



Solo ride: Malcolm crosses the mountains of Central Asia

Motorcycle diaries of a round-the-world rider, part one

By Ruth Anders

It's a brave man who would take off round the world with nothing other than a Triumph Tiger 800 XCX adventure motorcycle, a pacemaker and a challenging back condition for company. Malcolm Dunkeld, 68, of Leslie Road, N2 is just such a man.

Inspired by the four-year journey described by Ted Simon in his book *Jupiter's Travels*, Malcolm planned a similar expedition, albeit for one year only. With the generous agreement of his wife Gillian, Malcolm set off last summer across Europe, Central Asia and the Far East towards Australia.

Surviving and smiling

While his career as a lecturer in building technology and architectural history had taken him to many remote parts of the world, this solo odyssey was a very different matter. Escaping robbers in Istanbul, suffering gastroenteritis on the Caspian Sea, facing brigands in Central Asia, negotiating countless border controls, his stories are legion. He is now busy writing a book about his adventures.

He quickly learned that blue polo shirts suggest integrity and that a friendly smile opens many doors. In Central Asia, foreigners are treated as minor

celebrities, and the curiosity about him and his motorbike was endless.

"Crossing long distances on a motorcycle by road is entirely different from travelling by air," Malcolm told *The Archer*. "You experience all the sights and smells of every forest and plain, every town and village." Tar roads were replaced by corrugated dirt tracks, heavily wooded areas by snowy mountain ranges and clouds of butterflies by swarms of flies and mosquitos.

Special encounters

He talks about the characters he met along the way such as "the life-enhancing Rashid" in the port of Baku, who closed his café to help Malcolm find his mobile phone (located eventually back on his motorcycle). Then there was the Australian biker doing a similar trip in reverse despite a heart transplant and having to ride with bagfuls of drugs. And the

primary school Ishmali girls and boys he met in Tajikistan, carefully sweeping the road to maintain the civic pride they felt in their small village.

We'll have more on Malcolm's ride around the world next month, including the moment when his trip was cruelly cut short by an accident. Don't miss it!

Champion cheese

Cheesemonger Cheeses of Muswell Hill has been named the second most loved shop in the whole of London in the Time Out Love London Awards. The awards, which celebrate the capital's independent cafés, pubs, restaurants, shops and cultural venues, received nearly 165,000 votes.

Social media spotlight

By Ruth Anders

East Finchley business network N2United's chair Nick Allan welcomed a total of 20 local business representatives to the Clissold Arms in Fortis Green in May to catch up on a raft of local commercial interests including a follow-up to the previous month's GDPR guidance (compliance required by 28 May), disabled access to a new High Street coffee shop, local crime updates and East Finchley Festival opportunities.

Understanding platforms

The highlight of the evening was a talk by social media consultant Ginny Till who succeeded in de-mystifying the layers relating to the use of different platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest and Snapchat.

Describing each app's targeted demographic and pros and cons, she clarified the purposes for which each could be used to maximum effect according to the needs of individual businesses.

Ginny emphasised the significance of well designed content and thoroughly researched tagging while highlighting the importance of identifying and

using one platform well rather than three less effectively.

N2United is growing fast and new member Amanda Reuben, of Bijou Recruitment, was impressed by the welcoming and informal atmosphere of the group: "So much more fun and friendly than the other networking events I've attended," she said.

N2United's next meeting will be on Thursday 14 June at the Clissold Arms. The charge for attendance at each meeting is £10. All are welcome, and if you haven't already tested this network, come along to see just how stimulating and enjoyable these sessions are. More information at www.n2united.co.uk.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Two types of band

In the weirdly wonderful world of pop and roll there are only two types of band: 'The Beatles' and 'The Stones'.

In 1961 a 20-something gay music shop owner called Brian Epstein found four young lads in a Liverpool cellar. The band was tight, popular and there was something about the tight trousers and leather jackets that attracted him. So he did the only thing he could do, he signed them.

Brian realised that black leather was past it, restyled their hair, put them into neat, collarless suits and let them play up the cheeky Scouser. The rest is history and myth. I guess he realised that as teenage girls bought most of the singles, he'd got a band they could dream about having as a boyfriend. Yes, they wanted to have their hand held by a Beatle.

This set the tone for the sixties as the Hollies, Tremeloes and Searchers dominated pop music. In America they even invented the Monkees to get in on the act. Hit singles, screaming fans and a short shelf life. Why? Because no one stays a teenager for ever and if The Beatles hadn't quit touring, headed to the studio and come up with Sgt Pepper they'd probably have gone the same way as Herman's Hermits.

But The Rolling Stones were different. They didn't have Brian Epstein, they had producer Andrew Loog Oldham. He spotted something else in the bar band playing blues and R'n'B that Brian didn't spot in The Beatles. He spotted a gang. Gangs are different, gangs are something to either join or run from, they are attractively dangerous. And if lots of teenage girls love a bad boy, lots of teenage boys want to be in a gang.

The Stones didn't sing about holding hands, they sang about spending the night together. They didn't look like the kind of boy you could introduce to your parents and they had something else that teen pop bands don't have, a kind of long-lasting loyalty, because boys don't grow out of the bands they want to be in at 15, whereas girls grow up and move on to real boys, not poster boys.

And it doesn't stop there, you can play the poster boy versus gang all the way through. Blur versus Oasis? Poster pop versus gang. See what I mean.

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