

From Africa to... Ashford!

The Ashford Classic Motorcycle Show is a regular highlight of Easter weekend and this year, as usual, it takes place on Easter Monday, 25th April 2011. The venue, Ashford's modern agricultural market, is within easy riding distance from London or the south coast. You'll find the Show near J10 off the M20 in Kent; roughly halfway between the historic Kentish towns of Hastings and Canterbury should you be tempted to take the whole weekend for a trip to the south-east of England.

Guest of Honour Spencer Conway is used to travelling long distances – his trip to the Ashford Show will be a pootle in the park compared to his 37,000 mile solo ride through Africa. In 2009, Conway rode for 286 days from London on a Yamaha XT 660 Z Tenere in order to raise funds for Save The Children. Unlike most celebrities, Conway undertook the trip on his tod, alone and unsupported. He rode from London to the southernmost point of Africa and then back again, effectively circumnavigating the continent as he rode down the east coast and back on the west coast. Conway rode through some 34 different countries and across one-fifth of the world's surface to complete his trip.

Visitors to the Ashford Show will be able to chat to Conway about his epic journey and admire his motorcycle in the metal. The 600 off-roader was the first bike which Conway had ever owned from new; 'most of my bikes were old scraps I fixed up' he says, 'XT250, 500s mainly, but I also had an old Ossa trials bike.' The Tenere looks a little less new after its epic journey, but Conway reckons it held up well to the demands of the non-stop ride.

'I made no modifications to the bike except to buy handguards and a solid bash-plate. I fabricated mounted holders on my panniers which could hold five litres of fuel each, giving me a total of 33 litres for the desert or remote sections. I took a toolkit to do all my maintenance. I cleaned the standard air filter regularly (had no problems with that even in Sahara), and checked the tyres, the chain tension and lubrication, oil, suspension, coolant and such, regularly.

'I had about ten punctures on route so tyre levers were vital and so was a compressor to reinflate them. I carried a spare front knobbly for sand and dirt roads. I had plugs and cables also. That's about it really; I just changed suspension settings and tyre pressure to suit the terrain.'

After admiring Conway's Tenere, visitors will be able to take their time browsing through the other bikes on display in the indoor halls at the Ashford Show. The event attracts a wide range of classic motorcycles, including many rarely-seen American machines. Owners of pre-1980 classic bikes qualify for free entry if they prebook in advance and should download an entry form via www.elk-promotions.co.uk as soon as possible to arrange admission.

Previous winners have included bikes as varied as a 1932 Francis-Barnett, a 1977 Portugese Sachs, a BSA Bantam in full GPO trim and a ready-to-race Manx Norvin. The show bikes are judged during the course of the day, with a prize-giving ceremony and exhibitors' prize raffle at around 3pm. All show entries will receive a mug, a display card and will feature in the show programme.

The Ashford Show also incorporates a bike-only autojumble with stalls both under cover and on hard-standing areas. Garage clearance stalls are available for any private individual

who'd like to de-clutter the shed and turn old relics from old wrecks into a little extra cash. These stalls are available for £10 pre-booked, which includes admission.

If, on the other hand, you have an entire motorcycle to sell then you can simply ride it along on the day, pay the standard admission price on the gate and display it in the Bikemart area. This zone is only for complete, on-the-road motorcycles, and gives you the chance to advertise your machine to a large audience of dedicated enthusiasts. It saves all that faffing around with adverts or worrying about the security of selling via eBay. You don't have to let strangers come to your home to view the machine – they can see it at the Show and ask you any questions in person without phoning up at midnight!

Admission fees for the 2011 Ashford Classic Motorcycle Show have been held at the same level as last year, despite rising prices elsewhere. Visitor parking is free and the general facilities are excellent. Fast-food refreshments are available, as well as the excellent grub served at The Stock Pot, a proper sit-down restaurant on-site which offers a great line in cooked breakfasts suitable for long distance riders and hungry show-goers.

A selection of photos and previous programmes are available from the organiser.

The **Ashford Classic Motorcycle Show** opens 10am on Easter Monday 25th April 2011.
At Ashford Livestock Market, Orbital Park, Ashford KENT, TN24 0HB
Admission £5 adults, £4 OAP, children under 16 free
To enter your classic for the display, book a club, trade, jumble or garage clearance stand please download a booking form see: www.elk-promotions.co.uk
Or call 01797 344277
Or send SAE to ELK Promotions, PO Box 85, New Romney, KENT, TN28 9BE

The **Ashford Classic Motorcycle Show** is organised by:
ELK Promotions, PO Box 85, New Romney, Kent TN28 9BE.

Our other motorcycle events in 2011 include:

Romney Marsh Bikejumble 10am Sunday 22th May 2011
Marsh Road, Hamstreet, Kent TN26 2JD (A2070 6 miles M20 J10)

Romney Marsh Show & Bikejumble Sun 3rd July 2011
Marsh Road, Hamstreet, Kent TN26 2JD (A2070 6 miles M20 J10)

NEW! South of England Superbike Show Sunday 7th August 2011
South of England Showground, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TL

Romney Marsh Bikejumble 10am Sunday 18th Sept 2011
Marsh Road, Hamstreet, Kent TN26 2JD (A2070 6 miles M20 J10)

South of England 'RealClassic' Show Sunday 23rd Oct 2011
South of England Showground, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TL