

ASSIGNMENT AT ASSEN

A CONFOUNDED nuisance, at times, is "Addie"—E N Adlington, Esq. Advertisement Manager of Temple Press Ltd.!

It is several years now since he ceased to be on the staff of "Motor Cycling." In his present exalted state he should have acquired a large motorcar complex, but he still is altogether too enthusiastic about motorcycling.

If a new road test machine arrives at the back door, "Addie" descends upon it like a kite-hawk and—before we've had time to get it thoroughly dirty—he's galloping off home for the week-end on the "Doggie," the Triumph or whatever else happens to have been temporarily bequeathed to us by a benevolent manufacturer.

A trip home for "Addie" doesn't mean 10 miles to Thornton Heath Pond and then a "bash" along the Croydon By-pass. It means 120 fast miles in each direction, for the man lives in Gloucestershire. It is a tribute to the durability of modern machines that his correspondence-column averages have yet to result in a burst bicycle.

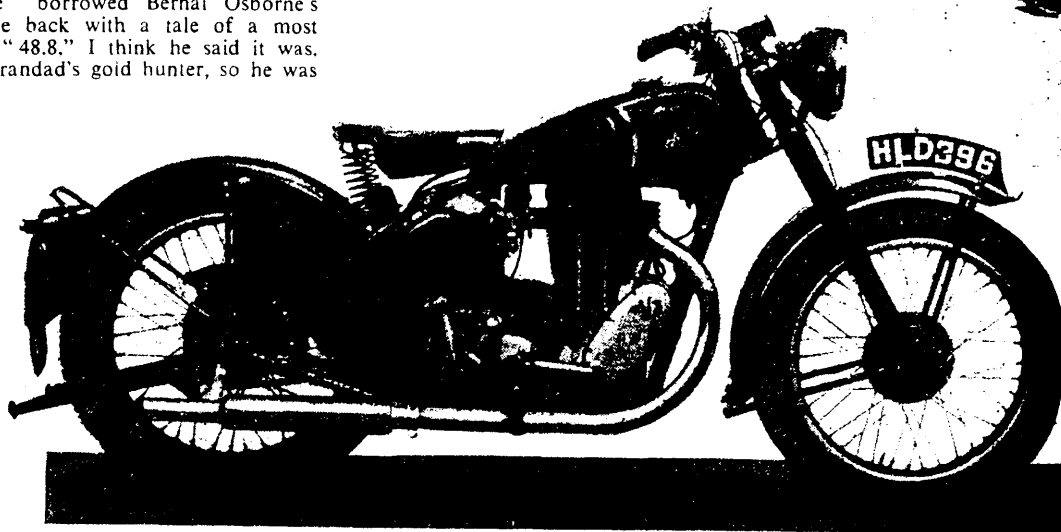
Some time ago "Addie" borrowed Bernal Osborne's Model 18 A.J.S. He came back with a tale of a most preposterous average . . . "48.8." I think he said it was, and he'd timed it by his Grandad's gold hunter, so he was sure it was right!

A "Motor Cycling" Sports Reporter Covers the Dutch Grand Prix Using a Much-Borrowed Staff 1947 Model 18 498 c.c. A.J.S.

"Bon Voyage!" Bernal Osborne, the "proprietor," watches Cyril Quantrill depart for Dover to report "The Dutch."



As it came back. The 498 c.c. Model 18 after its strenuous return trip to the Continent, described in these pages.



The Advertisement Manager borrowed the model the next week-end, and again the next.

Ho-hah! Must be something in all this! So, after promising Bernal faithfully that I'd clean it when I got back, I borrowed the "Ajay" myself.

I used it to gallop down to the race meeting at Bryanston Park in Dorset. Practising was due to start at about the time I usually thump the alarm clock out of action and turn over for "another five minutes." That meant being on the road just before dawn.

It Can be Done!

When I ran out of petrol between Shaftesbury and Blandford the sun was still so low on the horizon that I was forced to believe that bar-parlour averages *can* be maintained on English roads—if the conditions are right, and you've got a willing bicycle.

I came back with "Winco-Mac," of the R.A.C., who had borrowed the "Gent" for the week-end, and the Ajay hung on gamely to the Ariel "thousand," although the plug began to "whisker" towards the end of the day.

Several times, now, I have borrowed the "Ajay"—particularly since my own Norton has grown a third wheel—when a fast solo has been called for. It has always been a most reliable mount.

Recently there came the problem of getting to and from the Dutch Grand Prix. I could fly—but I wouldn't unless I absolutely had to. (I'm old-fashioned: at least, my tummy is!) I could go by boat and rely upon "train, tram, omnibus or tube" at the other end, or—well, what was wrong with taking a bike?

I took one, Bernal's A.J.S., crossing to Ostend and riding up to Assen—about 300 miles each way if you travel after

dusk and have to go south to avoid the ferries over the Maas and Maal, both of which, it seems, close at night.

At Dover on the Wednesday I met Peter Goodman, Vic Miller (his Man Friday), Tommy Wood and Les Dear. As it was after 9 p.m. (European time) when we'd cleared the Customs at Ostend, it seemed a good idea to tag along behind the heavily laden "V8" van instead of rushing off to get lost on my own, especially as Tommy had already announced that he knew the route from Ostend to Antwerp "like the back of his hand."

In the darkness I suppose it was quite understandable that Tommy should mistake a tributary of the Oofenhuglwegl for the canal at Bruges, but I had a *feeling* we were on the wrong road when we got mixed up with the circus equipment down a cul-de-sac in Ghent!

But by then, of course, Tommy was asleep. So were Vic and Les. Wedged uncomfortably between them, Peter drove the Ford, kept awake by the unsynchronized snoring of his companions.

In North Belgium

We'd been having several stops, as something had gone wrong with the "electrics" on the van and Peter was running on the dimmest of head lamps. I hadn't the heart to put my own headlight on, for fear of dazzling him, and so bumped along "blind" over the never-ending pavé of Northern Belgium, in and out of the potholes which could scarcely have been avoided even had I been able to see them.

As the Ford had poked a con-rod through its basement on the way to Dover, we kept down to about "30 per" most of the way, the Ajay plonking on hour after hour, scarcely off the pilot jet until we passed through the Customs



—the Dutch officials showing a great deal of enthusiasm when they spotted the racing Velocettes in the van—and headed north for Breda.

Early in the morning there was a time when everybody woke up rather sharply. The Dutch roads are generally good, but an unforeseen pothole jolted Tommy into the realization that "things were rattling in the back."

They were indeed! "T.L.'s" box of spares had toppled off the shelf and the precious contents were nicely distributed over the floor of the van—and 2 a.m. is not the best time of day to discover a thing like that!

It seemed that a cup of coffee might help to restore morale, so I forged ahead to look for the local "Bedford Drivers' Club." All shut! For mile after mile the "Ajay" cracked towards the brightening Eastern sky. It was lovely to give the motor its head. It was also rather chilly.

At Gravé, a few miles west of Nijmegen, I spotted a filling station with lights burning in the house alongside. In like a flash!

Had they got coffee? Yes. Food? Yes.

Five coffees, five foods, please. And I waited for the van to come rumbling into sight. There it was. I waved frantically and Peter swung into the yard.

Mr. Barten, mine host of the Elftwegl roadhouse, and his charming wife served five hungry Englishmen with as nice a brace of eggs apiece as ever I've set my eyes on. Then we slept in armchairs for an hour or more.

Anxious to "make" Thursday morning's practice, the Velocette boys pushed on while I enjoyed the luxury of a wash.

Through Nijmegen

I suppose I must have passed them while Tommy was finding the way through the back streets of Nijmegen, for I never spotted the Ford again that morning.

Nijmegen, by the way, now looks very trim and tidy, as does Arnhem, only the areas near the bridges showing signs of the historic battles fought around them not so very long ago.

On the magnificent new road between these two towns I held the A.J.S. flat out. As on the run to Dorset, a few months earlier, it was the plug which cried "Enough!" A change to a slightly harder one improved matters, but, nevertheless, I was becoming distinctly 'whisker-conscious' by the time Assen was reached. If only that little trouble could be cured, I felt sure that the "Ajay" could be walloped all day without protest.

Apart from a certain amount of oil which had "boiled

By CYRIL QUANTRILL

over, from the filler cap, there was nothing in the appearance of the model to show that I had been galloping it at a steady 65-70 m.p.h. for two hours and more. And after that coming it ran just as sweetly and smoothly in top at well below the "30" mark when required to do so.

During the stay at Assen I managed to extract a K.L.G. 718 C. plug from Rex Mundy, who shared with "Dicky" Davis, of Dunlops, the honour of being one of the two "Trade Barons" to cross to Holland for the race.

"This isn't the standard recommendation," he pointed out, "but if you're really going to belt that machine you'd better have one."

And whether I wanted to or not, I had got to "belt" the A.J.S. on the Saturday night. "Alongside 7.30 a.m.," said my sailing instructions from the R.A.C. After I'd taken leave of my hosts it was half past nine, and when I'd reached the outskirts of Zwolle, after riding in a traffic stream which would make the Brighton road on August Bank Holiday look deserted, it was getting dark.

The traffic jam in the town itself, where there is a Bailey bridge, which must be one of the longest in Europe, was just nobody's business. I tried to by-pass it by using the cycle track, but a Dutch policeman who could speak a little English—I'd met several who couldn't—pointed out, most politely, that it wasn't the "done" thing.

It was one of those wretched sort of traffic jams which moved forward a couple of yards every time you stopped the engine in the hope of letting it cool. Fortunately, the Ajay started first kick on every occasion—what a relief that was!

Thanks to the "Teles."

Eventually I got clear and picked up the road for Apeldoorn. For several miles it is like a trials section—for in Holland they undertake the rebuilding of roads on a grand scale—and I gave A.M.C., Ltd., a mental pat on the back for thinking up their "Teledraulics."

By the time Arnhem was reached I was getting weary and looking forward to the supper I had ordered in advance at Gravé, now only 30 miles farther on.

And—good!—there at last were the lights of the café. After supper I had another little sleep in the armchair and, with the sky once more getting light, set off for the final 200 miles to Ostend.

I don't like cutting things fine—I do it all too often through a disinclination to get up in the morning—so, rather than maintain a steady "50" for the rest of the journey, I decided to hammer along at a considerably faster bat. The result was that I arrived back on the coast far too early for breakfast and had time to have a look around the town. In due course Madame at the Hotel de la Gard started taking down the shutters, and I went in for coffee and yet more eggs.

In the middle of shaving I was assailed by the good lady, who was clearly of the opinion that it would be better for me to sit down to eat with one half of my face shaven and the other bearded than that the eggs she had cooked with her own fair hands should spoil.

I had intended to put my notes into ship-shape order on the boat, but as soon as I sat down in the bar to write I went to sleep. . . .

Finally, there was the run on Sunday evening from Dover to home and the 16 miles into the office early on Monday morning.

Bernal pounced on his machine. "What've you broken?" He looked long and hard.

There was one nut missing from the saddle mounting—the vibration caused by trying to do a mile a minute over pavé having done that—and the rear chain looked a bit dry. The head lamp glass was covered with squashed flies and beetles, and there was some oil on the off side of the tail end.

But the engine still had its excellent tickover, it was still beautifully quiet in traffic and once the "no limit" signs were passed it would still accelerate like a thoroughbred up to and past the figure "70" on the "clock."

It is a very nice machine, the Model 18 A.J.S. I phoned Jock West as soon as he was back from Holland to tell him so, and with most becoming modesty Jock said, yes, he, himself, thought it was quite fair value for the money!