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**2020 Spring Email Supplement**

**Notice of the Association of Pioneer**  
**Motor Cyclists**  
**2020 AGM.**

**Owing to the Corona virus this meeting arranged for  
7<sup>th</sup> April has been cancelled.**

**Hopefully it could take place later in the year  
It is possible that the White Peak Wandering and the  
Run of **Something** Strange may not take place. Please  
contact the organiser nearer the date.**



On page's 28 -35 There is a very interesting article from 1914.  
Almost a World War One version of the Great Escape. I received  
this from the editor of the Irish VVMCC..

I have several of their past magazines, and if you are interested in  
reading them to pass the next 4 months, then I can send them by  
email. Please let me know.

Geoff

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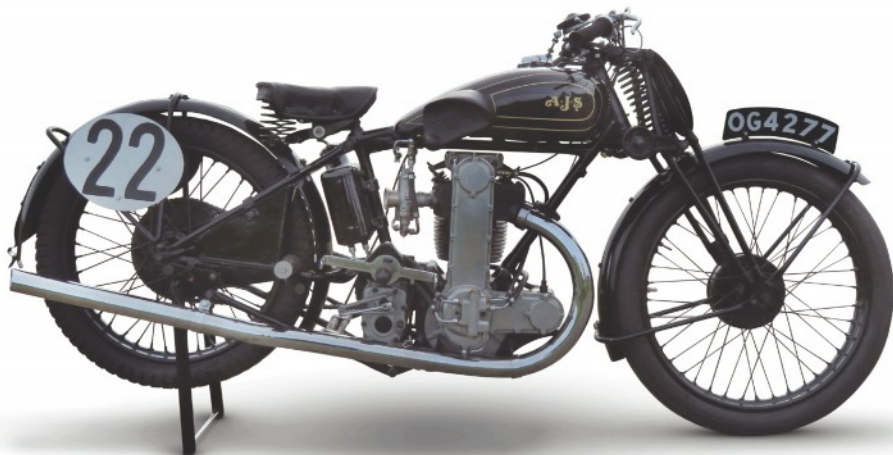
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## A TALE FROM AUSTRALIA 1955

*Story: Jim Scaysbrook*

Imagine if Valentino Rossi decided to spend the European winter earning a bit of pocket money by taking in a series of races in Australia with his works state-of-the art Yamaha Moto GP weapon.

A parallel scenario actually happened 75 years ago, when reigning 500 World Champion, the dashing 31-year-old Geoff Duke, arrived on our shores with two works 500 Gilera fours.

To put things in perspective, Duke was the first motorcycle racer to become a post-war media megastar. Handsome and erudite, Duke was also blessed of phenomenal talent on two wheels. Ever since he turned heads by winning the 1949 Senior Clubmans TT on the Isle of Man, his rise to stardom was meteoric. With the superb handling but underpowered works Norton singles, he took the fight to the European opposition, notably the multi-cylinder MV and Gilera fours. After gathering the 1951 500 title for Norton, he defected to Gilera in 1953 and set about instilling British handling into the already rapid package. The result was a near-invincible combination. Aboard the Gilera, he won 9 GPs in 1953 and 54 to take back-to-back titles.

Late in 1954, rumours of a Down Under tour by Duke, as well as our home-grown star Ken Kavanagh, and Rhodesian tearaway Ray Amm, began to circulate. Then Amm was injured in England, and Kavanagh withdrew for personal reasons, leaving Duke on his own. George Lynn, editor of the Australian Motorcycle News paper, had been handling Duke's arrangements and convinced him to still undertake the tour, despite the lack of travelling partners. Eyeing a possible export market, Gilera gave their blessing and two 500s were shipped from Genoa, accompanied by works mechanic Giovanni Fumagalli. The bikes arrived in Fremantle on January 2nd, 1955, and after some wrangling with local customs officials (who placed a value of \$40 each on the priceless machines), the cargo was cleared.

Duke travelled by air, arriving in Sydney on Friday 7th January to be greeted by a bevy of fans and riders, before flying on to Perth where he was deluged by the media. In the mid-fifties, the closest that Australian motorcycle enthusiasts came to 'the big time' was via months-old copies of the English weekly magazines, *The Motor Cycle* and *Motorcycling*, so the appearance of a world champion was greeted with near hysteria.

In Perth the Gileras were entrusted to Harry Gibson, former land speed record holder on a Vincent. After a day of interviews and personal

appearances, Duke was whisked off to Mooliabeenie, a wartime airstrip 60 kilometres from Perth that could be accessed only by a rough bush track. For a rider accustomed to the classic circuits of Europe, the sight of the crumbling strip was somewhat sobering.

Race day, January 16th dawned stinking hot, but it did not deter 15,000 eager spectators from filing into the circuit. With the temperature soaring to 45 degrees, members of the organising clubs, the Ariel, BSA and Coastal MCCs, formed a human chain to sweep the track surface free of loose gravel before racing could start. Practice had shown that Duke's main opposition would come from local all-rounder and current Australian scrambles champion Peter Nichol, on a Matchless G45 twin, and from George Scott's GP Triumph. The start of the first race was eventful, with Nichol crashing heavily on the run to the first corner and badly damaging his Matchless. Scott held second before his machine jammed in third gear, allowing Jack Lowe's Norton through into second behind the long-gone Gilera. Scott had the gearbox functioning again for the Unlimited race and clung to Duke for the entire race. In the latter stages, a stone flung from the rear wheel of a lapped rider smashed one lens of Duke's goggles, cutting his face and further adding to his discomfort. However he maintained his advantage to the flag, holding a slight advantage over Scott.

Adelaide was the next port of call, but with a total ban on public roads racing still in force by an Act of Parliament, the only suitable venue to be found was Gawler airstrip. Even obtaining the use of this rugged site was difficult, and only the intervention of the directors of the Adelaide Children's Hospital (the charity which would benefit from the meeting's proceeds) saw permission granted for its use. Even so, as Gawler was officially an emergency site in case of bad weather for the main Adelaide airport, a proviso was that aircraft still had right of way!

But again, race day turned out to be a scorcher, with the hot gusty winds blowing dust and dirt in all directions. With 16,000 spectators crammed into the confines of the airstrip, it took some time to erect extra barriers for crowd control, meaning that practice was restricted to four laps. Duke found the Gilera wheel-spinning in top gear down the gravel-strewn straight, and was rather unimpressed with the whole set up. In the 500cc race, Keith Campbell had the crowd jumping for joy as he took the early lead. Although the Gilera clearly had the speed, Duke had his hands full with Roger Barker, who would constantly slide under the maestro on the slippery corners. With the air full of dust, Duke's Gilera ingested a gritty mixture, knocking a few hundred revs

off the top end, and he had only managed to catch Campbell as the race reached its final stages. The Victorian was far from beaten, but just when a thrilling finish was looming, the gear lever of his Norton dropped off and he was out. The heat was so intense that both Campbell and Barker needed medical attention and were unable to start in the Unlimited event. Duke also declined to start. His number one machine was off song after its diet of Gawler grit, and he was unwilling to use his spare Gilera (the bike used in the World Championships by Irish star Reg Armstrong) so early into his tour. His decision caused much consternation amongst officials, but Duke was adamant. In the end, just six riders took the start for the Unlimited race.

After the rugged confines of the first two venues, Bandiana army camp near Albury was a welcome relief for the meeting on Sunday January 30th. A 4.5 kilometre layout through the camp featured well sealed roads, but



*Geoff at Bandiana Camp.*

the back straight incorporated a jump over cross roads that flung the Gilera into the air at somewhere around 200 km/h. Duke's day began badly when the Gilera stopped on the far side of the circuit after only a handful of practice laps, giving him a long push back to the pits. It transpired that the magneto armature had lunched itself, and the machine was whisked back to local star Doug Fugger's workshop in Albury for emergency repairs.

With its sparks returned, the Gilera arrived back at the circuit with practice finished and the support events under way. Young Eric Hinton, riding a highly-modified road-going 500 International Norton, won the Senior Clubmen's event, making sure to do it in the slowest possible time. The reason for this ploy was that handicaps were being calculated for the final Feature race on the results of the scratch races. In the 500cc Senior race, Duke settled in behind Maurie Quincey's Norton for several laps to learn the



line, then opened the taps and cleared out to win easily by 25 seconds – a fact not unnoticed by the handicappers. With daylight fading, the Unlimited Handicap was reduced to six laps, and Duke conceded 45 seconds to Eric Hinton, and 25 to Eric's father Harry, riding an ex-works 350 Norton after crashing his 500 in the Senior. Finally Duke was away and set about carving through the field, blasting by rider after rider as if they were standing still and shattering the lap record. With just one lap to go, only one rider lay between Duke and the chequered flag, but even his final record-smashing circuit could not bridge the gap, and Hinton took the win by just 30 metres. It was to be the only time Duke was beaten during his stay.

The Gileras were to be next domiciled in Sydney, in the garage of our family home in Hurstville, and were loaded onto a box trailer towed behind my father Charlie's Holden FJ utility for trek back from Bandiana. For two whipper snappers, myself and my younger brother Peter, the rugged confines of the back of the utility amongst all the gear gave us a fine view of the priceless cargo during the trip, with the cabin seats occupied by my mother June and works mechanic Giovanni Fumagalli. Geoff Duke displays his immaculate style at Mount Druitt. Geoff Duke after his victory at Mount Druitt, with Keith Stewart on his Matchless G45 behind.

Duke's next racing engagement was two weeks later at Mount Druitt, west of Sydney, but before this there was a whirlwind round of other duties. 1,300 enthusiasts crammed into the lower auditorium of Sydney Town Hall, with many more forced to listen from outside in Druitt Street. The audience hung on the champion's every word as he recounted tales from the European theatre, while diplomatically avoiding any criticism of the local scene. He did, however make the point that he did not support the local alcohol-fuel formula, claiming that the superior performance it created was overshadowed by chronic unreliability.

The following day, accompanied by several members of the Auto Cycle Union of NSW, he was flown to Bathurst to inspect the nation's pride, the 6 kilometre Mount Panorama Circuit. The ACU, and Bathurst Council, held faint hopes that Duke could be persuaded to ride at the NSW TT at Easter, and Bathurst's Mayor was among a string of identities who greeted him as he stepped onto the tarmac at Bathurst Airport. Duke was lavish in his praise, describing the track as "set in beautiful surroundings...with a wide variety of medium, fast and slowish bends, and probably more gradient in 1.5 miles than I have ever seen. I was indeed sorry that the necessity for returning to Italy, to test machines for the coming season, prevented me from



competing at the Easter meeting”. Not half as sorry as the ACU!

Again, a bumper crowd poured into the scruffy Mount Druitt circuit to see the world’s top rider in action, and this time the weather was much more benign. The track surface, basic at the best of times, was in extremely poor shape due to the number of car races in recent months, but Duke praised the general layout. To the delight of the crowd, evergreen Art Senior, on his home-brewed Ariel-based special, shot into a brief lead in the Senior GP. Before the first lap was completed however, it was the blood-red Gilera out in front, running away to an easy win. Riding the race of his life, Keith Stewart brought his new Matchless G45 twin home in second place, ahead of Harry Hinton. Everyone expected big things from wild man Jack Ehret, the lap record holder, in the Unlimited race. But Ehret’s alcohol-burning 1000cc Vincent Black Lightning was slow to fire from the push start, whereas Duke was quickly in the saddle and disappearing. Although unable to bridge the gap, Ehret charged through the field, sharing a new lap record with Duke. As some consolation, Ehret then fitted a ‘chair’ to the Vincent and won the Sidecar TT!

One week later, it was back to Victoria for a combined car and motorcycle meeting at the airstrip at Fisherman’s Bend in the heart of Melbourne. With his number one machine now getting rather tired, Duke switched to his spare, but found it severely lacking in bottom end power. The featureless layout, with long straights and hairpin turns with hay bales on the inside, presented its own obstacles. Noel Cheney, who rode at the meeting recalls, “We (the local riders on Nortons) used to brake hard and hug the straw bales tight on the corners, which meant we had to slip the clutch hard, and this resulted in a lot of clutch problems. Duke, however, would brake out wide, then swoop in and just clip the bales coming out. We all hoped that no-one would outbrake themselves and torpedo him.” On his home turf, Maurie Quincey was in fighting form, and led the 500 race until clutch slip set in. By this time Duke had stalked his prey and pounced when Quincey ran wide at a hairpin bend. In the Unlimited event, Quincey again took the early lead until the clutch gave out completely, leaving Duke to win easily from Doug Fugger’s Norton.

With a week to spare before his final engagement at Longford, Tasmania, Duke could have been expected to relax with a spot of sight seeing, but he chose to compete in a local scramble at Springvale, where he rode a pre-war 250 Empire Star BSA, provided by Jimmy Guilfloyle, complete with rigid frame and girder forks! Qualifying through a heat and a semi-final, he lined

up for the 250 Final with nine others, his hands now red-raw from the pounding. Alas, while holding fifth place, the ancient engine cried enough. The Longford meeting was to be held over two days, Saturday and Monday, and in the opening race Duke was circulating comfortably in front after passing first lap leader Noel Cheney when the engine began to lose power. Sensing his chance for glory, local star Max Stevens, on his ex-Ken Kavanagh Norton, really got his head down and closed to within a few seconds of the ailing Gilera when the chequered flag came out. The Gilera was rushed back to Launceston, where a faulty magneto was diagnosed. With the unit beyond repair, a frantic phone call to Melbourne, where the other Gilera was already packed ready for shipment back to Italy, had the magneto removed and on a plane to Tasmania, where it arrived late on Sunday afternoon. With the motor now sparking healthily, Duke had no problems in winning the Unlimited race, with a new lap record of 152 kph/h, before jumping out of his leathers and rushing to the airport to catch his flight to Melbourne.

His whirlwind tour had taken him to every state except Queensland, and his charming and eloquent manner did incalculable good for motorcycling. The unprecedented publicity generated helped to dispel the popularly-held, media-fuelled belief that motorcycle racers were a bunch of half-wits with a death wish. It also had a profound effect on the local riders, serving as a stark reminder of the gap between our rather primitive scene and the European big time. A number of our up and coming stars impressed him, including Keith Campbell, Roger Barker, and particularly Bob Brown, who had just gained selection as Australian representative to the 1955 Isle of Man TT races. "This young man is a joy to watch, uses his head, and should figure very well in the IoM and on the Continent," he said in his report to the British press. When Duke was injured at the start of the 1957 season, he recommended Brown to take his place in the Gilera team for the TT, resulting in two excellent third places. For 1958, Duke personally sponsored Bob on a pair of Nortons.

There was considerable speculation of a return trip Down Under after the 1955 European season, but by that stage Duke, Reg Armstrong and 12 other riders, many of them leading privateers, were under threat of suspension following the infamous 'Riders' strike' at the Dutch TT. Nevertheless, the sight, and sound of the maestro on the screaming red 'Fire Engines' stayed with everyone who witnessed the spectacle for many, many years.



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Devonshire Arms by 4<sup>th</sup> April..

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*Q: How old is your son, the one living with you?*

A: 38 or 25, I can't remember which.

*Q: How long has he lived with you'?*

A: 45 years.

*Q: What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke up that morning?*

A: He said, "Where am I Cathy?"

*Q: And why did that upset you?*

A: My name is Susan.

*Q: What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?*

A: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

*Q: Can you describe the person?*

A: He was about medium height and had a beard.

*Q: Was this a man, or a female?*

A: A man I think.

*Q: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a depositor notice?*

A: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

*Q: Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?*

A: All my autopsies are performer on dead people.

*Q: Was it you or your brother who was killed in the war?*

A: Not me.

*Q. Do you recall the time that you examined the body?*

A: The autopsy started at 8.30pm.

*Q. What is your date of birth'?*

A: July 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Q: What year?*

A: Every year.



Extra photos from Ian Kerr's tale about the



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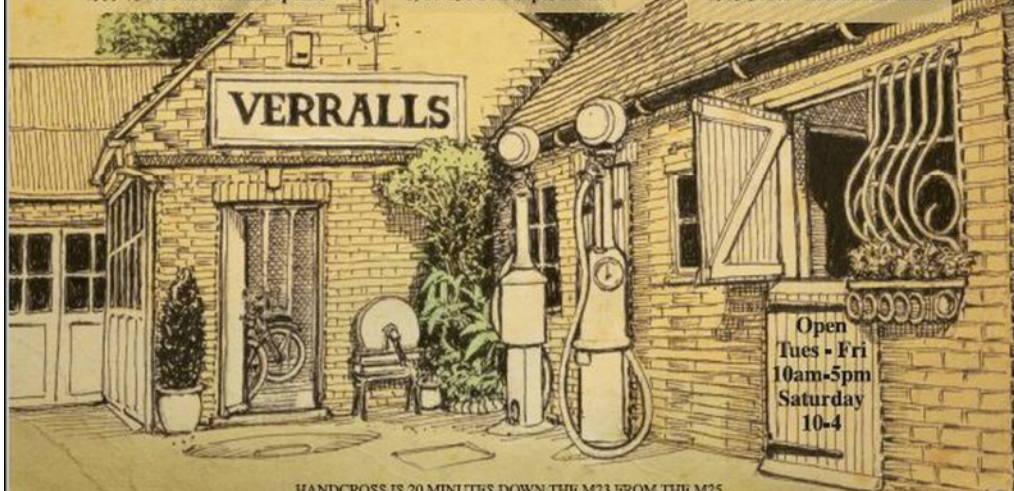
1959 750cc Norton Manx Special



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## LUXURY STEAMER

The fabled three cylinder Scott runs again. Sammy Miller is rightly proud of the unique collection of restored British rarities on show at his museum. A good many people must have seen Sammy's three cylinder Scott as a dusty wreck — 'as found' on the Scott Owners' Club stand at Stafford in 1990. That in less than a year it was superbly restored and transformed into a sweetly running motor cycle is nothing short of phenomenal.

The Scott factory anticipated the terrible depression of the early Thirties by offering a cheap 300cc single. Alas, not cheap enough — and not good enough either. The three probably had its origins in the same sort of thinking. In hard times, the very cheap sells — and so does the very expensive and luxurious, in limited numbers.

However, to design, build and develop a machine as radically different as the Scott three was no small undertaking. How they financed the work at all is a mystery, for sales plunged disastrously after 1929. That year 1400 machines were made. In 1930 the figure was a catastrophic 860 or so. Never again throughout the next decade did the average yearly production rise much above 200 machines. Yet, somehow the three was developed.

That a prototype was running early in 1933 is certain, because it was on his way to that year's TT that the celebrated Liverpool Scott dealer A E Reynolds called at the factory and was given a demonstration ride. The machine must have been reasonably well developed, for the enthusiastic Reynolds contracted to take every machine that Scott could make for the 1934 season.

Alas, none were forthcoming. Then in February 1934 the new three cylinder machine was announced in the Press. For *The Motor Cycle* of March 1, 1934, Torrens (editor Arthur Bourne) road tested what was almost certainly the same prototype that Albert Reynolds had ridden nine months earlier, and it differed considerably from the model that is now to be seen in the Sammy Miller museum at New Milton, Hampshire.

The frame was built from essentially straight tubes brazed into conventional lugs. There was no springing at the rear, and at the front Brampton bottom link forks were used. A distinctive wedge shaped fuel and oil tank sloped steeply down to a fashionable and sensibly low saddle. The engine was of 750cc with the crankshaft in line with the frame. Bevel gears between the car type clutch and the four speed gearbox allowed a conventional kick starter and chain final drive. Gearchange was by hand. Cooling was by thermo siphon, using an oversize version of the Scott honeycomb radiator with a filler

cap on either side of the header tank. The machine weighed in at just under 450lb, with full complement of petrol, oil and water.

Torrens was most favourably impressed by the new machine. A prototype, especially one so radical, might have been forgiven any vagaries of handling, but there were none. About the engine there were no doubts. The acceleration was described as exceptional: "There is no pause, no flat spot as you snap open the throttle. With its six cylinder torque, the clatter-free drone rises in an instant to a screaming hum — the war cry of a Scott and a half!"

However, for whatever reason, Scott chose to undertake a complete redesign. One suspects that they had an eye on the light sports car market in enlarging the engine to 73x78mm. Indeed one of these 986cc engines was fitted into a Morgan 4/4, endowing it with performance that for the time was blistering, far outstripping that of the side-valve Ford fitted as standard.

Be that as it may, the redesign of the engine embraced more than a change of capacity. Fundamental to the design was the separation of the crankcase into three separate chambers by large diameter, light alloy drums between each section of the pressed up crankshaft. These drums carried the main bearings which were lubricated — and the gas sealing effected — by flooding them with high pressure oil from the throttle controlled pump. The crankcases were in turn scavenged positively by a gear pump. All very ingenious, but in practice far too complicated to be good engineering, and intrinsically over expensive.

In the original 750cc engine, the whole crankshaft assembly was threaded into a one piece 'barrel' crankcase, and the drums secured by through-bolts. The re-designed engine had a horizontally split crankcase, and the drums were trapped between the two halves. The light alloy cylinder head and cast iron cylinder block were both detachable.

And where the 750cc engine had featured light alloy connecting rods whose split big ends had clamped onto the outer races of needle roller bearings, the 986cc engine used one piece steel rods assembled on loose double row rollers.

Needless to say, although the flat-top piston, loop scavenge system was already well established elsewhere, Scott remained true to the cross flow deflector piston system that the firm's founder had developed so painstakingly all those years ago.

This new engine was fitted into entirely new cycle parts and, as a last minute surprise, formed a huge attraction at the 1934 Olympia Show. The frame itself was of steel channel to which tubular rear stays were bolted, and the Bramp-ton front forks were replaced by heavy duty Webb girders. The

machine appeared to have been consciously re-styled to leave behind the rather vintage appearance of the prototype. Most striking was the way in which a car style grille concealed a radiator let into what appeared to be a very shapely saddle tank that was in fact a shell.

Petrol — all 2 ½ gal of it — was carried inside tanks bolted to the single top tube of the frame. The sides of the shell were hinged, lifting to give access to dynamo, distributor, sparking plugs and water hose connections. Engine and gearbox had been cleaned up, and the gear-change was now a positive stop foot change.

No price was quoted to the three on the Scott stand at Olympia, but a leaflet issued in 1935 says boldly '£115 complete' — and then goes on to list speedometer, pillion seat and foot rests as extras!

Remarkably, a power output of 48hp at 5200rpm is noted on the front of the brochure. Though no machines were sold in 1935, the brochure has its date altered to 1936. By this time, the Scott company were in business only by virtue of production of industrial engines, general engineering, and increasingly Admiralty contracts — for re-arming for Hitler's war was now underway.

The 1000cc three became increasingly a lost cause, though some sort of development programme continued and almost incredibly, a six cylinder version was made, and fitted into an Aston Martin sports car!

In 1936 the factory actually supplied a 1000cc three to a customer — but it was in fact to Albert Reynolds, who had a financial interest in the Scott company. The neat radiator of the Show model had obviously proved inadequate, because Reynolds' machine was fitted with a radiator twice the size, fit to grace a double decker bus. At the same time the 'petrol tank' shell was louvred to improve the flow of cooling air, and the totally inadequate 2 ½ gal petrol capacity was improved upon by the use of twin pannier tanks each side of the rear wheel — thus preventing the carrying of a pillion passenger! Thereafter, despite hopeful noises in the Press, development of the three seems to have fizzled out.

Post-war, Scott motor cycle sales picked up a little, though between 1946 and takeover in 1950 by Birmingham entrepreneur Matt Holder, the figure averaged no more than 400 per annum and even that was distorted by a temporary upsurge in 1947.

Part of Matt Holder's plan for Scott was to revive the three. Indeed he and his right hand man, Bill Read, revised the design using petrol lubrication — which considerably simplified the layout. First considered by Aston Martin as the basis for a cheap sports car, the engine was later adapted as a motor boat

unit for the Bermuda company. Despite its appearance at the 1959 London Boat Show, nothing came of this development.

The machine that Sammy rescued and restored after the 1990 Stafford Show was sold to him by Ryan Holder, Matt Holder's younger son. Most unfortunately, in addition to the general dilapidation, the engine had stood for a long time in the open air with the spark plugs removed, and the crankcases had filled with water. "That was bad enough," says Sammy, "but it was a brand new crank." Rectification involved expensive metal spraying and machining. Rebuilding the engine was greatly simplified by Sammy's acquisition of a wealth of photographs and original factory drawings — over 600 pieces in all. There are details of everything from a gudgeon pin to the radiator grille. "We'd have been lost without them!" he admits.

One thing that was missing was the virtually one-off Delco Remy three cylinder ignition distributor. After spending various sums, and seeking to convert six cylinder units, Sammy eventually based his replacement on one that cost him the magnificent sum of £1.50, and was found at the Beaulieu auto-jumble on a car stall.

The gearbox, again, caused some head scratching, and had to be rebuilt not once but twice. "I don't think that they had really got it sorted even in the end," says Sammy.

Flood the three, hold your hand over the bell mouth for a couple of kicks (all Scotts like a rich mixture), switch on the ignition, and one more kick brings it into vibrant life. The exhaust note is a rich baritone, quite unlike any other.

Mechanically — complete silence.

To ride the Scott three is an uncanny experience. It is heavy — there is no doubt about that — but it steers admirably and its very weight seems to give it a remarkable stability. The wide handlebars and sit-up-and-beg riding position, along with that free-revving engine, place the three firmly in the luxury tourer class. Gear ratios are indeed nicely chosen, but the ample and abundant torque of the engine is such that it would mask any deficiencies.

And the engine! Believe in every one of those 48 horsepower! Despite the machine's weight, acceleration is a sheer surge of exhilaration, and so smooth. A veritable candidate for the appellation of 'super bike', and not, believe me, with the patronizing qualification of 'in its day'.

Many thousands of Scott fans over the years must have asked themselves: "Was the three really the dream bike it looked on paper?"

Having ridden it, and ridden it hard, I'm able to tell you: "Yes, gentlemen, it really is a wonderful machine, years ahead of its time."

The Scott factory never did have much luck with their timing!

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DISCOVER  
THE DIFFERENCE



## **BMW Airhead Twins – The Complete Story**

A quick look and count-up along the bookshelf shows Ducati and Harley Davidson taking the top spots in terms of numbers and variety of titles. In terms of British bikes, the original Triumph marque weighs in with a big score, matched by BMW.

A closer look through the various titles for the German marque show complete marque histories, model-specific volumes, and one or two on the 'Boxer twins', none on the whole airhead range. Even an early title from Crowood - who have published this new work centring on the whole airhead range - does not do this subject the same level of attention that this latest tome does.

Written by experienced and respected motorcycle journalist Phil West - who wrote an earlier book on the BMW GS range - this hardback volume looks in depth at the history of the air-cooled boxer twin or 'airhead' engine that has been the trademark of the German manufacturer since they introduced their very first motorcycle in 1923.

The horizontally opposed motor has been used in everything from road-bikes, TT winners, to land speed record holders, right through to 1970s style icons, and powered the first of the off-road GS range, so popular now with adventure motorcyclists. In its air-cooled format it managed to survive until 1996 when ever-stringent emission regulations meant a move to liquid-cooling, having survived an attempt by the company in the eighties to consign it to history with a switch to inline three and four cylinder machines.

Because of the following that the early machines still have – despite the forced modernisation of the boxer power-plant - the company is using its styling cues for some of their present day machines, as reflected by some of the prices being asked for classic airheads.

As the saying goes 'the beginning is a very good place to start' and West takes the reader right back to the start of the company and the early machines, with each of the ten chapters looking at the various decades and the significant changes to the machines. The book ends with a look at the future and some of the tribute bikes like the R nine T and some of the concept machines that may follow.

Each chapter is well illustrated using some of the 290 photographs, mostly from BMW themselves, so you know they are accurate representations of the various models and there are box-outs with the model specifications throughout, with a useful appendix giving production numbers at the rear.



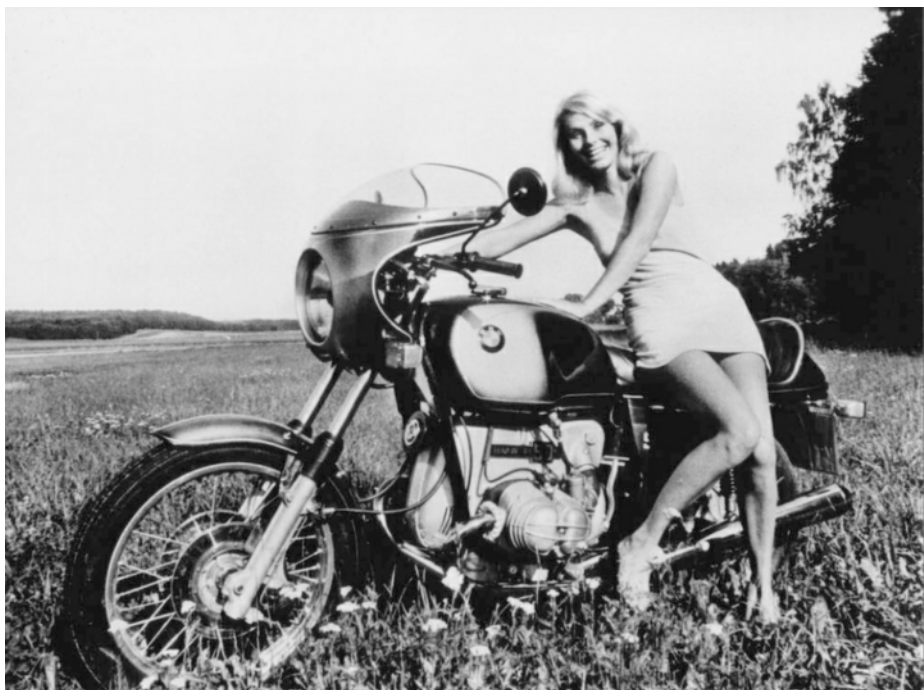
Throughout the book there can be found information of the firm's history (pre- and post-War), and the personalities behind the development of the bikes and those who rode them to worldwide acclaim, not to mention records. Like most books these days it is designed to be capable of being dipped in and out of from a general reading point of view, but also as a reference work and, as many of the images have never been published before, making it an important tome to have handy, especially for fans of the early airheads.

Phil West has an easy to read style and imparts the information well by sticking with the basic facts without boring the reader with trivial minutia. As with all Crowood publications, the quality of the book is excellent and has a good feel to it, with all images being pin sharp and, no matter how many BMW books you have on the bookshelf, this book definitely deserves to join them and update the information, especially given the modest £25.00 cover price!

ISBN 9781785006951

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

**Ian Kerr MBE**





***"WHAT DID YOU HAVE TO WAVE FOR,  
I TOLD YOU BMW RIDERS WERE A  
SET OF UNFRIENDLY BASTARDS..."***

**The following article is supplied by John Garrett, Editor of the Irish Veteran & Vintage Motor Cycle Club.**

**Something to read during your four months of lock down.**

## **A DASH FOR LIBERTY.**

*Thrilling Adventures of a Scott Rider in Germany and Belgium.*

*The Motor Cycle, September 1914.*

I WAS living at Karlsruhe, in the Grand Duchy of Baden, when the official mobilisation order was issued. War with France was inevitable, and as there seemed a great probability that England would join in before long, Germany could not be called a pleasant country to stay in. Trains were still running, but no one would guarantee that I would be taken to my destination, which was to be Brussels in the first instance, then London. A dash for liberty on my Scott motor cycle struck me as being much better sport than to be stranded in some German town, and I quickly decided to have a try. By means of a host of letters of recommendation, and after various difficulties, a military passport was procured. This allowed me to cross the German frontier "with my machine." The latter phrase was included after the paper had been filled in, and when I made the request, I had no idea that on it would depend the safety of my mount. The next thing was to find some fuel. All the petrol had been requisitioned by the German Government. Through a friendly chauffeur, I "found" four gallons. Two went into the tank and two one-gallon tins were strapped each side of the carrier in place of the tool bags. The latter, with a spare suit, some linen, and a few things I did not wish to leave behind, were stored in a portmanteau, and this was fastened across the carrier. A tin of oil in place of the end number plate brought up the rear. All night from the 2nd to the 3rd of August, the bicycle was overhauled and packed, with the assistance of the landlady's daughter, whose job it was to flash an electric pocket lamp wherever light was needed.

### **Adventures Soon Commence.**

At 5.30 a.m. on Monday, the 3rd, I set out for Brussels. The road circumstances would choose, but it was certain that it lay towards Cologne and not through Luxemburg, as sharp fighting had taken place in Alsace, and the wounded had already been brought to Colmar. Friends who knew of my intentions prophesied many things—they were mostly not exactly cheerful. Everyone was certain that I would never reach Brussels, and most people

agreed that I would be shot before crossing the Rhine. The common advice from everybody was "Don't go." After riding for ten miles I was stopped for the first time, my papers were verified, and my luggage searched. The stopping is done in a most effective way. The street is barricaded and two members of the civic guard or soldiers point a loaded rifle with fixed bayonet at you. One man covers you while you pass your little exam. If the guards decide that you are O.K., you are told that you may ride on but will be shot unless you dis-mount at first call. These stoppages occurred about every ten miles. Most of them went off as described. The men were business-like and strict, but not impolite. A few instances, however, deserve special mention.

While riding along in Mannheim in search of the Belgian Consul, and thinking of nothing except my machine, which was ticking over most beautifully, I suddenly heard violent shouts. It turned out to be a man who was pursuing me on a push bicycle. He rode up with great dash and informed me, "Sie sind ein Fransose" (You are a Frenchman), and that I was under arrest. All argument was useless, so I asked him to show the way to the Belgian Consul. By this time, we had a crowd around us, and it had been decided that I was a French spy. Still there was no danger in taking even a spy to the Belgian Consul, and the gallant captor proudly led the way.

**So great was his zeal that he at once rode into a lamppost,** and on turning my machine, I found the poor man picking himself up.

Anxious not to provoke the slightest suspicion of wishing to escape or to go wrong I asked if that was my road. He looked furious, mumbling something about every German doing his duty for the Fatherland.



### **A Search for the Consul.**

We had quite a long ride together, as he first took me to the wrong end of the town and then almost back to the starting point. In the course of our travels, I apologised to my companion for the trouble I was giving him, and hoped that I was not monopolising too much of his valuable time. The answer was a very neat little speech in which I learnt that every son of the Fatherland cannot spend his time better than in sacrificing it to stop the disgraceful practice of spying which is resorted to by other nations. Which alone

endangers the position that great empire holds in the sun. Furious glances also came my way. Not being vain enough to think that they might be meant for me, I asked my escort how he liked my machine. As there was no answer, I proceeded to explain the advantages, of a water-cooled, two-stroke, valveless, chain-driven, double-gear English motor cycle, and it only occurred to me much later that the man was watching me as perhaps he feared I might run away. Such thoughts I am prepared to forgive him. He was surely no motor cyclist, and, therefore, could not understand the far greater merits of a machine creeping silently along the streets through the traffic, at almost a walking pace, compared to the possibility of my bolting on the throttle suddenly being ripped open ; besides, he was doing me a great favour by showing me the way.

Finally, we did reach the Belgian Consul, whom I knew very well. He sent off the man and informed me that the Belgian frontier was still open; whether it would be when I reached it, he could not say. My patriotic escort looked calmed and a little sheepish. This did not prevent us parting on quite good terms. After obtaining some advice about the roads, I thanked him for his services and expressed a hope that the same courtesy would be shown to all foreigners.

The disagreeable thing about these stoppages was the loss of time. To reach the Belgian frontier that night 350 miles had to be covered. This had made me decide that the speed limit should be governed by the state of the roads and nothing else. As there were 80 Ib. of luggage on the carrier, besides fuel and oil, I could not do much more than 45 m.p.h. whenever the road was at all uneven, for fear of something coming unstrung.

### **Arrested as a Russian Spy.**

The next unpleasant experience was at Seeheim, on the famous Bergstrasse, which runs along the hills from Heidelberg to Frankfurt. There two worthy old men were guarding the barricade. The first one wanted to shoot me because on stopping I stayed astride my machine. How was I to steady it otherwise and have my hands free for showing my papers? Number 2 did not think his companion-in-arms had a right to pot me there and then, or perhaps he feared being robbed of his share of honour and glory. A heated discussion started. I awaited my turn sitting on the bicycle eating-chocolate, as there was nothing else to do.

### **To Shoot or not to Shoot.**

Gradually things went worse. No. 1 was determined to have his way on the "

I saw him first “principle, and let daylight through me at once. Luckily, No. 3 turned up and, joining No. 2, overruled his bloodthirsty countryman. A crowd of so-called patriots always linger at these “hold-up depots.” They had all more or less joined in the argument, but Nos. 1, 2, and 3 shouted loudest. When anyone comes along on car or bicycle, people spring up by the dozen to see the fun. This time I was a Russian spy. My papers were false, the petrol and oil tins contained explosives, and the club mascot was a bomb to be exploded by the wire holding it.

These facts had one good effect, they forced the crowd back. I was first ordered to remove the bombs. This was not done without fear, as the brave guards were trembling for all they were worth, and I was not at all sure that one of the shakes would not pull a trigger of the rifles, which were, of course, pointed at me. The electric connections with the bicycle, which were to let loose these “infernal machines” having been cut, the liquid running from tins and the sawdust from the mascot soon proved what I had not dared to argue. But this was no proof of my innocence. I was next made to half undress on the road, then marched back and guarded, until a gendarme could be fetched. This took two hours. Fortunately, it was warm, or my half-naked condition might have been less pleasant than it was. On the arrival of the gendarme, the usual examination was gone through and I was set free. The humour of the crowd at once swung round, and, when the kick-starter, set the engine going, it was amid the cheers of the people who only a quarter of an hour ago had sworn to lynch me. It may be unpleasant awaiting your turn in a room with a howling village mob outside, but I was to learn that things may be a lot worse without being fatal.

### **Obstructions Worse than Freak Hills.**

Darmstadt was reached at about three, and my hopes of reaching Aachen before dark rose. As I was nearing the fortified regions on the Rhine, things did not go as smoothly as they might have done. In spite of more or less serious checks, it was not too late at Mainz to get, at any rate, to Cologne before night fell. I crossed the Rhine Bridge with less difficulty than I had expected and found myself on the road to Lingen in high spirits, regretting only that I had no leisure to admire the lovely Rhine Valley I was travelling through. But before many miles had been covered, a most unpleasant thing happened.

## A Case of Dutch Courage.

**In a small village I was stopped by a Landsturmmann (member of the civic guard), who had evidently not been satisfied until he had seen the bottom of several bottles, and who was smelling more of drink than of powder. His condition made it absolutely impossible for him even to recognise my military passport, and before a few minutes were over a furious crowd had gathered, whose leading members were much in the same state as the man I had to thank for my none**



too envious situation. The fact that this man had a loaded rifle made things look decidedly black. A gendarme happily turned up, saw the danger, rushed me into a building, and took the matter into his hands. He thought my papers, or me, rather lukewarm, and decided to get someone who knew French and English to examine the contents of my pocket book and letter case. My luggage was searched as it had never been searched before, but as all things were known to him, except, perhaps, the toothbrush, there was nothing to be said. The bicycle was far more serious. A couple of spare sparking plugs excited suspicion and the defenders of the Kaiser involuntarily stepped a pace back when by negligence I dropped one on the ground. The tank was believed to have a double bottom. Every possible thing was dismantled. The generator of the lamp went to bits and the carbide had to be put very near several noses to convince everybody that it was not explosive. These were details, but when the old sergeant insisted upon my taking off the cylinders, I went on strike. After a long talk, he was satisfied at seeing the pistons move up and down. Once having to remove the sparking plugs, it seemed a kind action to show him what the part he had previously doubted was there for. A prod of the kick-starter produced the spark, but instead of clearing matters, it complicated them, and another lecture was needed to clear myself.

## Unpleasant Advice from the Mob.

All this took place in the yard of the village school, during the examination the crowd had climbed the surrounding wall and were hurling advice at the gendarme and compliments at me. Russian spies had poisoned the waters in Mainz the day before, and seventeen were to be shot that evening. This did not improve the temper of the population of the districts, and when my identity had been fully established I resolved to get back to Mainz and take a train to the frontier rather than risk another such op, which might not end so



well.

At Mainz, I found a train as far as Cologne; with luck, I should find one there to take me further but the railway company refused to forward my machine. This was most distressing, and little by little, it dawned upon me that I had only undertaken the journey because I objected to an English bicycle being the means of rendering service to an enemy of my country, as would have been the case had I remained or left it behind.

### **Petty Officials to be Avoided.**

During the whole of the journey I had found that, the higher placed the official, the more agreeable it is to deal with him, and, therefore, determined to go straight to the commanding officer of Mainz and claim the safe passage which my military passport guaranteed but could not enforce. The old "Platz-mmandant" (commander of the town) gave orders that my mount was to be taken as far as the Belgian frontier. All went well until Cologne, and here difficulties recommenced, the stationmaster flatly refusing the assistance of porters to transport the bicycle from one train to the other but seeing the weight and thinking no doubt of the stairs to be gone up and down, he informed me with an ironical smile that I might do the job myself. Two passengers were soon bribed to assist me and together we managed to get it into a luggage van just as the train was leaving for Herbstal. So close had been the shave that we were forced to stay in the luggage van until the next station was reached. The train journey was uneventful. Passengers were informed that any open window near a bridge or tunnel would be shot at without warning and that certain compartments were not to be used.

### **Over the Belgian Frontier.**

At the frontier station, the officer in command made a last gallant stand to detain the machine, and it needed many words to convince him that it was no use trying for a thing which had failed so far. With a sarcastic remark about not finding any fuel, I was allowed to pass. Luckily I speak English, French, and German equally well, and once on Belgian soil my English nationality, as well as the command I had of the French language, procured me a good reception. A Belgian gentleman was only too glad to give me the little petrol he could spare. This would save me from the Germans, he said, and further from the frontier, there would be no difficulty.

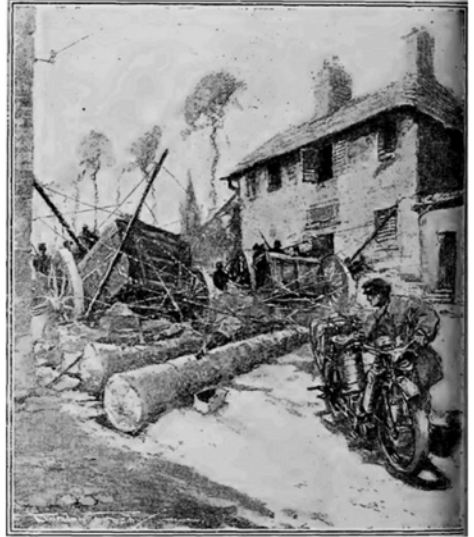
Ultimate success now seemed sure, and I felt more at ease than I had done for a long while. Before riding off I could not conquer the desire to bid farewell to the German officer who so generously had let me pass because he was

convinced that lack of petrol would prevent my getting away. He was soon found again, and with the engine running very smoothly, I thanked him for letting me through. He did not wish me "Bon voyage."

The railway line to Verviers had been taken up, and the road was full of people who were forced to proceed on foot.

**Just before Verviers, a heavy barricade made me turn back. This was a different thing from that which had barred the way in Germany. A couple of upturned carts placed across the road, a few felled trees, and yards of barbed wire were stretched from wall to wall.**

After a short search, some sort of cart track was discovered which seemed to lead to the town. It was tried like other ones had been before, but it was frightful. About fifty yards down, I met a peasant who informed me that the track led to Verviers, but that I would never get there. "Why?" "Parceque vous allez vous cassez le cou" ("Because you will break your neck"). To be sure, there was a chance. The surface was abominable—ruts, holes, stones, and a gradient which must have been at least 1 in 4 in several places made me fancy myself riding in the A.C.U. Six Days Trial.



### **Running the German Gauntlet.**

In the town, all the shops were closed, but a chauffeur consented to let me have some petrol. While praising my luck and filling up, I saw, to my dismay and disgust, that German troops were in possession of the main road and were marching on in an endless stream. This not only made the main road unrideable, but, as the inhabitants told me, would make progress impossible. The marching column had to be crossed somehow, so I waited in a small bye-street with the engine running, and as soon as a somewhat larger space than usual between two guns seemed to justify the attempt, I went the clutch. There were shouts, and I had the impression that the horses towing the next gun made movements other than were necessary merely to pull their load. The clatter of hoofs proved beyond doubt that some horsemen were giving chase. I don't think that I ever opened the throttle with such a jerk. The

machine fairly leaped up the long hill in front of me, and by the time the next corner was reached, the sound of hoofs had become fainter. There was nothing to fear except that it might occur again.

So near and yet so far !

### **How now to get to Brussels?**

The distance was nothing, about eighty miles. Leaving the main road did not worry me much. I had picked my way over many a mile the day before along bye ways and lanes to avoid forts and too frequent stops. The proposition now, however, was different, as wherever I turned the road was barred by felled trees and such like. My military passport had run out when crossing the frontier, and the only permit I had was a paper-given by the Customs officer, allowing me to go as far as the first Belgian military post (not much use in time of war).

I had a vague idea what direction to take and rode on, most of the time along the ditch lining the road. When this became unrideable whatever happened to be the other side of the ditch had to do. As often as not this was field; if so it was always protected by a barbed wire fence.

### **A Regular Cross-country Scramble.**

Scruples about cutting the wire soon vanished, and a new pair of pliers did the work beautifully. How the bicycle did not drop to pieces sometimes I failed to understand; the strain, especially on the front forks and frame, must have been tremendous. Sometimes the poor machine was ridden through meadows, sometimes through woods; then again, I would find it possible to make use of the road. Thus, I kept on, but the job was getting tiresome. I had scarcely tasted any food since Sunday lunch, and had had no sleep since Sunday morning. It was now near Tuesday noon, and no wonder that the strain began to tell. The worst thing was that no end to all these obstacles could be seen. I had stopped counting the times which the luggage was unstrapped to lift first the machine, then portmanteau over a felled tree or something equally objectionable. Once a patrol of guides came up and one man dismounted to help. Once a Belgian artilleryman hurrying to his regiment gave me a lift when I was near giving up. However, as long as a drop of petrol remained, there was hope, and as long as there was hope, the struggle would last. In the morning, I had dreamt of lunching in Brussels, but now I dreamt of lunching anywhere.

### **Information about the Enemy.**

About eleven o'clock saw me in Longwy, the outpost of Belgian lancers. A short examination convinced the commanding officer that my hatred for the Germans was as strong as his, and I was questioned about the German movements. The little information I could give seemed useful, and was at once wired the rear. At the town hall, a passport to Brussels was made out and things once more looked rosy, roads were now free, at least compared with those which had been left behind.

### **Arrested by the Belgians.**

Next stop was to be Liege. I managed to pick my way through the line of forts in front of the city, and at one o'clock entered Liege itself. With visions of dinner at Brussels, I rode on, but while trying to get past the second line of fortifications a lieutenant arrested me as a suspect. By persuasion of a revolver, I soon gave up my machine, my eyes were bandaged, and I was marched to the fort of Hologne. The crowd at once sprang up, and the murmur getting louder showed that it was increasing. A stone on my head proved that its mood towards me was none too friendly.

Arrived at the fort, the customary examination by the commander followed, and then, with my eyes still bandaged, I was led to a cell, handcuffed and guarded by a man with a loaded rifle.

Apart from these rather vigorous measures, they treated me kindly. I was allowed to smoke and given me water to drink. The commander paid a visit and gave strict instructions that I was to be treated courteously. This consideration must have been the suit of mentioning a few well-known families in Brussels, a photograph of a Brussels hockey team with the son of the Minister of the Congo sitting next me proving especially convincing. There seemed be doubts, however, and the commander of the gendarmerie was summoned. While waiting the alarm rang out. Doors were slammed; troops could be heard rushing along the passages and forming up in the yard. Orders were given, and all the while, the bugle sounded. I felt distinctly uncomfortable. The Germans could not be far off, and to be detained as a suspected spy during the bombardment in a fort might exciting, but it was not what I desired. My fears were soon put at rest. The chief of the gendarmerie arrived and took me off in an enclosed car to the headquarters. Another cell, another wait, another examination and search and, finally, the news that the motorcycle was to be confiscated and I would be taken to Liege to be court-martialled.

### **Rough Reception at Liege.**

Still handcuffed they drove me back to Liege, where things became serious. It was getting dark, and along the lighted streets, the Belgian troops were marching on to the fight. The car had to stop during half an hour we waited, all the while the soldiers passing, cheering and being cheered by the crowd which packed the streets. With one breath they cried, " Vive l'Armee, vive la petite Belgique" (Long live the army, long live little Belgium"), in the next, "Mort a l'espion ("Death to the spy!")

At the beginning of my ride I had found it ticklish to look down the muzzle of a loaded rifle, but I found that to face, handcuffed and utterly helpless, a howling mob which considers you a spy is a far more serious proposition. Had not my two guards drawn their pistols and offered to shoot the first man who came on the car there would have been nothing of me left to prove my identity. It seemed ages before we moved again, and when we landed at the Palais de Justice there was only the concierge to be found. He seriously advocated that I should be shot at once. "Il faudra le fusilier de suite," and I was too tired out to answer anything else than " Vous etes tres amiable, Monsieur."

Then we had another drive through the mob, this time to the headquarters of the garde civic. Here the thing was done in style, and the scene seemed most realistic. A group of officers were seated around in a semicircle, in the centre of which was standing the prisoner, still handcuffed and looking very dirty and fagged out. A guard was on each side. The cross-examination that followed was extremely lively, but things went well, and after about ten minutes, I was a free man again.

### **Free Once More.**

A permit de voyage was made out by the commanding officer of the garde civic, and with another interesting document in my pocket, I went in search of an hotel. Wednesday morning an early start was made for the Hologne fort to get the machine. While attempting this I was only arrested once. By mid-day, all the formalities had been gone through, and soon the engine was humming merrily, but it was not to last long. Barricades caused trouble, and houses along the roads being blasted to give better views for the artillery were a sad sight.

At the second line of forts, there was another check. A sentry led the way to the officer in command, who immediately decided that my papers were too good to be true and ordered a search. The usual questions were asked, and

when it came to light that I held a German degree of engineering someone remarked, "He is a German engineer, that's enough." I was not handcuffed or blindfolded this time, merely placed with my back against a wall and guarded by a man with a rifle. The crowd once more had the pleasure of viewing "a German spy" for half an hour while the gendarmerie was summoned. At the headquarters a telephone call soon put matters right.

### **The Sound of the Big Guns.**

By now, I had got heartily sick of these hold-ups, and decided to finish the last fifty miles to Brussels by train. It was near the evening of the 5th. Then, the guns could be heard roaring, and, as I learnt later, the front line of forts was already stemming the German advance.

The siege of Liege had commenced, and a few more of those checks could get me into a more serious position than I had any wish to be in. The remainder of the journey is of no interest. Steamers from Ostend to Folkestone were running, and soon I set foot in London town.

But all my troubles were not at an end. After reaching my home in South Wales, the story of my escape from Germany soon got about, and the police promptly informed me that, having been born in Germany, I must be a German. **I asked if being born in a stable constituted being a horse?**

I have only one regret. My poor motor cycle, to which, besides my life, I owe three of the best days' sport I have ever had, is still in Brussels, and though it is stored away in a cellar I tremble when I think of it, defenceless in a city held by the enemy.

**W.S.**

