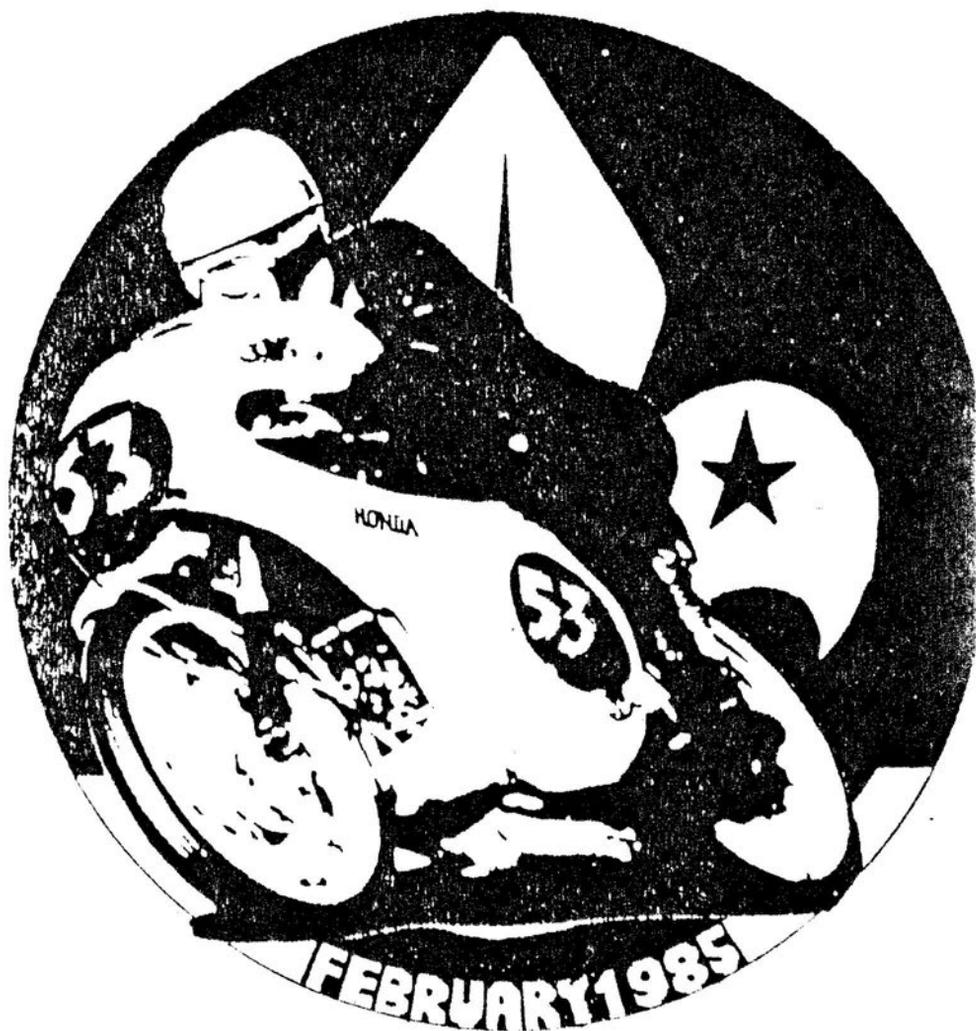


VENTURE

44



VENTURE 44. The Magazine of the 44th Gloucester
Sir Thomas Rich's School Venture Scout Unit

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EDITOR

Neil Hawkins

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Recorder	Stewart James
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Elected Members	Rich Booth
	Ian Heathcock
	Dereck Dalby

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**In this issue of Venture 44 we feature a series of articles by a number of ex-members on the subject of the motorcycle and its aficionados. Our contributors in this section are Rich Kerswell (Suzuki and Cambridge) John Pepperell (Yamaha and Huddersfield Poly) Mike Barton (Sundry old bangers and Gloucester Tech) Simon Williams, (Honda and West London Poly) and Andy Deeble (Honda and S.T.R.S.)

EDITORIAL

Taking up the challenge from Steve Catchick in the previous issue, I "volunteered" to be editor at the last annual reunion just before Christmas. The reunion proved very successful with over 50 people attending, and I was caught off guard by the V.S.L., and so became "recruited" to editorship. Because of this I never managed to write my expected article on the recent trip to North Wales - more of that perhaps next issue...

The Unit has been ticking over quietly of late but there have been one or two high spots, with our participation in the District Swimming Gala producing our best performance for years. The team of Graham Dalby, Richard Booth, Steve Clutterbuck, Stew James and Sean Watts came second overall, with Graham (an ex-city of Gloucester swimmer) coming first in both his events, which was no surprise to himself - have we another super-ego swimmer in the school? He will be swimming for the district this weekend in the county gala. By the way he is also selling his power pipes (what is the opposite to silencer?) for a reasonable price, which leads on to the main theme of this issue - motorcycling.

Neil Hawkins

We welcome several new members to the Unit, Paul Bellamy, Andrew Butchers and Sean Watts, and wish them a long and happy association with the 44th. With another half dozen prospective members attending events the Unit seems in a reasonably healthy state at the moment.

THE SUMMER ACTIVITY is most likely to consist of a cycle tour in Southern Ireland. Any ex-members who may be interested should contact me before the end of term.

Congratulations to all who helped out in the "Raid the Larder" scheme, especially the organisers, Graham D. and Marcus Whitmore. It was a good job well done. F.H.

Although I am editing this issue my experience of motorcycling is limited to friend's bikes and half-a-dozen training sessions for a regional competition held last November. These sessions were taken by Mr Dalby to whom we are all grateful, and resulted in our team seeing off the rest of Gloucestershire in the exhausting competition. The victorious team-members were Graham and Dereck Dalby (it must be in their blood) and Dereck will be going on to the national championships in London..... next stop the world - who knows?

The articles following this introduction range across the whole subject of motorcycling and even touch on the psychological aspects of it (allowing us novices to see what goes on beneath the visor). I hope the articles will also interest any experienced motor-cyclist who read them as they contain several interesting anecdotes!

Neil Hawkins

TWO WHEELS ARE BETTER THAN NONE

Ever since its infancy, the motorcycle has held a curious fascination for man. Whether its primary asset is raw, uncompromising speed, or three figure decibel ratings is perhaps debatable, but what cannot be denied is the cult like following it enjoys. To a confirmed car driver the blind adoration of two wheels is perhaps as commendable and interesting as hitting one's head against a brick wall. For he who believes, a motorcycle can become an extension of his personality. As many perform their own maintenance and minor repairs, cherishing their steeds with unembarrassed pride and not uncommonly developing close relationships with their machines.

For many the ultimate pleasure is feeling part of the machine while negotiating meandering rural roadways. For others the drugs of speed and danger provide all required thrills. However, for those not interested in rewriting Newton's Laws whilst cornering or XR3i burning

on the M1, the motorcycle still has plenty to offer.

The motorcycle for many leatherclad adolescents, is the natural progression from the BMX, and as such can become a status symbol. This aside it provides a real introduction to internal combustion - without which surely man would have come second to an Orang-u-tan. Such cheap, mechanically simple and hence often reliable motorised transport is the first step to independence and a lot, lot more for the contemporary youth.

For those set on taming the rugged, undulating terrain of open woodland and moor, the development of the motocross bike must have been a dream come true. No longer are many parts of the country two feet domain, knobbly wheels, big sprockets, four foot ground clearance and unashamedly, free revving engines are the order of the day.

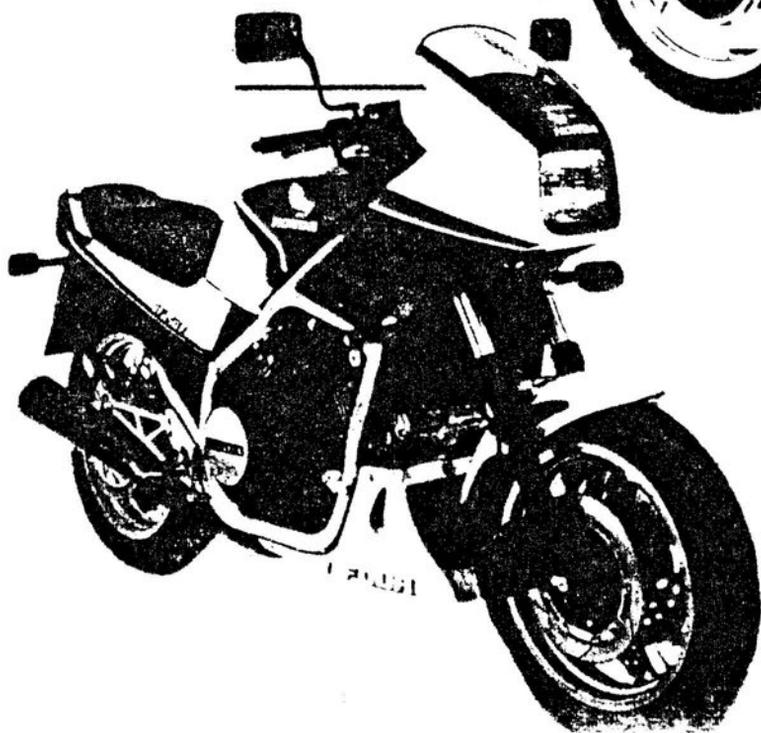
For those who seek a real alternative to four wheel obesity, if it be only for commuting five days a week or simply as cheap A to B transport, the motorcycle rules O.K. Admittedly there are things you can do in a car not sensibly attemptable on two wheels- but surely wheelies more than compensate?

All in all, wind-through-your-hair transport in the form of today's motorcycle is an integral part of modern society, and Japan is smiling.

Rich Kerswell

TALKING DIRTY

Of all forms of motorcycling, the scramble is perhaps the most exciting and the most unpredictable. It has no strict confines like the surfaced tracks of a Grand Prix course or the cindered track of the speedway circuit. The course is just where the men have chosen to ride, with every facet of the land thrown in the path of man and his machine. It is the element of speed that turns the peaceful countryside into a battleground.





The scrambler requires all the skills of any other motorcycle rider - and more. Also he needs these skills all at the same time. He must hang on at flat out speeds over hard unforgiving ground and skate on spinning wheel round slippery bends; he must pick his way delicately through deep ruts and rubble, and launch his mechanical steppelercher off ledges into open space. It may be so hot and dusty that he can barely draw breath in the choking atmosphere, or so wet and muddy that he can hardly grip the controls, or see the track ahead.

To the uninitiated he is a determined fool, defying all the laws of nature, gravity and commonsense as he fights to achieve an almost impossible mastery of all the elements. Only the true enthusiast and those involved in the sport can appreciate why the rider puts himself into such situations to achieve, apparently, so little. The challenge is a very personal thing, quite unconnected to rewards, riches or audience acclaim.

Technology plays its part, of course, as in any form of racing, machine development is a relentless search for the ultimate. To the scrambler this means developing a machine light enough to be thrown into the air, yet strong enough to take the pounding it suffers on landing. It means an engine powerful enough to pull away from near stalling speeds and accelerate hard down the short straights; it needs suspension that can soak up punishment, yet is not so soft that it will turn the bike into an uncontrollable pogo stick.

Machine development has boomed as the sport has grown in popularity and nearly every manufacturer now includes some sort of scrambler or motocross bike in his range. Products requiring frequent repair and replacement are good news for any manufacturer - but only for as long as their product is at the front of the field. This year's winner may easily end up on next year's scrap heap.

But when the gate drops and the machines fly from the start line, it is the man that counts; torque figures and power to weight ratios are irrelevant. The rider must keep every faculty razor-sharp if he is to stay in

control of the writhing, bucking machine beneath him. Scrambling is a tough sport, and crash damage is high in the rough and tumble where broken controls and bent handle bars will put a man out of action. Deliberate rough riding is rare, however. Each man is aware of the knife edge line dividing success from a bad crash, and each knows full well that he relies in part on the sense and sportsmanship of the rest of the field.

The scrambler's very personal battle is as much with himself as with the course and other riders. If he has the wits, the will-power and the endurance to succeed where others fall by the trackside, then he has triumphed in a championship all of his own.

John Pepperell.

LONDON A to Z

Having given up college for the year I wanted to stay in London whilst waiting for my new course to begin in September. Being a typical student I found myself penniless and as I needed to eat, I was compelled to look for a job. Being a motorcycle owner and enthusiast, I was delighted to find a job that required me to spend most of my time riding a bike (much to my mother's despair!) I went to work for a motorcycle Courier company called 'District Link', whose office was near Heathrow.

The basic work is much the same day in, day out, i.e. the conveyance of packages and documents and artwork etc. However, your destination is nearly always varied. That was something I enjoyed, as exploring new areas of the city was interesting. When I started, my knowledge of London was sketchy to say the least, but with the aid of the Despatch Rider's Bible, "The A-Z of London", I soon began to find my way around. To make matters worse, most of the areas I was delivering to, like Piccadilly, Soho, and the Bank are a complex system of one-way streets. I sometimes wondered whether I would find my way out again.

Some of my jobs involved delivering and collecting passports of jet set businessmen at various embassies in London. In fact only two days before the shooting at the Libyan Embassy occurred, I spent several hours there with a passport problem. It was a hive of activity and the people who dealt with me seemed very friendly and most helpful. Consequently I was quite surprised to hear of the subsequent troubles at the embassy.

On the same subject, I was again surprised at the rapidity at which central London was brought to a standstill. This happened to such an extent that it was not possible to get through the near stationary traffic. On that day it took me two hours to do the 10 miles out of town to Heathrow.

Working as a despatch rider and clocking up about 25,000 miles in four months has made me a safer and an alert rider. I soon found that in order to stay in one piece you had to give 100% concentration all day, as the traffic in London is certainly not a slow entity. As you have only two wheels, instead of four, reading the road is all the more important. Hidden dangers like manhole covers and silt DERV lurk on London's road surfaces. It is made altogether worse when it rains as the old over used roads become like an ice-rink, making cornering on a bike a really risky business!

Two things bothered me with my work - one was how dirty London is; by the end of the day my face would be black from road dirt and pollution from the air. Another thing was that I once saw an accident involving another motorcyclist en route through town, and when I passed by again half an hour later, the injured rider was still lying in the road, and the ambulance only just approaching. Seeing things like that made me a very much more cautious rider!

When you are driving well over 1000 miles a week, it becomes a full-time job keeping the bike on the road, as bits wear out very fast. Luckily I was riding company bikes which meant that I didn't have to fork out for the

frequent repairs that were needed!

In conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a courier, but I decided to stop while my luck held out. It was an experience I am much the wiser for. However as my friend the sage Mike Barton once said - "I likes my cows!" and it was certainly good to be out of the bustle of the Big City.

Simon Williams

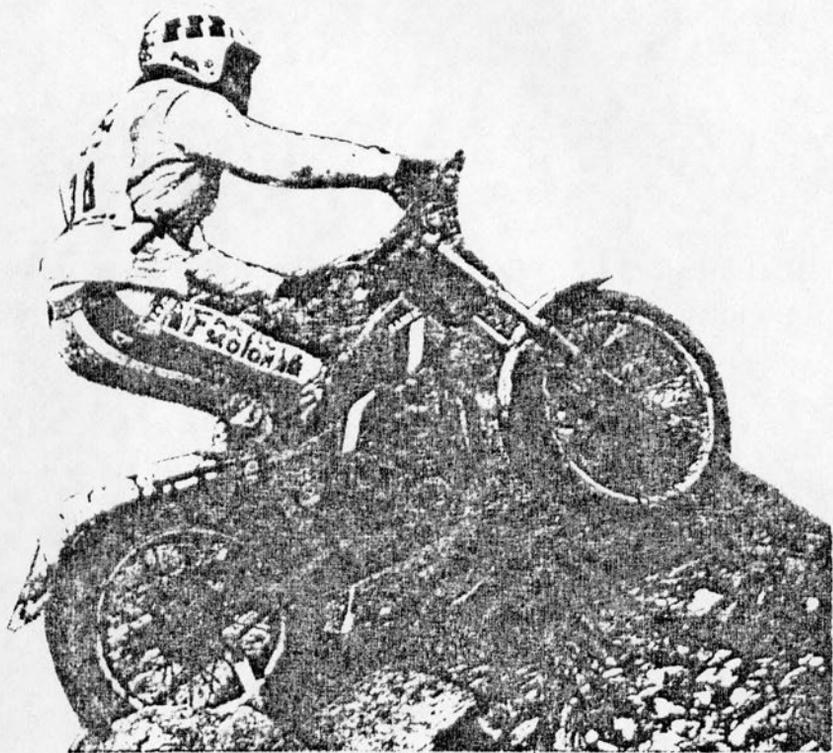
(P)RIDE and PREJUDICE

Motorcycling is more than owning a motorbike; (just because you own a paintbrush it doesn't mean that you're an artist!). To the artist it is, quite literally, a way of life, a belief, an obsession, and a dream. This way of thinking is more important than just what you've got between your legs.

Many motorcycle clubs exist in this country (as they do in most civilised countries) on a regional, national, or even international scale. These clubs have, over the years, often been displayed and reported as murderous, rampaging holigans; the next time that you see a biker portrayed on T.V. he is bound to be mentally subnormal and raping every woman in sight.

Perhaps this untrue and unjustified feeling stems from the fact that the old maids of this world who write these programmes, films, books or newspaper reports enjoy trying to scare the public (just as the public like to be scared). So those horrible fabricated tales of Hell's Angels creating madness and mayhem in all sorts of lovely little places in England are, by many people, read eagerly and believed, just like Dark ages peasants being told to watch out for the bogeyman in the dark woods - they didn't really understand who the bogeyman was, but they were quite prepared to hate him. Nowadays, of course, we all know that there are no bad men in the so perhaps someone had to invent a new bogeyman, a new myth.

X.V.S.



Death toll on roads rises

CRASH VICTIM 'STABLE'
~~Motorcyclist~~ (21) of Market-
st., Wotton-under-Edge In intensive
care after crash near Nailsworth.

MORE than half the Stroud road deaths last year were on the notorious A38 road a county councillor said yesterday.

The fatalities out of a total of 13 in the district during 1984 were along a 16 mile stretch of the road between the Avon county boundary and Quedgeley, Coun. Basil Booth (Con., Berkeley) told the District Local Advisory Road Safety Committee.

There were 619 casualties from 472 injury accidents in the Stroud area, a rise of four per cent. The highest proportion were teenage motorcyclists

aged between 17 and 19.

Also 191 people altogether were seriously hurt in district road accidents.

Motorcyclist 'up' to avoid collisions

TEENAGER ~~19~~ (19), of Boverton-ave, Brockworth, received minor leg injuries when her motorcycle was in collision with a sports car at Walls roundabout, Gloucester, yesterday evening.

"I saw her standing just the other side of the white line. There was the sound of a motorcycle horn. She stood still and the first motorcycle went past her. She then stepped forward and the second motorcycle was upon her. The rider tried to turn to go behind her but there was an impact," she said.



STRAIGHT FROM THE SADDLE

Having only been riding for a mere eighteen months my experience of motorcycling is limited, although interesting.

The fear of all loving mothers is a daughter's boyfriend with a motorbike. The reason is quite obvious - accident. Fortunately I have had no serious injuries. I say fortunately with deliberation, since, in other conditions, my name may have appeared on the front page of the Citizen. Two occasions come to memory; one just over a month ago - the other on my second day of riding. Both incidents were owing to stupidity. First, I took a corner at sixty and slid on oil into the pavement. Only wearing shorts and a waterproof top I escaped injury, landing in someone's conifer tree. I could have 'burned' my legs severely on the road, or experienced many other more serious things. Hence the importance of protective clothing, correct cornering, and reduced speed in wet conditions.

The reason for this first incident is the same as the second; lack of thought through heady excitement. Returning from the hut one evening, Paddy and I were "bending" the speed limit in a race. Being forced to brake at fifty five miles per hour, I skidded between a gap of a metre, with a very small space on either side (a rather attractive girl in a miniskirt had caught my eye, which should have been concentrating on the road). Only dry road conditions, good tyres, correct training, and a lot of luck saved me from almost certain death.

Speeding is acceptable at times, in my opinion, but only at very limited times. If people drive with proper consideration, accident may become an unused word.

Motorcycling is great fun when one uses the power of the bike responsibly. Unfortunately, certain individuals ignore this unwritten rule, hence the poor reputation that motorcyclists have in some quarters. This, I must emphasise, is a minority. On the whole training is of a

high quality, and other drivers - i.e. cars are at fault! If the possible dangers can be tolerated, riding a bike may prove a rich and rewarding experience.

Andy Deeble

AND IN CONCLUSION..

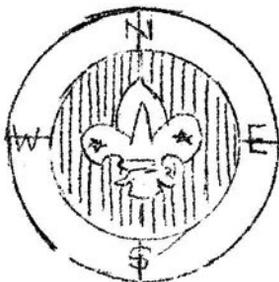
Dangerous things, bikes, and objects which seem to raise strong feelings, one way or another. To some folk they are death traps with allmanner of unsavoury associations, but to others they are more a way of life. Whatever one thinks of them, they are here with us, and despite high insurance, and plenty of 'bike-hostile' legislation, they are likely to stay for a while yet.

Undoubtedly the young motorcyclist is very vulnerable and is always going to be so, accident statistics both locally and nationally support this view. However, there are very good training schemes operating locally which give young riders an excellent theoretical and practical grounding in the art (and it IS an ART!) of motorcycling. Mention has been made earlier of the road safety competition held last term, and events like this can only help in developing the skills and perception needed by the young rider on todays roads. Unfortunately, as has been indicated in the previous article, many car drivers seem to hold little regard for anything on two wheels.

Of course, I am not without bias in this issue, as I have to confess to having been a motorcyclist myself for nearly a quarter of a century. Over that period, stars fade from the eyes, and I can see many of the disadvantages of the animal in question, but on a pleasant summer day and a quiet country road I can still appreciate the magic of the motorcycle and hope I may do so for many years to come.

F.H.

Articles for number 54 are now urgently required, contributions to Neil Hawkins as soon as possible.

From All Points

The Christmas reunion gave an opportunity for many 'old stagers' to get together to look back on halcyon days, when Venture Scouts were real Venture scouts, and beer was 20p a pint...

It was particularly good to see those who travelled a long way to be there - Andy Chalkley's arrival from West Australia being the high spot

Others who had travelled far were Al Robbins, from bonny Scotland, Tim Holford from Gerrards Cross, and Row Lloyd from South Wales. In all 54 members and ex-members enjoyed the evening, and in particular the food prepared by Mr and Mrs Calvert of Crystal Catering.

Keeping up to date with the progress of some of those mentioned in issue no. 52, Jer Hobbs is now at Bath training to be a nurse, whilst fully trained nurse Ian Fletcher may perhaps be back in the Gloucester district before long.

Iain Weir is now working at Winsford Cheshire, but not, apparently doing hard labour in a salt mine.

Simon Lapington is recovering well from his accident, dispensing with crutches, and is now working again.

Chris Pashley is still on the oil rigs, but is now employed in the South China Sea, where he expects to be for several years. Chris has promised an account of the Chinese new year celebrations in Hong Kong, where he is based - there always seems to be at least one ex-member in that part of the world these days!

Finally a brief mention of this year's Cotswold Marathon which was held during the recent cold spell. Four veterans, John Pepperell, Andy Manders, Neil Bircher and Mike Barton braved the cold, although Mike wisely decided to retire at Elkstone, and the others finished in well over 13 hours. Incidentally, whilst on cold weather, when I saw Ernest Davies recently he reported a temperature of

minus 35° C at Krattebøl last week!

Well, I will leave the last words in this edition to that well travelled agricultural expert, Mark Evans

F.H.

LETTER FROM THE MID WEST

December 84

Best wishes from Minnesota! The temperatures are dropping now and I am looking forward to a snowy winter sports season. They had the snow machines out in Mankato to get some slopes ready for Thanksgiving.

I hope you enjoy reading the newspaper articles which explain what I am doing over here.

This summer has really been a great American cultural experience; I had a brush with the legal system after a car crash, visited a health clinic for a tetanus shot went to a souther Baptist church service and introduced myself to the local Democratic Farm Labour party. In the course of the latter I met Ted Mondale (Walter Mondale's oldest son). Mondale, of course, lives in St Paul Minn.

Towards the end of my practical period I've met some stimulating intellectual Democrats. Although they relate more to the S.D.P. and think Labour is too left wing.

The mayor of Good Thunder gave me a fascinating slide show about the local Winnebago and Sioux Indians. Mankato is the site of the largest public execution in U.S. history; 38 indians were hanged after the 1862 Sioux rising.

I've finished on the farm now. If you've ever watched "Little House on the Prairie", well that was supposed to have been situated near Mankato. My boss was a second generation pioneer of Irish ancestry.

I am staying here for a while with friends before heading south for Florida - I have a job loading oranges for the month of December. It is low pay, but we are all guaranteed plenty of hours.

Have a nice day,

MARK EVANS

