



CAPITAL WINGS



Whilst Capital was getting ready for our 'MoleWatch' Wing Ding at the end of June, other Capital members and friends were travelling across Europe on already-planned holidays to participate in a number of Treffens viz. Hungary, Slovenia, Italy and Switzerland.

Johnny and I headed for Green Lake, near Ptuj, in north-eastern Slovenia for their 13th Treffen. We notched up the countries - France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Austria before crossing the border at Dravograd into Slovenia. We met up with Nigel and Hilary, Rob and admire his museum of vintage tractors and engines. We sampled more pumpkin seed oil - this time one with roasted onions - and were offered hemp-infused schnapps as well as water.



Ladies Sampling the Schnapps

I should mention that the farmer grew industrial hemp legally.

It was a beautiful countryside ride to the vineyards around Jeruzalem where legend says that the Crusaders rested on their way back from the Holy Land and named the place their Jerusalem. I remembered my old school hymn: "And did those feet in ancient time.....". We enjoyed a good chat over a four-course lunch overlooking the hillside and were grateful for the gentle breeze to keep the heat down.



Jeruzalem Five

We didn't participate in the Light Parade that evening but the live band was certainly on the ball when the bikes returned. They played 'Ring of Fire' and then Hilary enjoyed herself drumming along to 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door'.



Drummer Hilary

On Saturday, Johnny and I explored Ptuj, Slovenia's oldest town. We climbed the five floors of the City Tower and watched the 21.4-meter clock pendulum swinging to and fro and the huge bell from 1706 chime. It was lunchtime and we had the place to ourselves. The views across the city and beyond were wonderful.

The Parade of Nations was another well-organised event with 11 out of the 12 British bikes out on the run.



Slovenian Parade of Nations

At the Awards later, the entertainment consisted of 'belly dancing' - apparently a number of the ladies belong to the Slovenian Goldwing Club - and then masked men and boys appeared dressed head-to-toe in sheepskin with cowbells hanging from their belts as the mythical Kurenti. The Slovenians are a lovely friendly people who, as we have experienced, proudly display their culture and history. The Kurent was a mythical god from Slovenian folklore known for his debauchery.



Belly Dancing

The legends link continued with the t-shirt and the Awards trophy, both based on a forest creature. GWOCGB came in 2nd behind Italy.



**Bob
Collects
Slovenian
Trophy**



Slovenian Creature

The next day we set off on a scenic route through the centre of Slovenia towards Italy. Another beautiful sunny day shared for part of the way with Peter and Wendy who we caught up with on the road, they having had the same idea as us. They stopped off for a few days in Ljubljana while we continued into the Euganean Hills for a spa break in the thermal baths there and a day visit to Venice.

The 40th Anniversary of the Italian Treffen at Imola beckoned and we arrived on Friday morning with the temperature in the high 30s. It was hot, hot, hot. This was a make-shift

campsite near the Acque Minerali Park next to the Enzo and Dino Ferrari racetrack, famous for motorcycling, cycling and Formula 1 events. Sadly, Ayrton Senna died in a racing accident here 41 years ago and there is a memorial statue as well as many very moving personal tributes to him.

The Lights Parade was two circuits of the track - crikey there was a lot of Gold Wings - and then we rode into Imola and parked up in the main Square.

The Brits quickly spied the Co-op and dived in to buy ice creams, drinks and gallons of water. After presentations and music, the bikers lingered over coffee and beers in the cafes around the Square, but we found a restaurant in a back street and co-incidentally met up with



Martyn Breaking Free

our Swiss friends. Tango was a lonely bike in the Square when we came to ride back to the campsite.

The karaoke entertainment was in full swing with all nationalities taking part. The two Brits, Jayne and Martyn Stone, did us proud with Jayne dressed as Boy George and Martyn as Freddie Mercury. He had fashioned a Hoover out of cardboard and was singing so well to 'I Want to Break Free' that the DJ joined him on stage.

I'm sure he got the loudest clapping and cheering from the audience all night.

On Saturday Johnny and I rode a short distance to explore Dozza, a charming medieval village perched on a hill between Bologna and Imola. Picture ancient stone streets wrapped in colour, not from flowers or flags, but from murals splashed across every wall. It was an open-air art gallery. We were the only ones wandering around at lunchtime taking lots of photographs. It was hot of course. We then had a delicious lingering lunch before exploring the old castle/fortress, with its magnificent views over the Sellustra River valley.



Dozza Castle

The Parade of Nations turned out to be two laps of the track making Imola another race circuit experience for us to add to our list.



Imola in Action

The Awards presentation started with ten members of GWCI on the stage so Bob had lots of hands to shake before collecting the trophy for 3rd place and 17 GWOCGB bikes.



Bob Collects Italian Trophy

It was announced that 559 motorcycles had inscribed so no wonder the track was chocka when we were speeding around it.

All good things must come to an end and we had to be heading back to London so sadly missed the Swiss Treffen.

We did visit the country though and after riding along the Aosta valley met up with Jed Halpern at the top of the St Bernard Pass at midday on the Monday.



Jed and Johnny

We had our first rain of the holiday up there so quickly rode down to Martigny for lunch. The rain caught up with us in France but not before we were given a souvenir of the Tour de France from the hotel receptionist - the Tour was passing at the end of July through where we stayed - Pontarlier. Our holiday ended safely back home even though we did have to pay the Silvertown Tunnel toll!

Finally, we send congratulations to Margaret who celebrated her 70th birthday at the end of July. We all keep Joe in our memories so it must have been a bitter-sweet occasion for her to be without him, but she has the wonderful support of her family.

We are all looking forward to Margaret's annual Tea Party in aid of Macmillan on Saturday 6th September at 2pm in Witham.

Please put the date in your diary and remember to starve yourself for two or three days before so that you can enjoy all her wonderful homemade savouries, biscuits, cakes and scones. Can't wait.

Miss (Helen) Whiplash