

What Ho!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Herewith a spiffing
Photo**

Xmas Newsletter.

*(Great for a 2014 Calender
Eh!!!)*

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EJP

editorejp@live.co.uk



*Roger and Marina in the
JZR*



Ted in Jazz drummer mode

*(I had always wanted to be a drummer so that I could play
with musicians!!)*













But then I thought, **“Why not become a musician!”**

Vincent to the North.

© E J Parkin 1995

Through Denmark.

I woke to the roar of passing traffic. I had been vaguely aware of the drone throughout the night. Indeed, it was this which had lulled me to sleep about 1am.

I didn't want to disturb Liz so inched outside to put on the kettle. Another bright sunny morning. The map was to hand by the bike so I had a scan over the roads we would travel today. The plan was to pick up the ferry at Puttgarten, travel straight through Denmark into Sweden using the Helsingør/Helsingborg ferry over that famous strip of water the Kattegat.

I always thought it such a thrill to hear these famous names tripping off the tongue and always a revelation that an ex-Nottinghamshire miner was enjoying himself riding through Europe.

A long, drawn out groan from the tent told me Liz was awake and had suffered as bad a night as I.

"Tea up!" as I thrust a steaming mug through the flap.

A grunt, Liz is not at her best first thing in the morning! She had a hard day yesterday on the seat of the Vincent and was paying the price with stiff limbs and an aching backside. A wobbling tent, a series of oaths and cries as her damaged leg shoots from the entrance rapidly followed by a dishevelled, red eyed girl.

"Morning!" she mumbles. "What's for Breakfast?"

Straight to the point is Liz.

"How's about bacon, eggs and fresh bread."

"Sounds alright, I'm off to the toilet. Give us a shout when it's ready."

A woman of few words as she hobbles off on one crutch.

I love cooking, in fact I would much rather do all of it myself. That way I get what I want.

"Nosh up" I cry! There is an unrecognisable answering scream from the direction of the toilet block so I assume Liz has got the message. The kettle boils and a fresh pot is brewed. The sun climbs higher in the blue summer sky. Good to be alive! A brilliant start to the day!

I must make more time to talk to Liz, I get carried away when I am travelling and tend to be quiet. This is not surliness, I think a lot. Perhaps now would be a good time to talk about this.

I dish up the breakfast, loadsa bacon tomatoes and eggs. Just the stuff for roughy toughie frost hardened northerners to stoke their reserves of stamina, fortitude and sense of humour. I dig in, Liz arrives, looking cleaner and having recovered her powers of conversation.

"What's the plan?"

Between mouthfuls of Denmark's best known export I lay out the map and suggest we nip up to Puttgarten, take the ferry to Rodby, motor-way it past Copenhagen to Helsingør, finally entering Sweden at Helsingborg. This would be the last high speed dash, we could relax and take things at our own speed from now on. What did she think?

"Sounds good to me! Got any more bacon?"

Liz's priorities are intact.

"Let's slow down in Sweden and talk more!"

My feelings exactly.

We finish the meal, strike camp and tog up ready to go. The bike needs fuel, I make sure I pay!

The road to Puttgarten is modern and we make good time to the ferry. The bike needs a bit of work on the charging circuit again and I sort it out while we await it's arrival

We load up. Chock the bike and set ourselves up with coffee and sandwiches made earlier. It always seems to me that the trip is really beginning when you get on a ferry. Liz feels it too and the atmosphere lightens perceptively.

We enjoy the wind, blue, blue sea and the fabulous views.

Denmark looms, flat, clean, efficient.

We disembark and chalk up our first border crossing. No formalities of course. (*It is only the British who are paranoid about being invaded by Johny Foreigner*) We continue on our way with spirits uplifted.

It's the same old grind past Copenhagen, although we would both have liked to stop, perhaps on the way back. We press on through the country to arrive at Helsingør of Macbeth fame. A pretty seaport and the gateway to our third country in one day.

Another good crossing although we had to wait awhile for the ferry to arrive. By 6 in the evening we were in Sweden and could now take things easy and dally awhile at places which caught our fancy. Old buildings, smithy's, cattle sheds. The Swedes have a deep reverence for their agricultural and seafaring heritage. This can be seen in the preserved buildings and small villages. The tiny harbours and sailing ships were of great interest and we tarried far too long as evening drew on. The road had hugged the coast up to now and had afforded us some spectacular views. Angleholm hove into view and we decided an early camp was the order of the day.

No great distance today but we were getting places, the rhythm of travel was beginning to be established and most important was the acceptance of each others presence. This was, by far, the most difficult of the problems for both of us to come to terms with. A start had been made, we were aware of the problem and were beginning to sort it out.

Change of jobs today, Liz cooks, I put up the tent. Her leg seems slightly better, she can bend it a little more and there is less pain. But we don't push it and she still uses the crutch to help her along. I didn't realise how restrictive the injury would be for Liz, she bears it with stoicism, we can see the silver lining starting to show.

A good meal and long chat starts our 'knocking the rough edges from each other' plan.

Into Norway.

We drop naturally into our striking camp rhythm. It is around 7am but we both feel like a riding day. We have a coffee, fruit and bash on. The plan is to stop later in the morning at a cafe' (I can't wait to find another like Cafe' Frieden) although prices in Sweden have staggered us, coffee twice the price, meat twice to three times as expensive, the only things which are reasonable are fresh vegetables and fresh bread. Looks like we will be vegetarians for a while!

We set our cruising speed at around 40mph. That way we can appreciate the countryside and not bother about watching the road all the time. Not that we don't keep an eye on things! The road now edged away from the shoreline into woods and moor land. This was much too early to start the climb to the Arctic plateau but gave us interest as we rattled along and a taste of what lay ahead.

Humour raised its head.*(At last!)*

Liz spoke "I say old chap! Couldn't half do with some Jolly old Breakfast. What?"

Not half and we keep a sharp eye open for a roadside cafe' After half an hour during which my stomach was crying out for food and Liz leaned over, pointing to her mouth we spied "Den Svenske Histe"(The Swedish Horse) painted bright red with superb swirly patterns on top. This, we later learned was the Swedish National symbol and colours. We rattled to a relieved stop hitting the entrance stomachs at the ready!

Smorgasbord was the dish of the day, I had cheese (3 different kinds) and some sort of fish, rawish, but I worked on the premise that what was good for the Swedes was good enough for me. Liz didn't like the look of the fish and settled for ham and cheese. A couple of cups of coffee served by the ubiquitous tall blond goddess completed the meal which, apart from the horrendous price, was delicious! The sun gets higher in the sky, the temperature shoots up and our early morning layers come off as we tuck into our first Swedish meal.

Now this was why we had come to Scandinavia. Scenery, relaxing conversation and interesting travelling. We didn't meet any colourful characters in the Cafe' unfortunately.

The road called, with full stomachs and light wallets resumed the journey. Now! what was it about the serving girl in the Cafe' that reminded me of Sicily?

Oh Yes! One of my more humorous trips!

I frequently took half a dozen of my lads to Sicily to service the firms equipment. On the latest, a senior manager had accompanied

us filling in as a spare bod. Thereby justifying his allowances. We always stayed at the same hotel in Catania. This was also the base for various international airlines, their cabin staff using a permanent set of rooms as the base for rest days.

What should we call our manager? How's about Dave.

Right, now Dave was married with a shrill wife who questioned his every move when at base. He was looking forward to a few days in which to let his hair down. We successfully completed the job and, as we had a day in hand, I gave the lads that day and evening off. Everyone to meet in the hotel foyer at 11am the next day for the flight home.

I toured around Catania soaking up the sun, spent the evening at a restaurant and hit the hay around 2am. The morning passed with a leisurely breakfast and I was in plenty of time to vacate my room and sort out the crew.

My lads arrived in dribs and drabs all looking weary but in one piece. Dave was missing! We rang his room, roused him and sorted out the transport to the airport. Dave ran to the Taxis, dishevelled, pale, shaking and very, very quiet.

We were alone in the second car as we threaded our way through Catania's rush hour traffic. He haltingly told me his story.

He had met two blond air hostesses at the hotel bar, they were overnighing and were leaving the next afternoon on a shuttle to Stockholm. As was his wont he chatted to them before they suggested perhaps he would like to accompany them to the local night club. He accepted with alacrity but was disappointed when they suggested that they really should invite the two stewards from their crew to come along as well. Dave thought it would be churlish to complain. The stewards duly arrived and they had one

riotous night on the town. Dave being very attentive to one of the stewardesses which was reciprocated by her.

"We were getting on great" he said and when she suggested that they all go to the stewards room for a couple of drinks he thought things were really going his way. Drinks were consumed, the atmosphere was happy and Dave's girl was charming. All of a sudden the two stewardesses got up and said, "Well boys, we'll leave you all to get acquainted."

Dave was a bit nonplussed. What was going on here? He was answered by the two guys sitting either side of him with large, charming smiles splitting their faces saying, "Hey Dave, do you think that we could make it?"

The light dawned. Dave ran.

Got to his room.

Locked the door and didn't open it till our call to him.

The stewardesses were bait put out by the stewards to get them randy, drunken men. You just can't trust anyone, be they stewards, stewardesses or, more importantly, erring husbands who had their brains between their legs!

The bike hit the first of many potholes, jarring me back to reality. We were passing acres of long meadow grass, I hadn't seen anything like that since my childhood when meadows were full of the stuff. Just right for young boys to make 'dens' in. Goodness! The times we had! The poor farmers endless and ultimately fruitless chasing of these young hooligans with their wanton destruction of his crops and his livelihood. I am the first nowadays of course to decry such wanton destruction and need to keep reminding myself of what I did as a youth!

Stop it! Get back to reality!

This drifting away into esoteric subjects is getting out of hand!

For goodness sake! Try to concentrate on the bike and the scenery.

I wonder if Liz is doing the same? I must ask her at the next stop. She was looking a bit fed up a while back at the halt so I must try harder. The problem is, riding the bike is so enjoyable and the confidence in the machine is at such a high pitch there is little to do but keep an ear cocked for any untoward noise which trips me back to reality. *STOP IT TED!* I did it again!

OK! Thumbs up to Liz, an answering thumb tells me all is well.

We arrive on the outskirts of Gothenburg which affords a welcome break enabling us to stock up with more food and fresh vegetables. I must say the old wallet is getting a hammering. It took me ages to coax him from the deep recesses of my inside pocket and he only agreed to being opened after my **solemn** promise to leave it alone for the next few days! I thought I had lost the Barclaycard this morning but found it hiding in a rarely opened inside pocket trembling with the thought of being used and spending money! I had the Devil of a job trying to peel each of it's fingers from the stitching before I could get him out, he was moaning all the time saying, "No No No, I don't want to come out. You only want to spend money." *Stupid Boy!* Not only that! The silly thing embarrassed me all the time I was using it by snivelling and sniffing. It really needs a ruddy good talking to and a sharp slap around the thighs! I'm sure Liz doesn't have these problems with her finances. Perhaps she doesn't talk to them? I ask her, she gives me a funny look.

Back on the road we pass through the centre of the town around the ring road system and have to stop at a series of traffic lights. A large red American car pulls along side us, a chap leans out and says something in Swedish. We don't understand and the lights change so off we go to the next set. Again he comes alongside and tries German. I get his drift, he wants to buy the bike! The lights change once more and off we go now pursued by this guy. Three more times he makes an offer. I suppose the sums must have been great but as we didn't know the rate of exchange these amounts meant nothing to us. Strange to be pursued by a local offering us money! Out of Gothenburg and the ground rises away from the town to wilder and wilder countryside. I love this desolation. Beaches and night clubs are an anathema to me. I would much rather do a challenging ride like this than what I consider a waste of time. *(Nothing to do with spending money then? No! of course not!)*

We work now. Liz has to lean out over the chair as we spin around left hand bends (This keeps the sidecar down as it would tend to lift on left-handers due to centrifugal force. Not a lot of people know that. Its no use being a dummy on bikes you know!) This is the stuff! This team work where it matters gives us a shared responsibility for the success of the trip. Confidence builds between us and we start to enjoy ourselves, this is what was missing before, no wonder Liz thought she was being left out! She must have felt like a non contributing passenger most of the time! Isn't it strange how all you have to do is listen to the little whispers to sort out problems. Perhaps what you need is a receptive brain and time to work it out.

You learn a lot on slow motorcycles!

The weather had remained clear and fine for the last few days for which we had been eternally grateful, the thought of coping with this journey in the wet before we had settled down would have

been too awful to contemplate! It now had the look of clouding over from the West.

Always to the North we plodded forward through Uddevalla and decided to take the minor road to cross the Norwegian border at Halden. We climb higher through more forest and lakes. Vassbotten, Holtet, Bakka all passed with time, which was now marching on. Until we came to the Swedish-Norwegian border strategically placed on the centre of a massive and very high bridge. We stop. Only to get the stamps, the border guard really isn't interested in leaving the comfort of his shed and football match on his television. So we pass into Norway, see a **no entry** sign, it says nothing about Vincents so assume this does not mean us and motor along a steep track until we come to a natural amphitheatre with the sea a sheer drop 50ft from our stopping point, how thoughtful of the Norwegian Government to provide such picturesque and quiet surroundings for weary travellers. We give in, relax and call a halt. The time is around 11pm but it is as light as day, we are approaching the summer equinox and bask in the early **night** sun.

There's unique, not many travellers can say that!

Sleepytime!

EJP