

20th Anniversary MagFest

By Dave Robinson

(Anm. Der folgende Artikel ist ein Reisebericht unseres alten Freundes Dave Robinson, der eigens die Flugreise von Leeds auf sich genommen hat, nur um das MAGfest zu besuchen. Wir geben seinen Text hier unverändert wieder)

Couldn't take two weeks off and medical condition really dictated that I shouldn't ride 1000 miles there then back on my own, so decided to fly out. Leeds/Bradford – Amsterdam (more of that later) – Vienna – Hire car – drive to Ralsdorf.

Weather great left Leeds/Bradford at ten to four Thur 8th Sept. 50 minute flight by Fokker 100 then 13 minutes taxiing to the departure terminal. Amsterdam airport is ^£%\$" huge, I swear its bigger than Amsterdam. The connection was at eight but because of time zones when I got off the plane it was ten past six so plenty of time. The destination gate was 25 minutes away according to the guide and that's with the walkways. Next leg was a Boeing 737 to Vienna. Acceleration was a bit faster than the BM but the frame wasn't as solid – it shook like buggery.

Arrived Vienna ten o'clock – picked up the hire car (Ford Fusion). I chose that type of vehicle because it would be doubling as a tent for 3 or 4 nights. Didn't fancy battling through Vienna at that time so had a couple of hours kip in car park to let the traffic die down.

So this is where I gets clever. Having just got a copy of Autoroute 2005 I had printed the map and directions to take with me. Step 1, take the road signed A4 Bratislava/Wien (Austrian for Vienna). So I sees a sign saying Wien Zentrum (centre) one way and A4 Bratislava the other. As I didn't want to go into the centre I took the second one. You've guessed, wrong one. 25Km later I found an exit and turned round.

From there not bad, straight up the A22 from Wien A4 from Stockerau to Horn, B4 to Pernigg L something or other to Ralsdorf. Stopped just before Horn and bedded down for the night as it was now 2am.

Next morning drove into Horn and found a roadside bar for croissants and coffee. Coffee is so much better over there. I've tried to make filter coffee and just can't do it right. Drove through Ralsdorf to Sports centre (Sports Platz) where the gathering was scheduled to take place. I was the second person there, the other being an Austrian version of Billy Simpson called Claus. People gradually began to arrive.

A very nice touch I noted was that on the 3 flagpoles they had put the Union Jack on the centre one in my honour. Later was told that is was the same flag I had presented them with the last time I was there, eight years ago. That happened because at the Bigger than Borders run in Ireland, the chap with the tackle for flying the Austrian flag had broke down and I flew the flag from my bike on the run, in gratitude they presented it to me after. So I took the Union Jack to them to reciprocate the gesture.

Things started to liven up a little by about 8 at night, until

someone had his little joke on the 'Tommy' and parked a local drunk on me. He knew hardly a word of English and my German consists of about ten words and five of them translate as 'I can't speak German'. I tested him to see if he was taking the mickey by talking about Lancaster bombers and how we should have given Germany France after the war as a punishment so I know he was genuine.



Edwin's sister Dorite

From what I gathered much of his conversation seemed to centre around how impressed he was with Edwins sister Dorite.

After 2 hours he decided that the best English he knew was in songs, so he held my arm looked deeply into my eyes and started singing (heavily accented) 'Oh my darling Clementine'. He was apparently not familiar with 'whole lotta rosie' or 'paradise by the dashboard light'. Being a clever Yorkshire man I knew just how to extricate myself (people were starting to snigger). Buy him another glass of wine. After a couple of these he fell asleep and I slid off.

As the gathering didn't start till Sat, Fri was a freebie. I found I couldn't pay for anything. As a foreign visitor, for Sat was given vouchers for two meals and five drinks.

As I have already implied it was not so much a rally as a gathering. About 150 bikers and about 50 locals, (Herbert is famous for his barbied chicken). Clubs started to arrive and among them my old friends from the Riding Ducks (so called because they consider themselves waterproof for so much riding in the rain). Much back slapping later and I

presented them with the plaque that Gecko made. They seemed pretty impressed. See pics. Spent the rest of the day reminiscing like the old fart that I am, but they indulged me this time. Last time they dragged me to a clear bit of field and gently roughed me up.

About lunchtime Sat I was told that another Englishman had arrived on site. A Harley rider from the Black Country. Dave Richards was his name. He had been to the big Harley week about 300 miles away. He said he passed 6 bikes on the way in and another 50 on trailers. The site surrounded a lake and was pretty good at first but he got fed up of the bullshit after two days and made his way to the MAGfest. I think he perhaps regretted it later as the evenings entertainment was a blues band and he hated blues.



Dave Richards

The main band that was due to play from ten on was double booked. I happens all over the world. So the support band played until one o'clock. The main band turned up at two o'clock and the party continued till 6 o'clock I'm told. I had crashed out by then.

Sunday was like any other Sun after a party packing up and lots of goodbyes. I had mentioned that I would like to see the clubhouse again in Vienna but didn't fancy coping with the city traffic and road signs every 50ft. So Michi the club president offered to drive my car back for me and put me up a night at his place, see the clubhouse Mon night then take me to the airport for Tues morning. Told you I was a clever Yorkshire man didn't I?

It was the same clubhouse but smaller than I remember it, memory can do that to you can't it?

. Last time there I gave them a serving tray with a vintage B.S.A on it and they still have it on the wall.

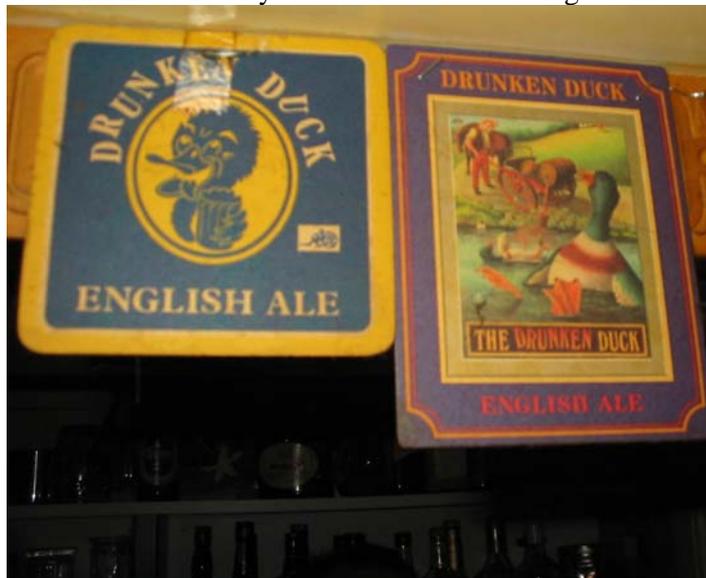
Alex tried to sell me his wife Abse but as he wouldn't go as far as her plane ticket I had to refuse his kind offer. Told him to look after her until I could return to which he graciously agreed. Irene (Riding Ducks treasurer) made an excellent meal (better than the one we had out actually). Katerina was a new member the last time I was there and the year after was Austrian Young Rider of the Year. Well done that girl. Wolf has put on a bit of weight and so has Grisu (made me feel quite at home), and Elfi is as cuddly as ever. They have a lot of trophies for club turnout which was pretty impressive.

Trip home – 5:50 Tues morning at Vienna airport to Amsterdam, did I mention how &\$"£*! Big Amsterdam airport is? They have terminals B,C,D,E,G. Hows this, the plane lands at Gate C after taxiing for about ten minutes. They picked us up in a bus and drove us to the terminal building. I had 45 minutes to do a 30 minute walk to Gate E including going through a border control post. Another bus picks us up and drives us to Gate B. Bastards. I could have walked to gate B in five minutes from where they dropped us, and then they lost my luggage for twelve hours including my cutt-off, Our club jacket and Riding Ducks T-shirts I had been given.



Still there since years: my BSA tray

I always amazes me how much English they use as a matter of course. The club name for instance, would be 'Reiten Ente' and they are nuts about duck things.



They found an English brewery called 'Drunken Duck Ales' so they got a load of beer mats and a German beer called Duckstein.

They love the Lake District Scotland and Wales and make regular trips here. Michi, Irene, Edwin (President MAG Austria) stopped at our house in Leeds a few years ago. So I hope that when they next visit we can extend the same hospitality to them.

Take a look at www.riding-ducks.at