Yetti is our roving reporter this month as he tells the adventure of 12 bikes going to Switzerland.

It started off with a message from Essex Rep Dave planning on doing a Swiss trip, staying at the Hotel Hof und Post at Innertkirchen. We have stayed at the Hof a few times before and its owners, Christoph and Monika, are great hosts. The hotel is situated at the bottom of the Grimsel and Susten Passes with the Furka in between.



Furka Pass

So in September three groups made their separate ways to the Hof. A total of 12 Bikes: eight x Wings, one x Can-Am, one x Triumph, one x Kawasaki and one x BMW. Unfortunately, Andy & Lucy had to drop out, so..

Group 1 was just us (Ray & Ginny) and our personal, long-term friends Mark & Lisa on the Kwacker. Big Al on his BMW joined us later in the week and travelled back with us.
Group 2 was Dave & Bev, Phil & Liz, Colin and Mike & Maeann on the Triumph.
Group 3 was Rocky, Richard, Del & Linda, Rob & Shirley and Little Al on the Can-Am.

Groups 1 and 3 met up at the Orange Hotel near Mons for the first night and it was a great start to 12 days of riding fun and memory making.

Our second stop for Group 1 was the Moto-Hôtel at Col de Bussang, a busy mountain pass in the Vosges mountains of France. A motorcycle-only hotel and a great place with superb Belgian hosts Julian and Daisy, we will be going back again if we travel that way.

The next stop was the Hof. We arrived in sunshine and received a very warm greeting from Monika and Christoph. The hotel is situated in a perfect location for rides out, has good food and is a good price for B&B in Switzerland. They also did a three-course meal for 20 Swiss Francs. Imagine 19 wingers together with beer and wine being a quiet mealtime with no banter or people borrowing phones to take loads of pictures - if you believe that you will believe anything!!!



Swiss Gang with Christoph and Monika

Saturday was a no bike day as we were there to see the cows being bought down from the mountain to graze on the lower fields. Sounds a bit strange but it's a big event all over the Jungfrau region.They went right past the hotel, all dressed up with flowers and with their big bells on. Afterwards we visited the food and beer tent to join in with the locals.



Cows coming down the Mountain

On Sunday we went to Lauterbrunnen while Mike & Maeann and Mark & Lisa did the Schilthorn trip. The Piz Gloria summit offers panoramic views of the Swiss skyline including the Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau peaks.



View from the Schilthorn with Mark and Lisa

Visitors can explore the 360-degree revolving restaurant Piz Gloria and the *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* exhibition. With three cable cars up to the top of this James Bond location, it is not cheap but is a once-in-a-lifetime trip. We and some of the others went up in a cable car to Grindelwald, the famous alpine village and resort in the Bernese Oberland, nestled at the foot of the Eiger mountain.

Just 1,000 meters up and guess what - a pub with real ale at the top - The Black Monk! As we were on the bikes, I could only have a small glass of their beer. A pity as it was a lovely setting to sit and taste a lovely beer in. As always in the Alps, the ride there and back was amazing - twisty roads and fantastic scenery.



Hof Line-up



The Black Monk Pub

We tended to split up into different groups over the next few days as people visited a variety of places or took different routes up and down the Passes. Great fun waving at a particular group as we passed each other, eventually meeting up at the end of each day to catch up with everyone, relax and hear all about their adventures.



Gang at Gimmelward



Ladies in the Jacuzzi

The rest of our stay was a mixture of rainy-day trips (only one) including on the train to Meiringen (Sherlock Holmes connection) and Interlaken - the Harder Kulm funicular railway and the viewpoint at the top are well worth the visit and the Hooters restaurant was interesting!!! Sunny day trips were spent around the Grimsel, Furka and Susten Passes; poor Lisa, who doesn't like heights, did very well to complete all three. We had a lovely trip to Thun but unfortunately on the return journey my old 1200 died on a roundabout in Interlaken. Ginny pushed me into a back packers' hotel car park, which was just off the roundabout. Just a click could be heard from the starter button. Big Al and Mark & Lisa came back, and I told them I think the external alternator had gone. "Never mind", I said, "I will plug in the one that's still in the bike!". We jump started the old girl and off we went.

Far too soon it was Friday and time for everyone to head off on their separate Group routes, homeward bound. Our first stop was to a really old hotel in the walled city of Langres, France. We stayed at l'Hôtel de la Poste which is the oldest hotel in France and was originally a sixteenth century inn. The hotel rooms were all period decorated and no two the same. We had time for a short walk around the shops before a bar stop was required to quench our thirsts and a restaurant stop to fill our bellies.

Our last stop was a Kyriad hotel just outside Laon (another walled city) in France. A short walk to the Buffalo Grill for dinner and then the nearby bar for a few more drinks/nightcaps whilst reminiscing over the last 12 days. Hats off to Lisa as it was her first time on a bike abroad and especially for going up all the cable cars and funiculars and walking to the overhanging viewpoints. Well done Lisa - we hope the brandies at the end of each one helped!

On Sunday morning, breakfast eaten and bikes loaded ("just one more little bag" from Ginny to squeeze in), we set off for the Le Shuttle at Calais. No more charging troubles for the 600-mile ride home, apart from the universal joint giving up and clattering like an old BSA when not under a load all the way from Laon but the old girl still got us home. A wonderful 1,700-mile round trip and very little rain.

We've been to Switzerland many times now for Treffens and holidays and the country never ceases to wow us. We love Switzerland for the scenery, the roads and the people. So do things in life that make you happy, worry about the credit card later.

Thank you to our travelling friends - you all made it a great and wonderful trip.

Mmmmmm, where to go next year people?

And now moving onto another year and another terrific get-together of family, neighbours and friends, especially Goldwing friends. The occasion was a fund-raising afternoon on 26th September enjoying Margaret's Tea Party, all in aid of Macmillan cancer support. It was another warm, sunny day as we gathered in Witham and filled Margaret's house and garden. Lots of squishing together and cuddles in the hall as we passed each other with plates of sandwiches, cakes, scones and biscuits all exquisitely made by Margaret. Carrot cake with cream cheese frosting, coffee & walnut, fruit cake, lemon drizzle, apple cake, chocolate almond cake with chocolate ganache and not forgetting, chocolate caramel shortcake.



Margaret's Bakes

After we had satiated our hunger, we played the 'Toss the £1 Coin' game in the garden with bottles donated by Grumpy & Von, Charles and others. This time there two bottles to throw money at and Wayne and new Club member Paul were the victors.



Wayne wins Rhubarb Gin



Paul on the Raspberry Sambuca

There was an auction for the remaining three bottles with Big Al going for the rum and Chris eager to win the malt whiskey. These two activities and playing the *Shut the Box* game, together with donations from people present and those not able to attend on the day, raised around £1,500 for Margaret's charity.

Kerry & Big Al from the south and Daz, Sarah and Georgia from the north vied for the furthest travelled group. I think it was even Steven in the end.

Margaret has since received a letter from Macmillan from which I quote a section: "In fact, with the amazing support that you, your family, friends and your community have given us since 2012, your amazing donations of **£10,598.00** could help pay for a Macmillan Nurse for over 7 weeks. Your donation is helping people living with cancer and their families receive essential medical, practical and emotional support. We couldn't do any of this without you and your team of supporters, Margaret - Thank you!"

So a huge well done to everyone who has contributed over the years. A magnificent achievement for super baker Margaret. I wonder how many pounds of flour, sugar, butter, eggs, dried fruit etc etc she has whipped together to deliver this scrumdiddlyumptiousness. Even Margaret's labrador enjoyed the day. Here she is.



Betty on Door Patrol

Thinking of cakes, it's time to start making the parkin for Bonfire Night. Enjoy the sparklers.

Miss (Helen) Whiplash