



THE

RIDER'S DIGEST

WWW.THERIDERSDIGEST.CO.UK

Issue 186
January 2014



From the editor...

As has become the tradition here at Digest Towers (well we did it last year), once again the January edition has been cut to the bone to allow everyone involved in the production process to better enjoy/endure the Xmas/New Year holiday period.

Obviously as this issue only runs to these few pages, it will be joining the equally truncated one we put out in January last year on the free shelf; so if you have only ever read the magazine online until now, why don't you visit our [shop](#) and check it out in all its PDF glory? (And while you are there, you really should take the opportunity to download the wonderfully diverse and beautifully laid out 188-page issue 171, which we've been offering as a no strings attached [FREE](#) sampler.)

That's the good news; unfortunately on the downside, and I know that this will be a major disappointment to some of our oldest and most loyal readers, this will, for the time being at least, be the last PDF we will be producing.

Conventional wisdom says that while it's absolutely fine and groovy – and can even be a little edgy – to talk straight about the ups and

downs, pleasure and pain motorcycles can deliver (even to the extent of including the kind of gruesome content that PC Graham confronted us with in [issue 183](#)), I should never ever be upfront about the kind of Micky Mouse operation that lies behind the slick image that our pages present.

And although I've gone on record as stating that as far as I'm concerned 'conventional wisdom' is an oxymoron, I'm also acutely aware that I seem to have had a complete business acumen bypass. Consequently, for the last couple of years I've bowed to the superior wisdom of friends and associates whose commercial instincts are supposedly vastly superior to mine and kept shtoom.

However, my reluctant reticence doesn't appear to have generated much by way of income so I've decided that although I'm obviously a 'bear of little business brain', I'm going to revert to my natural inclination and lay it on the line.

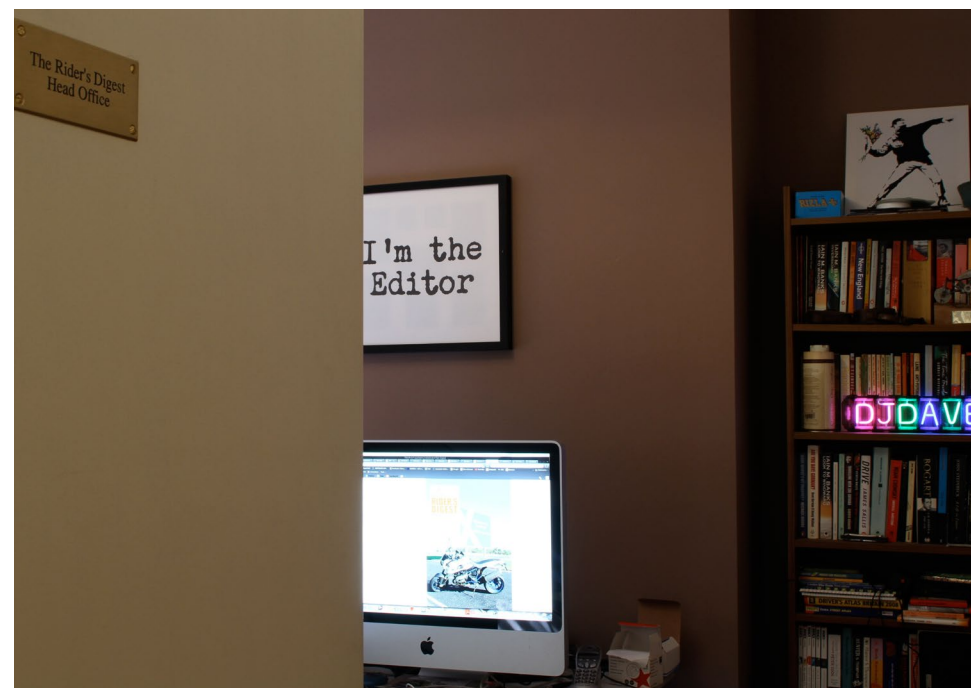
The awful unvarnished truth, for the sake of anyone who hadn't figured it out, is that Digest Towers is an upstairs back room in a terraced house in an

unfashionable part of west London and the whole operation has been subsidised thus far by a combination of the insurance settlement I received after a particularly nasty shoulder-shattering RTA in 2009 and the good grace, generosity and indulgence of my lovely wife Wendy.

Producing the PDF has always been the most costly part of the operation because it requires the skills and know-how of an experienced designer and even at mate's rates that kind of thing doesn't come cheap.

When I first committed to publish The Rider's Digest online, my only relevant experience was the 41 issues of the printed magazine I'd produced and they were all laid out as PDFs so that was the obvious starting point – particularly as I knew nothing about presenting content on the web.

The gap between the cost of producing an attractive magazine in PDF form and the income the whole operation generated, was showing little sign of getting any smaller by August 2013 when I had no choice other than to tell Simon Gardner, our designer, that I couldn't afford to carry on paying him after September.



Although he's not a rider himself, he's thoroughly enjoyed being involved with the magazine and derived enormous satisfaction from creating some great features so he generously offered to lay out these last four issues for love – gawd bless you Si – in the hope that we might knock out enough copies of the PDF to cover his time. Unfortunately the comparatively small number we've sold don't even begin to come close.

It would be great to be able to find a way of paying for future editions in PDF form (or my dream of dreams, printed on glossy paper) but frankly at the moment it's as much I can

do to finance the basic web site so I will be concentrating on getting the extensive archive on line and spreading the word more efficiently to the massive potential readership that doesn't even know we exist.

I might not be particularly business savvy but I understand that when it comes down to it, earning money on the Internet is all about numbers and if we can generate enough traffic all things become possible. So what can you do? Well, if everyone who's enjoyed one of our features was to recommend it to a dozen or so of their fiends, we'd have the kind of audience our material merits.

In the meantime, if there are any would be guardian angels or mega business brains out there who think they might be able to help (without telling me how to change the content or the ethos of the magazine to fit conventional commercial wisdom) you know how and where to contact me.

I wish you all the kind of motorcycling New Year you hope for.

Be careful out there.

Dave Gurman

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Riders' Lives



Name: Gary France

What was your first motorcycling experience?

As a 16 year old, I bought a Honda C90 and rode it year round. As a family, we didn't have much money, so I rode it without gloves or waterproofs. Some days I was so cold I could hardly move my hands.

What is your current bike?

I am very lucky to have four motorcycles. A Harley-Davidson Road King, two Harley custom bikes and a recently bought Triumph Bonneville which I plan to customise into a flat tracker.

What bike would you most like to ride/own?

As a young man, we used to regularly go watch motorcycle racing at Brands Hatch. One of my heroes was Giacomo Agostini riding an MV Augusta. His playboy image and riding ability was something I aspired to. I have always wanted to ride an MV Augusta, but have never had the chance.

What was your hairiest moment on a bike?

I haven't really had any, at least not recently. I do remember riding a GT750 Suzuki when much younger and hit a brick in the outside lane of the M1 at around 100 mph. That was very scary.

What was your most memorable ride?

This is easy to answer. A few years ago, I rode 21,475 miles in one trip around the USA. This took 4 months and I managed to see 27 states on a glorious journey that varied from Mountain to deserts. I liked the ride so much I wrote a book 'France in America' about the trip.

What would be the ideal soundtrack to the above?

The sound of other motorcycles riding with me. I enjoy showing other riders great roads and terrific places to ride and that is why I set up Tour1. It is very rewarding seeing the smiles on people's faces at the end of the great days riding.

What do you think is the best thing about motorcycling?

Driving in a car across spectacular scenery makes you feel as if you're watching a film. Riding almost anywhere makes you feel you are featuring in that film. You can feel the temperature change, the wind, smells, the warmth

of the sun and you can feel changes in the road surface. I love riding motorcycles!

What do you think is the worst thing about motorcycling?

I don't mind riding in rain, providing it starts raining during the ride. I hate starting a ride when it is already raining

Name an improvement you'd like to see for the next generation?

More freedom for motorcyclists. Compulsory hi-vis, engine size restrictions, compulsory ABS and customising restrictions are all possible in the future. I sincerely hope limitations from the European Union do not spoil the freedom we currently enjoy.

How would you like to be remembered?

That bloke who went on some pretty cool motorcycle journeys.



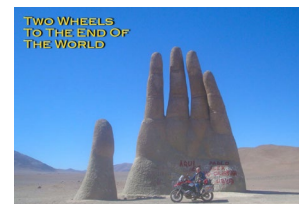
Photograph ©Thomas W Day



Thailand

A REVIEW OF 2013

This time last year we had a bumper mailbag to pad out the ultra slim New Year's edition; unfortunately this time around there was nothing in the mailbox – not so much a short note from Nick Lojik or a Midwestern weather report (complete with great pictures) from Gary Ilminen and now that Ian Dunmore is a regular contributor... There are plenty of comments below last month's content but rather than simply transferring them here, we thought it might be a better to round this short issue off with a celebration of the many wonderful stories and features that have graced our pages over the last twelve months.



For a start there was the tail end of Paul Browne and Maeve's, Alaska to Argentina adventure. The monthly instalments of their classic Pan American journey began with "Long Flog to Dead Horse" back in April 2012 (issue 165) and it was July this year (180) before they reached the end of the road in Ushuaia.

Just to confound anyone who thought they could pigeonhole us, we put a wheelie-ing KTM RC8 on the cover of our first full fat edition of 2013, complete with a lyrically waxed review on the inside. In the same issue (175) there was a report on the last snowy journey of a 97 year old ex WWII despatch rider, then a couple of months later (177) we featured yet another motorcycle funeral, only this time it was an incredibly upbeat farewell to a young man who had never ridden a bike at any time in his short life.



There was our exclusive interview with Ogri's creator Paul Sample (177), Martin Haskell's ode to FS1Es and seventies mopeds generally (178), followed later in the year by Stuart Jewkes' wider remit in "Time Travel: A Biker's Life in the 1970s" (184).



A Biker's Life in the 1970s



In May (178) we illustrated the kind of all embracing culture we're trying to foster by 'Asking a Policeman' (on a relatively unmarked, video equipped, Hayabusa) to join our steadily expanding family of contributors; and in June we introduced you to the Posh Boys' Bike Club and Stuart wrote "There's No Such Thing as an Original Triton", which aside from being undeniably true, has proved to be our most widely read feature to date (179).



Our New York based cultural correspondent, Jonathan Boorstein, has continued to provide regular insights into the more cerebral aspects of the world of bikes and biking, whether it's the inaugural motorcycle film festival (183), the classic black leather jacket (182), or his many in depth book reviews (described by

Continued on page 22









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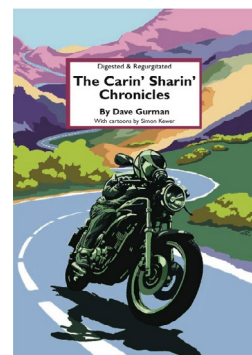
"Dave Gurman is the thinking motorcyclist's Jezza.

He's deeper, balder, funnier and infinitely less irritating - and he's had a lifelong passion for bikes!"

"Dave Gurman makes you glad that you're riding and glad that you're reading" – Austin Vince

"Dave's ability to capture segments of life and express them in a personal and uplifting manner creates many a snigger through to full on laugh out loud moments." – Neil 'Nelly' Hudd

"I have three words for Dave Gurman's Book -
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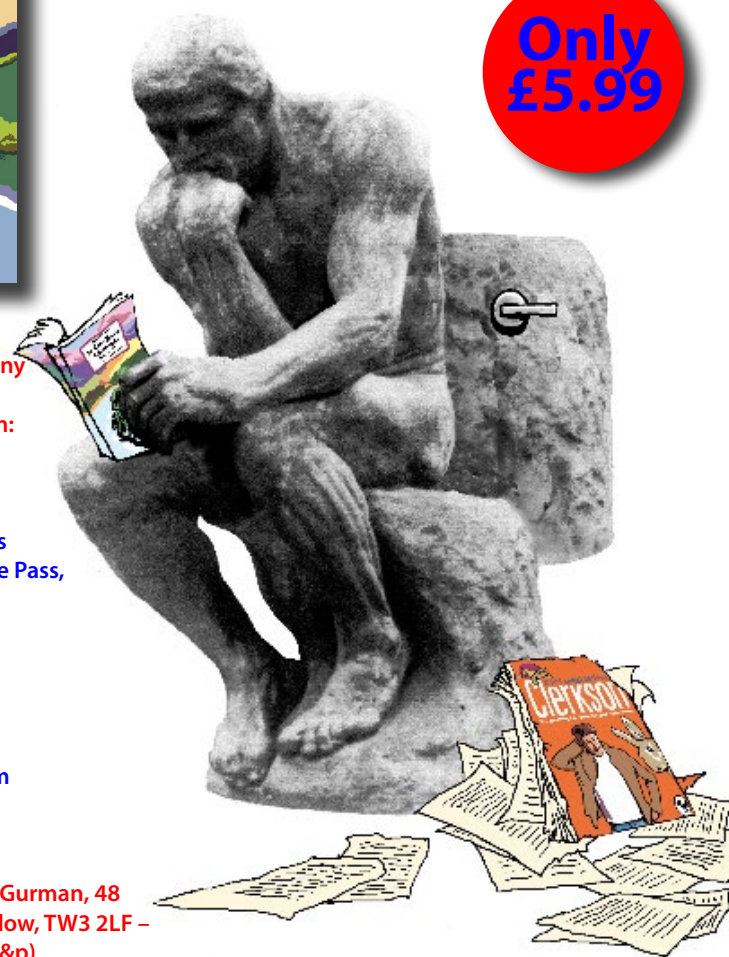
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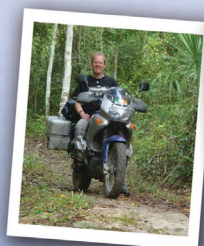
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The world enters economic meltdown. A global flu pandemic looms. An historical US presidential election is taking place and, somewhere in the Americas, a lone Irishman is coaxing his temperamental Italian motorcycle through another electrical breakdown...



"Funny, informative and thought provoking. A great travel guide and a great read" - Nich Brown, The Road



"humorous yet totally absorbing" - Motorcycle Monthly

"This refreshingly anecdotal book reads like a mate down the pub who's travelled and can tell a good story" - Adventure Bike Rider

"A seriously funny adventure novel written in a way you can actually relate to" - International Motor Cycle

"A fantastic account of life on the road and an antidote to celebrity overland adventures - I laughed out loud many times and felt like I was riding pillion. Can't wait for the next adventure." - Motorcycle Mojo Magazine

"We are seeking legal advice" - Puerto del Faglioli Tourist Board

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Dear Dave, TRD Contributors & TRD Readers,
I just wanted to say thank you for allowing me to design TRD 'Online' for the last 23 issues. I am very proud to be associated with a publication that is a wonderful source of free spirited journalism. I do hope dear readers, that you will continue to support TRD & Dave and his devotion to the magazine.

One day I hope to be back to design the next version.
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