conduct the service. I would point out that the aforementioned Bishop is a well-known figure in the biking fraternity in the Northwest and is also a branch member.

There are many events that we could get involved with but to do so we need more active participation from our members in Yorkshire, the Northeast and of course Scotland. If you are one of those people who have watched the forum and seen events crop up and thought 'I may like that' but have not actually turned up because 'I don't know anyone' rest assured that is how we all felt when we started. You will be made more than welcome whoever you are and wherever you pitch up, and I promise not to let Taff Rodgers come anywhere near you for your first time out with us in the Northern region. I hope to meet up with as many Northern members as I can in the coming months.

Nick Worswick

Northern Rep

NW Bit....

The last 12 months have been eventful, with rally's national and regional, visits to other clubs both in the UK and Europe. Membership has grown both national and in the N.W. due to the commitment of both new and established members, all of whom act as recruitment officers to some extent. There are so many who give a more than positive input to the region it is difficult to name any over and above others, although we have instituted an annual shield for service over and beyond, this year presented to Graeme(Doc)Moitie who will be presenting the award (for which he is not eligible) in 2010. As I see it, it is the duty of us all to assist our neighbouring, and indeed any region, as we can and so I urge all to do just that as a aim for the next period of expansion, to give assistance to those areas who may not be expanding as well as others. I also wish to encourage all who can to attend our annual meet in January to coincide with the Manchester Show at the GMEX., at which point all members (self included) will resign from our committee, with all positions open for re-election or indeed replacement.

James(Jimmy)Torrance N.W. Rep

This is an email that was sent for me to see on the eve of this newsletter going to print, sorry, I had to make room for it, I think you will understand why! You know who you are, well done.

Hello, I have just had the evening of my life, thanks to your charity. A few weeks ago I emailed you about going pillion on a big bike. This was something I used to do years ago, but sight loss made it difficult for me. Almost straight away I got an email from JJ, who arranged a trip, not only one bike but a choice of 4. The guys were unbelievable, they made me feel like one of the mob. The thrill it gave me to go down the motorway at speed brought many memories back to me, I felt so safe and secure and the guys, even though they have hardly any experience or none at all at guiding blind people, was so caring, but they did not treat me any different to any one else. I have hopefully not seen the last of the guys and cannot wait to go out again, I send my greatest affection and thanks to: JJ, Ray, Pete and Jim. Thank you for the best evening of my unsighted life. Tina

Croeso to all new Regional Members,

I look forward to meeting you.

County Reps - The Region currently has 5 County reps

Wales (North)	Carl (Stumpytreefrog) Burnham .	Northern Ireland	Tim Jones.
Wales (South)	Andy Wilson.	Ireland (South)	Mark Parlatto.
Wales (West)	John Bonnewell.		

If you have any ideas of things to do in your area contact your County Rep, they are there to help.

Aberystwyth Armed Forces Day

The day started for me on the Friday when Les (Oilrag) and his lovely wife Margaret, arriving at our house on Friday afternoon. After we had one of Anita's now famous steak pies we went down to our local hostillery for more than a few wets and got in about 12.30am.

Next day (Saturday) 25th I road my trike with Margaret on the back followed by Les on his Bike down to Aberystwyth prom, where we met up with Pete and some other members of the Riders Branch, all who helped to put the stall, banner and feather up so that we could be seen. We had a good stretch of the prom so there was no problem getting everyone on, I do admit it did look good.

The day was very warm even hot at times, so there were plenty of people about, and we seemed to attract a fair bit of attention to ourselves, we ran out of cards 50 in all and gave out a load of flyers. There were also stalls from the local Royal British Legion, Royal Navy, The Royal Welsh, Air Ambulance, Fire brigade, Police, Age Concern (I think that was for me) Ha! Ha! There were also about 8 classic cars there. By 5pm it was all over and the concert started in the Bandstand, there was the Aberystwyth Silver Band and 2 groups on, and the day finished at 9.30pm. A very good day all-round.

Next day 26th, Les, Margaret and I went back into Aberystwyth to join up with the parade to the church service representing the Riders Branch, and then on the march past, after the march past we went to the RAFA club for a bun fight.

Les and Margaret decided that as they were still wet after the parade and bunfight they would not stop the night so rode home. The only fly in the ointment was it threw it down on the march past, that is the 3rd year on the trot we have been drenched. But altogether a great weekend. Thanks to everyone who turned up and helped out. *Glyn (KINGO) Griffiths*

Cardiff Armed Forces Day

Once again Kingo travelled down from the heart of nowhere to attend this event along with Sarah, Les and Margaret, Les M, Taff Davies and the three stalwarts of the Cardiff day, Dave, Alex and myself. When we arrived we found a marquee already erected for us by Ken from Mid Glam (whom we thank). Generally a good day for awareness of the Branch and TRBL in general, a good figure was raised swapping photo opps on Kingo's trike for a donation and a free wristband. The highlight of the day was getting to ride in the parade. Next year the National event is to be held in Cardiff and I will be expecting the RBLR to be in that parade.

Royal Welsh Show.

Les Meek attended The RWS working alongside TRBL from various Counties throughout Wales and made some useful contacts where we expect to have our attendance requested for other events in support of other Branches. Please do try to assist as and when these arise.

Rememberancetide.

We have been asked if we would cover Cardiff Gate for a period of time during Rememberancetide, All those local please try to assist when the time comes, it will be posted on the website, closer the time.

Don't forget to try to support National and other Regions events as well as your own Regions. You will get a lot out of the Branch as long as you put something in. As many of us have and are still finding out.

Ian

Secretary's bits..... (I nicked this space from Ian, cos I can)!

Just a few points from me to keep you up to date; Membership seems to grow at an alarming rate, and very few days go by without a slack handful of forms hitting the mat at 'Morale HQ', keep em coming chaps, and for those of you who don't think you know how to fill the forms in for others, go to the membership section of our website for a downloadable guide! Please remember to leave the receipt attached as it goes out from here in the new member's packs..... Speaking of which, what do you think of the info you get in the new members packs? Too much? Not enough? Wrong stuff? Let me know if you have any views, good or bad!

Very shortly (if not included in this Newsletter, I will be sending out various bits of info and ballots so you can help us choose the right new committee members at the AGM in November. As your current committee, we will try and recommend who we think will represent you best in the posts which will be up for change, but as with everything, feel free to disagree and cast your vote for the person that you think best! But please have an opinion.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM & Remembrance in Oldbury, and at the 5th year party also in November but this time near Cheltenham.

Ride Safe, Pete

Midlands Region - Ivor

Midlands Region update, summer 2009

With the Midlands regional membership standing at nearly 400 members, activity in the region has never been so frantic!

Members have attended a huge number of events this spring and early summer with events popping up nearly every weekend from county shows to bike rallies, rock competitions to branch open days.

Notable events so far this year have been the Poppy Idol battle of the bands at Oldbury RBL, The CLA gamefair at Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire, Thurmaston Branch open day and 75th Anniversary, World war 2 Military Show at Berrington Hall, a very well attended Recruiting Advisors Course in April and of course the 1st Midlands Mudbath the first Midlands Regional Rally at Warley Rugby club in May. A number of midlands members took part in the RBLR1000 Saddlesore in June, The Riders Branch National Rally took place at Barkers Butts Rugby Club near Coventry and members have been at plenty of other events around the region helping out with other branches and their events.

There are a host of events to look forward to in the coming months. The Midlands Region Poppy Run takes place in August on the weekend of the 22nd to 23rd and runs around most of the region and ends at Galanos House in Warwickshire. All members are welcome on the run, you can join in for all or just a part of the run whichever takes your fancy or fits your personal schedule. Galanos House have also invited members of the RBLR to their open day on the 5th of September .

Towards the end of the year there are plenty of Poppy Launches by the Counties to kick off the Collecting period prior to Remembrance several of which the Riders Branch have been invited to attend.

This years AGM will again be at Oldbury in the West Midlands on Saturday the 7th of November to which all members are encouraged to attend and we will again be joining in with Oldbury's Remembrance Parade on Sunday the 8th of November.

For details of events across the Midlands, log on to the Riders branch website, register on the forum, and check for details in the Midlands regional section of the forum. We now have two sets of recruiting stand equipment (display boards and banners of various types) and a 3m x 3m Branch Tent, so if you identify an event that could benefit from the Riders Branch being present, contact either myself (over in the East Midlands or Mark Keeling (over in the West Midlands) and we can see what kit can be made available for use!

Cheers

Andy (Ivor) Downer

Midlands Regional Contacts

For your information these are the County Reps for the Midlands Region (all are contactable via private message or email through the riders branch web forum

Gordon (Pitch) Pitchford.....	Birmingham	Robert Ryan-Gilbank	Derbyshire
Marcus Bristow.....	Gloucestershire	?	Herefordshire
Sarah Hamblin	Leicestershire	Rob Cook.....	Lincolnshire
Chris Brookes.....	Northamptonshire	P(monty)Moncaster.....	Nottinghamshire
Albie Hall.....	Rutland	Paul Duncan.....	Shropshire
Dave Gasson.....	Staffordshire(North)	Sharon Sanderson.....	Staffordshire (South)
Gary (Smudges) Smith.....	Warwickshire	Neil Trinder.....	Worcestershire

Potential Riders Branch Meet at Stafford RBL Club

Dave Gasson (Staffordshire Rep) would like to meet any riders from the staffordshire area (or from anywhere in the Midlands, he's not fussy or unwelcoming!!) who might like to join him for a regular meet up at Stafford RBL club on a Tuesday evening. As with all Midlands events the best way to find details is to log onto the members forum and have a quick look through to find anything you may wish to attend.

Middle Earth Mud Bath.

May 2009 saw the inaugural Middle Earth Mud Bath at Warley Rugby Club in Oldbury. After months of planning and some serious blagging, the Midlands Riders moved into the Warley RFC early on the Friday morning to begin to make preparations to receive over 100 members over the next two days.

While Taff went down the cafe to get breakfast, things started to arrive on site. Birds Transport kindly dropped off a curtain side trailer for our staging. The next delivery came from Will Hire Ltd which included two generators, safety lights, tea urns as well as tea and coffee supplies. Pitch went off to gather equipment from the TA centre in West Bromwich while Tony Beale from Mayfair Fire dropped off four sets of alarmed extinguishers for us to use. Things started to take shape quickly the only thing that was missing was sound equipment... On Pitch's' return we loaned a van from Tony at Mayfair Fire to drive to Cannock to collect some of the lighting equipment from Mike Riley our resident DJ as well as pop in to see Greenwoods Studios, our sound guys, to ensure they had sufficient transport for all of their equipment. At this stage I would just like to say a big thank you to all of the businesses and individuals listed above as they donated their time, equipment and skills absolutely free of charge.

Friday night's entertainment was kicked off by Alan Rudge the brilliant but rather strange magician. Alan demonstrated some of his favorite tricks which went down a treat with both adults and children alike. Then it was time for the first of our bands, an up and coming five piece rock band called SiXDAYSOBER from Birmingham. Unfortunately technical problems meant that we did lose power to the stage at one point but this was quickly rectified. The sudden drop in temperature at around 22:00 hours however meant that anyone who hadn't been on the real ales retired to the warmth of the bar while those that had (you know who you are) continued

(Continued on Page 12)

Hi, everyone calls me Mel!

In addition to my position as the Eastern Rep, I am also vice chair at St Albans Branch, and RBL caseworker trained. In terms of military service I joined the army in 1978, and was medically discharged in 1981; serving with both the Royal Artillery and the Royal Corps of Transport. However, in 1989, I was diagnosed with MS, which has left me confined to a wheelchair, but be under no illusion; this does not stop me from living life to the fullest.

In my younger days, before I enlisted in the Army, I rode a Honda 250 super dream. However these days the Vauxhall Astra is my other set of wheels. However, in saying this, I have nothing but the upmost admiration for the biker community, and one day I know I will ride again. I am 100% loyal to both the RBL, and the RBLR, and I intend to give my utmost dedication and commitment to both of these causes, but during the first few months I am going to need assistance until I find my feet.

I chose to work with the RBL and the RBLR due to the different activities I would be able to work at and the people I would meet who all shared similar interests and backgrounds; both the military and biking community. As a retrospective for the past 6 months I have asked Sue Merry to condense the activities of the year so far (Extremely grateful).

Six months in Cambridgeshire - What a year so far!

What a year! When Karl (the Eastern Regional Rep at the time) asked Rick & I to take on the 'job' of Cambs Rep about 18-months ago I had no idea where it would lead or how lucky we would be to meet such great people along the way – many of whom Rick (husband & other half of the Cambs Rep job), Matt (son) & I are now lucky enough to call friends.

I use to complain that our weekends were 'samey' (housework, shopping, dusting – you know how it goes) ... now I have dust you can write yer name in, an ironing pile that needs crampons to get to the top of & an empty fridge! Complaining about it? Not on yer nelly! Here's what we got up to over the last 6 months:

22nd Feb – Help for Hero's Lunch @ Peterborough: - serving at the World Record Attempt to serve simultaneous meals in one sitting at the Show ground in Peterborough!

8th March – Retention & Recruiting Seminar @ Sutton; - Retention and recruiting seminar at St. Neots.

27th March – Ally Pally Bike Show: - I went on my first lone bike ride! Rick, Matt & I set up at a pitch at the Ally Pally Bike Show.

29th March – Eastern Region Spring Ride out – Lowestoft for Lunch: - Good food, good company & a good ride.

11th April – Plymouth Bike Show: - Outside our region but we still had a great time helping at Paul's Bike 1st Poppy Bike Show, meeting other Riders & at least we had glorious hot sunshine all weekend!

18th April – Kesgrave Bike Show, Suffolk: - I know it is another event not in Cambridgeshire but I went to help anyway! Again, great weather, good company & a few signed up.

9th May – Memorial Ride + 8-10th May – NABD: - The time at the Arboretum was, as expected, amazing, thought provoking & emotional. NABD was a good Rally & we met many other Riders there too.

16th/17th May – BMF: - Blagged a free pitch due to the cost for the branch. We met loads of other Riders & promoted the Branch although did not sign as many as we had hoped. Still, it was worth the 'begging' phone call!

30th March – Waterbeach Barracks Open Day – This event came from March's seminar and are hopeful that this will become a future secure Rally site but you'll have to watch this space as the camp are trying to get the 'powers that be' to agree!

6th June – Sawtry Show: - Special thanks to Ros for making me laugh & helping out & Dunc & Bob (James) for coming along too.

19th – 22nd June – RBLR 1000/Saddlesore: - This was my challenge for the year. It was truly life changing, amazing, and incredible & no aches, pains or even a sore saddle.

28th June – Fulbourne Feast: - This was another event where we went to support the local Legion & get ourselves known.

4th July – Ride to the American War Cemetery: - It goes without saying that this was an amazing day & I hope to see more Riders there next year. The day was filled with tears of sadness & laughter &, so I believe, a good sum of money raised. I am so pleased to have been there & look forward to next year.

10th – 12th July – the National Rally: - What a brilliant weekend & wonderfully planned & organised! I think the best thing to do in this section is just to suggest you all make it next year!

18th July – Over Carnival Parade: - Again following the March Seminar & by invitation we attended the Legion-led Over Carnival Parade & Show. We also were fortunate to meet the newly appointed Eastern Region Rep (No3!), Mel Corley, & his son Phil– not sure if Mel sees it as fortunate now he has met us!

25th July – Recruiting Advisors Course: - I asked if any other Riders could attend & she said yes. Therefore, Dino, Bob, Matt, Mel & I attended. We had a good day & managed to scrounge a couple of things for the recruiting kit!

26th July saw quite a few of us supporting Kez's fund-raising event in Welwyn Garden City. He is trying to raise funds to send Marines to the Paralympics in 2012. He raised over £770 at this event – well done Kez!

31st July – 2nd August – Riders Rock Rally: - This is happening this weekend so no report for this yet but Matt & I will have the recruiting kit + some merchandise & hope to sign a few up. I will report on this next time

Mud Bath cont & Merchandising

to dance the night away. Saturday was a brand new day. The sun came out to say hello and those that could manage went for a ride to the National Motorcycle Museum in Solihull, while the committee decamped to Oldbury RBL to hold a meeting. Back at the site Jane and Wendy set out to entertain the children with various activities including a treasure hunt and various party games.

Saturdays entertainment was kicked off by the Hog Roast which was devoured at 18:00 shortly followed by Slainte the Irish Accoustic Band playing in the bar. At 21:00 Rubicon took to the outside stage performing covers of rock hits from the 60's through to the 00's again technical difficulties took their part and ironically just as the lead singer reached the lyric 'Let there be light' there wasn't... The generators that were powering the stage lights had again stopped. This time however it was a simple problem to rectify, I was informed that generator's tend to work better if they have fuel in them.... whoops. As soon as power was restored, to use a fairly cheesy expression Rubicon rocked the house down.

Sunday morning we awoke to yet another glorious sunny day which helped as we had to clear the tentage, rubbish, mine tape and general clobber that goes to make up the rally site. By lunch time every one had left for home with just the set up crew remaining to finish things off and hand over the site. I would like to say a big thank you to all the members who helped plan this event, you know who you are, as well as all the businesses and bands which provided their services and goods free of charge. My final thank you is to Nick Bright and all the members of Warley Rugby Club for their support. Next year will be bigger and better... See you there...

Mark Keeling

Merchandise update

It's coming to the end of my first year as your Merchandise Representative and a busy year it has proven to be. Without wishing to be an 'anorak', I think it is relevant to mention that so far, I have processed nearly 5,000 separate items of merchandise. I have endeavoured to deal with your orders promptly. Some orders, especially for personal name badges, have taken longer than anticipated. I thank those of you affected for your patience.

The future - On-Line Shop We are, (meaning Mark Keeling is) in the process of setting up an on-line shop which will be accessible to all members via the Branch Website. We hope to have it up and running by 1st September 2009. When set up, you will be able to select your goods by clicking each item, which in turn will populate a PayPal order form. On completion it will take you through the PayPal payment process. This will make it much easier to order using PayPal. Thanks go to Mark for developing this additional aid to purchasing our very reasonably priced range of top quality Merchandise products on-line.

Current ordering processes. All mail, paypal and ultimately the on-line shop orders will continue to be dealt with by me (Chris Smith) here in Guernsey. (Please note, currently postage to Guernsey for a letter weighing up to 100 grams is the same as the UK Mainland, namely £0.39p 1st Class & £0.30p 2nd Class)

Regional Merchandise Representatives – have now been appointed. This has been done to facilitate a stock of merchandise being available in the Regions. These stocks are currently being built up. This should result in Branch merchandise becoming more readily available to purchase at local events. (This does not affect the current ordering process)

National Rally Patches 2009 Due to popular demand we are belatedly having a National Rally patch made up. All those of you who would like a 2009 RBLR Rally patch please send a cheque for £2.50p payable to 'C Smith Merchandise Account' together with a 'Self Addressed Envelope' (no stamp needed) to me at:- Mr. C Smith. La Niche, Rue Piette. Castel. Guernsey. GY5 7AB. We should be in a position to post out these patches by mid to late September.

Safe riding ! **Chris** Merchandising Rep

Andy and Elaine Tuzzio;

! As most of us know, many of the legions around the country are struggling at present, Droitwich Legion being one of them. With this in mind, we are looking into arranging a bike night at least once a month or more often if there are enough members who would be willing to attend. This would take place at their premises, to help them through this difficult time. In the first instance we would like your feedback to find out how many would be willing to attend. Obviously food would be available and plenty of parking. "

Wonderful English from Around the World

In a Bangkok temple:	IT IS FORBIDDEN TO ENTER A WOMAN, EVEN A FOREIGNER, IF DRESSED AS A MAN.
Cocktail lounge, Norway:	LADIES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE BAR.
Doctors office, Rome :	SPECIALIST IN WOMEN AND OTHER DISEASES.
Dry cleaners, Bangkok :	DROP YOUR TROUSERS HERE FOR THE BEST RESULTS.
In a Nairobi restaurant:	CUSTOMERS WHO FIND OUR WAITRESSES RUDE OUGHT TO SEE THE MANAGER.
On the main road to Mombassa:	TAKE NOTICE: WHEN THIS SIGN IS UNDER WATER, THIS ROAD IS IMPASSABLE.
On a poster at Kencom:	ARE YOU AN ADULT THAT CANNOT READ? IF SO WE CAN HELP.

National Rally 2009

This years National Rally took place on the weekend of the 10th 11th and 12th of July at Barkers Butts Rugby Club in Allesley, Meriden near Coventry.

Set up started around midday on Thursday the 9th of July. The weather was just about holding out for us and after road ways were marked, branch and county gazebos erected and branch caravan sited and our temporary homes built for the weekend, we all made our way to the bar for the production line to produce the goodie bags (and to check on the quality of the beer for the weekend!) . Just a small thank you to all the volunteers that turned up on Thursday to help set up. Those volunteers being the Merry family; Sue, Rick and Matt, Mark Keeling and Wendy Jones, Andy Leonard, Terry Wilson and family and Andy Butterill. After a couple of hours of labour and a couple of beers in the rugby club bar everyone retired to bed to get a good nights kip prior to the rally start proper and the weekend of graft it would entail.

On Friday morning we finished setting up the brew area and laying out the rest of the areas, Chris Smith set up his Branch merchandise stall and other trade stalls began to arrive. Trade stands included Two Guns tattoo studio, Nighthawk leather, Halvarsons clothing, Phantom Graphics t-shirt printers, ICE Utag among others. A few early birds wanting a good weekend started arriving on site from Middy and the afternoon progressed with more and more people turning up. Numbers started to exceed expectations with an extra 44 people turning up and paying on the gate over the weekend and we also had a steady stream of day visitors. The evening's entertainment kicked off with our very own Andy(Lenny)Leonard providing the first set of the night, followed by Stiff Upper Lip who kept the bar rocking until the better part of midnight.

Saturday morning awoke to drizzle and a very damp morning. The ride out to the NMA set up and went off on its way at lunchtime led by Garry Edwards and followed up by Andy Leonard, followed by a short time later for the one to the National Space Centre guided by Paul Langman. Roger and Ivor had a pact regarding the weekends weather; Ivor had promised that he had booked fine dry weather with the Big Man and would be the first into the stocks if it rained before 1300 hours on Saturday. As it turned 1 o'clock the sun started to come out but as it had rained nearly all morning it fell to Ivor to take the first turn in the stocks. After a thorough soaking, (some of the younger rally goers were particularly accurate with a soggy sponge at 20 paces!!!) it was Rogers Mills's turn, however his turn was cut short as the northern contingent hijacked the stocks and put Neil Rogers in there as part of his birthday celebrations. After a deluge of water, beans a couple of eggs and a helping of beer later they let a very messy Neil out. The day carried on with music from De Verdon Acoustic club, who played for most of the afternoon in the bar. After their set which they performed for no charge we wanted to give them a donation to enable them to buy more equipment for the club however they returned their donation to be put into the poppy appeal saying that they had enjoyed the afternoon and that was payment enough!! As the evening drew in the hog roast turned up and the superheroes came out to play, and the rain came back. Skorch Earth from Staffordshire were the first band of the night playing a mix of rock standards with a bit of a twist. The awards ceremony followed the first set with prizes for Male and Female long distance, best custom, grottiest bike, best trike, best bike, and the super heroes supermachine. The trophies were crafted by branch chairman Paul Pollards fair hands. Gordon Pitchford won the prize for the best fancy dress outfit of the night. Tony Beale had acquired an Official England Football shirt which was auctioned off for the appeal, thanks to Ray Betterton winning bid a very healthy £90 was raised. The evening was rounded off by Big Lix playing a very full set of rock standards, more rain, plenty of beer and plenty of chat and banter around the rugby club.

Thankfully Sunday woke to early sunshine which helped to dry off tents ready for everyone to pack up and go home. Gradually the campsite emptied and after a few hours of tidying up all vestige of the Riders Branch presence at Barkers Butts Rugby club was all but gone! The club steward John Barber and Social Secretary Kath Marriot were very pleased with how the weekend had passed, how everyone was so polite and with the condition in which the club had been kept over the weekend.

We'd like to give a special thanks to everyone that lent a helping hand over the weekend. All the traders that turned up and added to the weekend. The branch members who willingly pitched in to help clean up, all those who had helped out with gate stag/ fire piquet over the weekend and those who helped with other tasks over the weekend.

We would also like to thank the following in particular Hein Gericke for provision of the goody bags, E,Bike insurance for supplying the sidestand pucks, Bennetts insurance for a ready supply of lanyards, Paul Archer the landlord of the Crosswells Inn in Oldbury for the big box of raffle prizes, Tony Beale and his staff at Mayfire Security for the provision at no cost of the fire alarm/extinguisher trolleys for the camping area, Richard Cowley of Bridgestone/Firestone Tyres for their donation to the raffle prizes and all those individual branch members who found room on their bikes to bring items for the raffle. The final total for the poppy appeal raised at the rally through ventures like the raffle, stocks, facepainting, the pound coin game, and the tea and coffee area honesty box was £879.39

Finally we would also like to thank the staff and members of Barkers Butts Rugby club in particular Kathy Marriot and John Barber who were the perfect hosts all weekend, keeping the beer flowing and allowing us the use of nearly all their facilities.

Next Years Rally will be held at a location and date in the South Region which will be notified soon!! We cannot wait to see what they have store for us. Hope to see you all there!

Ivor, Cally, Roger

and the rest of the 2009 National Rally Committee



Welfare & Forum...

CREDIT CRUNCH



Joking aside, the Credit Crunch/Recession is biting even harder with more people being made redundant or becoming unemployed. If any of you are experiencing problems, do remember that the Legion can provide all sorts of assistance to those people who have a service connection, if you would like to know more give me a ring on 01245 348818 or email on welfare@rblr.co.uk



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CLUBS

On average there are 57 clubs and pubs closing down each week, this time last year it was 35 a week! If you have a Legion Club near you, do try to frequent it, as they say use it or lose it!

Until next time.....

Lynnette Francis

Riders Branch Welfare Secretary

More Forum: Did you know ?

That once you have made a post you do have the ability to go back and edit it, just look at the top right hand corner of your post and click here

Did you know ?

That once you have made a post you do have the ability to go back and delete it, just look at the top right hand corner of your post and click here

Did you know ?

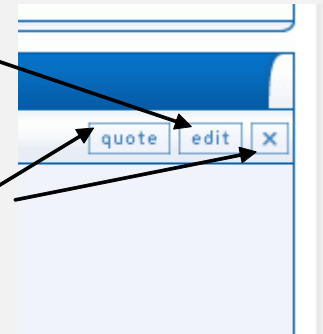
That if you would like to reply to another members post quoting what they have said you can click on the "Quote" button it is on the top right hand corner of thier post, this will open up a new post window for you, with a copy of the original post above it. It sounds a lot harder than it is, just click here and try it

Did you know ? That if you would like to see all the posts since the last time you logged on all you need to do is click here.

Did you know ? That if you click on any of the section titles like "Archives" or "Regional Forums" it will hide that section ?

Did you know ? That if you click on the section titles "Who is Online" it will give you a list of who is on line and what the part of the forum they are looking at ?

Did you know ? That so far only 8 members have made over the 1400 posts ?



Things to do to get involved at a local level Many people in the riders branch wonder how they can help out more with the Royal British Legion, There are more than likely a host of opportunities within your own locality with which you could help out. Caseworkers, poppy collectors, Recruiting and other tasks such as hospital visiting are all in demand usually co-ordinated from County Offices or local branches. Or you can take a similar approach to Ed Robson or Andy and Elaine Tuzzio from Redditch and Droitwich respectively , who are determined to try save thier local branches from slowly slipping into obscurity by implementing a few simple measures or even with something slightly more adventurous as detailed below.

Ed Robson from Redditch; "As some will have gathered. I am determined to help save my Local Legion Club. Tonight (after 3 passes over the days..I will explain problem) I finally managed to meet them. Good people & desperately fighting to keep it running...just about. These people have been here & grown up here at the club. They are also aware that other clubs (like Droitwich) are suffering. There is no bigotry here (very welcoming) they are class people fighting to keep their club going (with little or no assistance). I imagine this is indicative of so many RBL Clubs as the old blood is passing on, so making attendance sketchy. What many will know or have figured (hence our branch) is that new blood is verily needed. This Redditch branch is thin on the ground, but the facilities are good.

Below are some interesting facts and statistics relating to the Legion.

- The Royal British Legion safeguards the welfare, interests and memory of serving and ex-Service people and their families and dependants.
- The Legion was founded in 1921.
- Some 9.5 million people in the UK are eligible to ask for its help.
- The Legion is one of the UK's largest membership organisations, with around 380,000 members (including the Women's Section). Anyone can be a member, ex-Service or not.
- You don't have to be a Legion member to receive assistance – but you must be an ex-Service person or a dependant. Anyone who has been in the British Armed Forces for seven days or more (and their dependants) is eligible for help.
- People as young as 17.5 years can be sent on active service, so veterans are often much younger than people realise.
- There has only been one year (1968) since the Second World War when a British Service person hasn't been killed on active service.
- Each year the Legion answers thousands of calls for help to its helpline, Legionline.
- It helps with a huge range of issues, including counselling, job retraining, skills assessment, getting the right pensions and benefits, advice and interest free loans for setting up small businesses, welfare grants, pilgrimages to war graves,

convalescent and nursing care, and home and hospital visits.

- The Legion has close links to many other charities, organisations and trusts, enabling it to draw on the best resources and expertise, and to refer people to those best equipped to help them.
- The Legion will be needed for as long as people continue to be affected by conflict. It doesn't advocate war but is simply there to support those who have been prepared to make a personal sacrifice through serving in the British Armed Forces.
- The Poppy Appeal raised almost £30 million in 2007.
- In 2008 the Legion spent over £100 million on its work. Apart from donations, funds come from legacies, sponsorship, corporate support and fundraising events.
- In 2008 we helped more than 100,000 people in need with our Poppy Support services.
- For every pound raised 80p goes towards achieving our objectives and of that 6.6p goes towards our support costs.
- 300,000 staff and volunteers organise the Poppy Appeal each year.
- More than 30 million remembrance poppies, 500,000 poppies of other types, 5 million remembrance petals, 100,000 wreaths and sprays, 750,000 Remembrance Crosses and other Remembrance items are made at the Poppy Factory in Richmond, Surrey, each year
- More than 70% of the workers at the Poppy Factory are disabled or suffer from chronic illness. The Factory was designed to offer jobs to such people and its remit remains the same today.

Three simple steps to keep you secure on the Internet.

1.. Ensure you have a Virus scanner Viruses have now become so widespread, and so sophisticated that avoiding coming into contact with them is now impossible. Virus protection does not have to be expensive and in fact I would stay away from the bigger names such as Norton or McAfee as many coders/anarchists actively try to attack these large security companies.

AVG Antivirus distribute a full antivirus package which automatically updates and scans you machine to a set schedule and best of all its absolutely free
<http://free.avg.com/223204>

2. Install a Firewall Very simply, a firewall comes between you and the net, monitoring what comes in and what goes out. By configuring your firewall to disallow all traffic except what you are aware of and have specifically permitted, you can protect yourself from both hostile intruders and information leaks. http://download.cnet.com/ZoneAlarm/3000-10435_4-10039884.html

3. Treat all emails you receive with care Emails are the most effective form of attack to any criminal whether it be someone after you bank details and passwords or someone bent on causing as much havoc as possible here are a few methods they use:

Phishing is the process of attempting to gain sensitive information such as usernames, passwords and credit card details. This often appears as a request from a bank for you to confirm your details but recently criminals have started to use other institutions such as online stores or even social networking sites like facebook. If you receive any such requests never reply to them and always contact the institution directly to make sure they are fraudulent.

Links within emails can seem to be easy way to go to navigate to an Internet site. However do you know how easy it is to make a link appear genuine when in fact it isn't? Always physically type any links into your Internet browser and this will dramatically reduce any risks to your computer.

Email attachments are the most effective way to transport malicious code such as viruses. I know you probably heard this advice before but never open any attachment unless you are 100% happy you know it is safe and that your system is protected. Even attachments from friends can be dangerous and remember this applies to all types of attachments including exe files, pictures and even word and excel documents.

Please note that this is my advice but other IT professional may advise you differently. I personally use all of the software listed above. Stay safe and email me if you have any IT related questions, I will do my best to find you and answer.

Mark

Webmonster

The RBLR 1000 (Saddlesore)

RBLR 1000

During the first 6 months of 2009 a call went out to all RBLR members and other interested motorcyclists to help to raise money for the Poppy Appeal. This was to be achieved by attempting to break the world record for a simultaneous SaddleSore motorcycle ride (1000+ miles in 24 hours).

Previously this had been set at 156 during the 2006 "Ride for the Heart" (<http://www.ridefortheheart.com/about.htm>), and so a target of 200 bikes was laid down. After a slow start the idea gathered momentum and by the end of May the 200 target had been reached.

Each entrant was asked to raise a minimum of £50 sponsorship, potentially a whopping £10,000 for the Poppy Appeal.

Unfortunately news of our record-breaking endeavour spread across the Atlantic and we were gazumped on the 15/16 May 2009 when 409 riders completed the Redwing 19 (<http://redwing19.com/>) SaddleSore 1000.

However, bearing in mind that the main aim of the RBLR 1000 (as it became known) was to raise money for the Poppy Appeal and to raise awareness of the Iron Butt Association, it was decided that the event should still go ahead.

On 19 June 2009 the riders assembled at Squires Cafe, Sherburn-in-Elmet, for a briefing before setting off at 0800 on 20 June 2009 for their 1000+ mile endurance ride.

Riders were free to choose from 4 routes: A northern route up the A1 to Berwick-upon-Tweed, Edinburgh, Wick, Fort William and back along the M6/M62, just over 1000 miles, either clockwise or anticlockwise; or a southern route one to Dover, then to Southampton and Redruth and then back, also just over 1000 miles, and also clockwise or anti-clockwise.

Minus the no-shows, and the riders who had to withdraw due to personal or work commitments, 187 motorcycles crossed the start line on the morning of the 20 June 2009. The 1000+ mile SaddleSore is a common method of entry into the Iron Butt Association (IBA) which does not have membership in the traditional sense. The IBA is a little more loose knit organization than most clubs.

The IBA is dedicated to safe, long-distance, endurance motorcycle riding and although based in the United States, they have over 24,000+ members world-wide, including an ever-growing UK arm. The IBA bill themselves as "World's Toughest Riders" and it wasn't long before it transpired exactly how tough this particular ride was going to be for some people.

At 1030 the first retirement due to mechanical failure occurred, this was to blight many a ride that day, we had 7 DNF (Did Not Finish) due to mechanical failure of one sort or another.

Although you only have to maintain an average speed of just over 41 mph to conduct this ride, it is surprising how quickly time can run away from you and by the following day we had 12 riders who simply ran out of time.

The dreaded "Nerg Nail" of Ogrri fame also raised his ugly head and caused 2 retirements through punctures.

The SaddleSore 1000 has an excellent safety record and I am happy to say that this was maintained. There was one very minor collision which caused no injuries but which forced a retirement due to broken and misaligned lights.

However, the DNF that really broke my heart was one young lady who, having ridden 1000+ miles within the allotted time, nipped home (only 20 miles) with her husband to pick up some paperwork they had forgotten. Somehow, before or during that short 20 mile trip, she lost a clear plastic case containing her receipts and fuel log. No log and no receipts mean a DNF. It's not just body-tough, it's mind and emotionally tough too when that crap happens.

When all was said and done we had 23 DNF:

Overtime	-	12	Ill	-	01	Mech failure	-	06
Puncture	-	02	Prang	-	01	Lost paperwork	-	01

The details of 164 finishers have been forwarded to the IBA for scrutiny. One or two may fall by the wayside, but I am confident we have beaten the record of 156 that we set out to beat. This may not be a World Record, but it is a UK, European and Rest of the World Record! It is worth noting that we also gave away a few prizes to:

Furthest Travelled (Female)	Anna Simmons	-	275 miles to Squires
Furthest Travelled (Male)	Martin Reed	-	358 miles to Squires
Oldest Motorcycle	Ray Marrin	-	1981 Honda GL1100
Youngest Rider	Deborah Rowley	-	Age 23

Deborah also joined the RBLR that day and coincidentally became our **2000th** member – well done on both counts!

Finally I would like to thank the people, companies and organisations without whom this event simply would not have happened:

Squires Cafe Bar	http://www.squires-cafe.co.uk/	IBA UK	http://www.ironbuttuk.org/index.html
Action Advertising	http://www.actionadvertising.co.uk/	Above Par Events	http://www.aboveparevents.co.uk/
Appleyards	http://www.colinappleyard.com/	White Dalton Motorcycle Solicitors	http://www.whitedalton.co.uk/

The Committee and Members of the RBLR.

The Rally Staff – Terry; Vicki; Mike; Ruth; Ray; Rose; Joy; and Emma.

The Riders – all of you who stepped up to the plate. Successful or not, you stood up and were counted. I salute you all.

Paddy McCreanor

"RallyMaster"

Rogues Gallery.....



Q: Name the four seasons.
Q: What does 'varicose' mean?

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.
A: Nearby.

Out & About.....



We Rode to Faro & Gibraltar....By Anna Simmons

DAY 1 - Monday My bike is loaded. I have my ferry tickets, passport, money and EU recovery. I am ready to go. Pete and I wave goodbye to kids and dogs and set off on our big adventure. We arrive at Portsmouth ferry port at 1045 and look for Mike who is meeting us there. No Mike ! He has had electrical problems with his bike and it looks like he won't be able to make the trip with us – gutted. Pete and I board the ferry and it sails away from the UK at 1200. The crossing is smooth and uneventful (just the way it should be) and we arrive at Le Havre. The weather is already amazing. At 1900 hrs it is still 25 degrees and the motorways are virtually empty. Our first task lies ahead – finding the B&B for the night. We have put the Le Mans F1 address into the satnav and it takes us down a remote farm track. We are obviously in the wrong place and head back towards the town centre. We then spend the next 40 minutes following misleading hotel signs and it is now getting dark. Pete pulls over to discuss tactics and I pull up next to him – too close, and smack my pannier into his and nearly knock him over. We have a serious sense of humour failure brewing. Finally, Pete investigates in detail what the satnav is capable of. We use the 'Point of Interest' function which comes up with F1 hotel. We follow it, and miss the motorway turnoff, but can see it at last and double back to arrive there at 2230 hrs. We book in – very relieved – and settle in for a peaceful night's sleep in a comfy bed. How wrong we were !! Apparently it is a big holiday in France today and the fireworks and the partying crowds keep going until the wee small hours.

Mileage today: 250 miles

DAY 2 – Tuesday We hear from Mike. His bike has been fixed and he got the overnight ferry leaving at 2300 hrs last night. He will be on French roads at 0800 hrs and will meet up en route. We tell him not to come to Le Mans as it is a fair way off the main road. We pick a junction and arrange to meet up at the next services after it. Pete and I have a leisurely breakfast at the F1, and a kitten decides that Pete's leg will make an excellent clawing post – ouch! We then head back towards the motorway. We reach the allotted junction after about an hour and settle in with a second breakfast to wait for Mike to catch up. We wait, and then we wait some more and then we get a phonecall. Mike has missed the turnoff for our motorway and ended up heading towards Paris !! He then doubled back and missed it again – doh !! It is now easier for him to join our road south of where we are, so we choose another services and set off again. At the next RV point, we have some lunch and play the waiting game again. After about 30 minutes, we hear the roar of Mike's bike as he pulls into the services – we are finally reunited 350 miles into our journey. We head south with the intention of getting as far as we can before nightfall. We have locations for a couple more F1s and will see which one we can make it to. A scary moment occurs when an impatient Frenchman decides that we are not going fast enough in lane 3, and squeezes through between Mike and the central reservation, nearly taking out Mike and only missing him by inches at 80 mph. We make it as far as the French/Spanish border before we have had enough and seek out a bed for the night. We book into another F1 for another peaceful night in a comfy bed. The local 'Eat all you can' Chinese buffet beckons and we gorge ourselves and have a relaxing beer or two. This time the night-time disturbance is courtesy of one family who arrive at 0100 hrs and let their kids play noisily in the car park outside my window, while they unpack the entire contents of their car, constantly opening and closing the doors and boot. I can see a night-time pattern forming here.

Mileage today: 381 miles

DAY 3 – Wednesday On leaving the F1, we ride into the mountains. The views are stunning and the temperature is a cool 18 degrees. We encounter the rarity that is motorway twisties and hairpins – awesome. We start to realize that there are anomalies in the way that petrol stations operate in Spain. Some of them require you to prepay for your fuel prior to filling, which makes it very awkward for Mike who has a max range on his fuel tank of 120 miles, and we had planned to have fuel stops every 100 miles or so. At some places, it is only bikes that are treated this way, the car drivers have their pumps authorized immediately – yet again, bikers are being discriminated against !! As we leave the majesty of the mountains, the temperature starts to rise and the landscape becomes dry and arid. There are farms that create random pockets of green land along the way. The petrol stations that are on the motorway become less frequent. The services in this part of the country are mostly in the local towns and villages which nestle on the sides of the main routes. Satnav becomes invaluable in locating them, and then guiding us back onto the main drag. Approximately half way down Spain, we cross the border into Portugal and the difference is very noticeable between the two countries – it is even in a difference time zone so all the clocks go back an hour. The temperature is now 33 degrees and the bike air conditioning is being utilized – visors are up and jackets are open to let the speed of the bike force fresh air through clothes. Some way down the road, Mike's bike decides to launch a drink bottle missile at me. Fortunately, the guidance system is not good and the bottle goes skidding harmlessly past me and comes to rest in the central reservation, but I am reminded of the need to constantly pay attention when riding. We make the decision to get to Faro rally site and pitch the tents before it fills up too much. Pete leads the charge through the town and we arrive at the rally entrance with no accidental detours. Dave Pusey is there to greet us and leads us round to the camping area under the trees. We are now very hungry and thirsty and the rally has not started yet. There is one bar and one burger van for the early arrivals. The bar is very quick as everything is done with tokens. The burger van is a different story. I queue for 45 minutes for 3 burgers. It has been a very long day and we are tired. That night I have the best night's sleep I have ever had in a tent.

Mileage today 746 miles

DAY 4 – Thursday We start the day with a line of bikes following Dave to a local café for breakfast – and the luxury of a proper toilet. On return to the site, we spend the day taking it very slow and easy. There is a pretty good selection of rally food and plenty of bars with beer, pop and water. And the bikes keep on arriving. In the afternoon it is so hot that I decide to brave the showers. There is only cold water and I had been warned that there were only open 'beach style' showers available. However, I was pleasantly surprised to find that there were some closed cubicles for those of us who like a little privacy. That cold shock when the water first hits takes some getting used to, but is also very refreshing. As I head back to the tent, more bikes are pouring in to the site. The main 'Oasis' bar is now in full swing and is the main point of focus now. We eat and drink the night time away until fit to drop. On return to the tent, the noise of the rally is still at full volume. The bar plays music until 4am, and then the various camping groups carry on partying until daylight. This is not a place for sleeping.

DAY 5 – Friday Pete, Mike & I return to the breakfast café, on foot this time. As we return to the rally site, we are accompanied by the local 'suicide' dog. It constantly crosses from one side of the busy dual carriageway to the other – I don't think it has long to live. We decide to visit the beach today. Somebody tells us that it is only a mile away so we choose to walk. Somebody lied – it is about 3 miles and Pete ends up with blisters. The plus point was that lunch was a lovely fresh chicken mayo salad – my body is starting to

Still Riding.....Faro Continued

crave for fresh fruit and veg after this much time on rally grub. Back on site, a sand artist is starting to sculpt an angel of death on a motorbike. It is very impressive. As we walk past it, I comment to Mike 'There's already some cracks in those wings!' Mike thinks I have incredible eyesight, as he is looking at a plane taking off from the adjacent airport. Again the music and partying lasts all through the night. And still the bikes keep on arriving. Tent spaces on the ground are disappearing fast, and our small Brit patch is now being closed in on all sides by tents and bikes. The portaloos are now filling up fast despite the best efforts of the poo wagons that are on duty for 18 hours a day.

DAY 6 – Saturday Pete, Mike and I get up at 6am and pack up our tents to the sound of the music still playing from the bar. We have decided to take this opportunity to visit Gibraltar as none of us have been before. As we leave Faro, streams of bikes are still arriving. There is no sign of a dead dog on the side of the road, so perhaps he survived after all. Pete takes the lead, and we have a couple of unplanned detours as the satnav seems to have a mind of its own. Then we realize that apparently there is another Gibraltar in Portugal, re-educate the satnav and get on track properly. On the motorway we can see storks nests on top of the electricity pylons. Our top temperature on the road today is 36 degrees. We book into a hotel in La Linea (the border town with Gibraltar) and put all the clocks forward an hour again. The view of the Rock of Gibraltar is awesome. The hot shower and flushing toilet feel like real luxuries, and more than justify the cost of the room as we emerge refreshed and ready to go. We walk to the border and cross the runway of RAF Gibraltar. As we get to the other side, lights start flashing and a loudspeaker announces the arrival of a plane and warns everyone to clear the runway. People about halfway across run to the gates before they are locked for the plane to land. We walk through the original land defences of Gibraltar to the main square. It is all very British and we relax with Fish and Chips and pints of cider in the Lord Nelson Tavern. It is idyllic and we instantly fall in love with the place. That night I have a well earned peaceful, air-conditioned, very deep sleep.
Mileage today 240 miles

DAY 7 – Sunday We wake up to see the top of the Rock of Gibraltar shrouded in mist – it is beautiful. We load up and ride across to Gibraltar to fuel up. We set off north with the intention of riding to Valladolid, so that we will have a short haul tomorrow to Santander. We are making excellent time, when Pete's bike starts to play up. It is losing power and does not respond to the throttle. The first instance of this is at about 1300 hrs. Pete decides to push on and see how it goes. 30 miles down the road it happens again, so he phones our local mechanic for advice. We spend about 45 minutes getting under the fuel tank and checking everything that was suggested by the mechanic. He starts the bike up and twists the throttle – the engine cuts out. Pete announces 'That's it then! I can't do anymore!' Then we realize that he has knocked the Kill switch. The bike starts up no problem. We set off again with fingers crossed. Another 30 miles and it happens again, but this time it is worse – it actually cuts out completely. Pete gets the bike to the next major services through sheer will and determination. We can't be sat on the side of the motorway with no shelter, the temperature is now 38 degrees. At 1600 hrs Pete makes the decision to call European breakdown. He explains that we need to go north, to be closer to the ferry which is leaving at 1500 hrs tomorrow. We are hoping that he will be recovered to the ferry port, and Mike and I will meet him there. After 2 hours of waiting around, a recovery truck arrives, but the driver wants to take Pete south to a small village with a garage which will not be open until tomorrow morning at 9am. We ask him to take us north to Salamanca, where there will be more facilities and therefore give us more options. After an hour of pleading with him and the Breakdown HQ, he drives off without Pete and the bike. More frantic phonecalls follow to HQ, and finally Pete is promised that they will send a truck which will take him north to Salamanca. We all agree that Mike and I will ride to Salamanca, book in somewhere and try to make some arrangements for bike recovery for the next day. We set off at 2115 hrs, the recovery has not yet turned up and I feel sick at leaving Pete behind. We have a 2 hour ride to Salamanca. At our first fuel stop, Mike has a text from Pete to say that he is on his way. We arrive at 2300 hrs and book into the Ibis hotel. Mike explains our predicament to the receptionist, who immediately starts to look up Van hire companies so that we can transport Pete's bike ourselves. Meanwhile, Pete is asking his new driver if he can be taken to Santander. The driver agrees and phones HQ to negotiate a price for the extra mileage – recovery only allows 350 km (approx 220 miles) and we are 350 miles away from Santander. The quote is €1300. We don't have that amount of cash, so Pete comes as far as Salamanca. Our hotel receptionist is already making plans to get us on our way tomorrow. We try to calm down with a beer or two, but it is still an anxious time as we settle in for the night.
Mileage today: 403 miles

DAY 8 – Monday We are ready to go as soon as businesses are opening. We have a new receptionist who is equally as helpful as the first. The self-drive hire companies are unwilling to help as soon as they realize we want to transport a motorbike. At 0830 hrs our receptionist phones 'A Man with a Van' who says that he will do the job and quotes us a third of the price of the recovery thieves. Mike and I wait with Pete so that we can help load the heavy bike onto the van. It is getting ever closer to our time that we must leave in order to make sure that we both make the check-in time. That time arrives before the van, and once again I feel so sick as I have to ride away and leave Pete behind. Once again, at our first petrol stop, we get confirmation that Pete is on his way. The van turned up about 20 minutes after we had left. The two of them had lifted Pete's bike with Pete finding extra strength on anxiety adrenalin. Mike and I make good time and arrive at the ferry port an hour before final check-in time – very grateful for no traffic jams or other holdups. We wait outside the port entrance so that we can help unload the bike. Pete and Van man arrive 30 minutes after us and the relief is enormous. We are all celebrating, including Van man, that we all managed to make this ferry on time – the next one doesn't sail for another 3 days!! Pete rides his bike which is coughing and complaining through check-in and onto the boat. WE MADE IT. Hot showers, decent food, and pints of cider are what we need now. I am so tired that the alcohol goes straight to my head. An unplanned early night beckons. All worry is now gone and I sleep for about 12 hours.
Mileage today: 240 miles

DAY 9 – Tuesday I spend the morning on the boat, eating and relaxing with a book. At 1300 hrs I put on the sweaty bike kit again and wait for the call to vehicles. Pete has called Graham, who has promised to be waiting at Portsmouth with car and trailer to recover Pete back to Dorset, so all is set for the final leg of our journey. As the boat docks and we clear Customs, we see Graham and I have never been so happy to see him. Pete's bike is loaded up again and Mike and I set off down the M27. Of course, it starts to rain and then gets heavier and heavier. I wave goodbye to Mike at his junction and then I am on my own in the pouring rain – welcome back to UK. It is a very long 90 minutes to get home, but I make it in one piece, cold and wet. I unload all the panniers and kit off the bike and refuse the offer of a brew. I get back on my bike and ride to the bike shop to get my trusty steed some TLC (service due !!) My bike was brilliant and I love it. Mileage today: 80 miles Total Mileage for the trip 2340 miles **Anna**

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M O T O R C Y C L E

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