

Part 6 - A Kentish R.E. Sunday

November third, a lovely day,  
Just might go down to Dover,  
time to get Tornado out,  
and have a quick check-over.

A Royal Enfield Bullet,  
it always draws a crowd,  
an army type in olive green,  
it really does stand out.

A threaded bar is sticking out,  
now that's an engine stud.  
It's lost the washers either end,  
plus obviously the nuts.

Lawn mower man he says to me,  
"Here's Whitworth size three-eighths,  
to fix Tornado, free of charge,  
can't leave it in that state!"

The "spanner dance" is over now,  
turn key, switch on head lamp,  
Bloody thing's gone wrong as well,  
could it have been the damp?

Lucas switch has screws for wires,  
but one of them has gone,  
I use one from spare terminal,  
oh good, headlamp is on.

Cold start, clutch freed, now 'push it through'  
decompress, T.D.C.  
fuel and choke on, one-eighth throttle  
kick just once, wee-hee!



the engine fires into life,  
choke off, and throttle too,  
i'm really glad I bought this bike,  
and proudly think, "Thank you!"

Few weeks ago, my first time ride,  
it scared me near to death,  
stamped on the break to change down gear,  
cos it is on the left!

so hard to change my reflexes,  
the gears were hard to grasp,  
one up, three down, not 'down then up',  
a layout from the past.

I fought to learn to ride this bike,  
in truth I nearly cried,  
I swore I'd get the hang of it,  
or come off it and die.

as luck would have it I survived,  
I learnt the gears and brakes,  
it's fun riding Tornado now,  
in fact it's bloody great!

Back to the present, off we go,  
to find somewhere for luncheon,  
quite important, put in neutral,  
when stopped at a junction.

Otherwise, clutch plates will rub,  
and then get very hot.  
the plates expand and clutch locks on,  
which makes it hard to stop.

The feeling when your on the bike,  
is really quite unique,  
It's more like feeling you become,  
at one with history.

Add army cloths and goggles,  
plus a helmet, open face,  
Ride proudly on your bullet,  
and then you'll trip all the way!

we go to visit Sevenoaks,  
at Otford there's a queue,  
Long tailback from traffic works,  
but bike just noses through!



I buy and eat some sandwiches,  
and meet some air cadets,  
they sell me a red poppy,  
in remembrance of our 'vets'

we leave the town, for countryside,  
and bendy little roads,  
just like the bike was designed for,  
and where it loves to go.

It's at Chiddingstone Causeway,  
we spot a young black Bullet,  
Tornado chases after her,  
In hopes that he might "pull it"

we had to do one-eighty turn,  
to follow other bike,  
First gear, second, into third,  
we head back into Leigh.

Black bullet bike's not in a rush,  
it's trundling along,  
its up ahead, we hear it's thump,  
that age old bullet song.

Out of Leigh, round double bend,  
by now we're getting near,  
up the hill then straighten out,  
KER-LUNK, we're in fourth gear.

Tornado might be somewhat old,  
but no way he's retired,  
We hit the straight, I twist the grip,  
how well the engine fires.

The Enfields joust, Tornado wins,  
The other bike's been whipped,  
we're coming to Y junction now,  
best slow a little bit.

Intention is to indicate,  
and stop in left hand fork,  
hope other bike will pull up too,  
it would be nice to talk.

but other bullet forks to right,  
to Powder Mills that way,  
I look on disappointed,  
still, maybe another day!

I try to turn my bike around,  
to go home for a rest,  
Tornado's having none of it,  
I should have bloody guessed.

We tear off down to Powder Mills,  
to catch the other bike,  
But even though the road is straight,  
it's gone right out of sight.

Last desperate turn to Hildenborough,  
by now we're much to late,  
I'm feeling sad, but not just me,  
Tornado's lost his date.

we travel back though Leigh village,  
and spot a shiny Triumph,  
I ask with hope, "will that one do?"  
I'm sure my bike said "Hmmmph!"

I stop my bike with decompress,  
and then switch off the key,  
turn the crank till T.D.C.  
stops wet sumping you see!

bike's in the shed on centre stand,  
I go in out the weather,  
if only house had bigger doors,  
then we would be together!

To relax in an easy chair,  
Tornado at my side,  
what more could anybody ask?  
Now that would be the life.

Today has been a pleasant one,  
of which tonight I'll dream,  
Tomorrow, there's a promise made,  
Tornado needs a clean.