



Chapter 4

The Bonds of the Sidecar Family & Fibreglass - Southern 100 2013

Picture this: Awaking in the “little hovis” camper van with a view over the golden hay fields and out towards the sea of port st mary. Hot summers morning 24 degrees promised on the portable radio. Oscar race prepared and ready to rumble. Stig smoking rollies by the hour, with the prospect of two sighting laps and two practices sessions on the Monday evening and his into introduction to Road Racing. Two sighting laps were completed by Stig and Oscar. Everything gelled well Stig’s comment which he would roo was “its ok it’s not as bumpy as everyone makes out.”Well you know what happens to plans.....

A tragically sad week with the great loss of three Manx riders lives in separate racing incidents. Our hearts and thoughts are with family and loved ones of David Dukes, Mark Madsen Mygdal, and Paul Thomas.

So having been given the recipe for Beer Can Chicken it seemed like the perfect time to get it on the menu for our tea. – after an hour of lots of laughter and comments and the poor chicken burning its ass off it was hastily removed and chopped into pieces and cooked the traditional way and then promptly washed down with a few beers whilst enjoying the glowing embers of the drum BBQ.



With having no issues with Oscar it was a matter of a clean down and inspection so Tuesday morning it was decided to spend relaxing and the work to be done after 2pm. To our surprise a visitor was to make the team complete. The little monkey of Derek Donsworth (Pro Photographer) popped his head around the awing with one of his massive grins and huge hugs. So a sightseeing trip of our turquoise Irish sea t perfect high tide at Gansey followed by a wonderful lunch at the cosy nook café at Port Erin prom.(This was to be truly one of our highlights of the week). With a revised schedule issued for practise of two timed qualifying session the odds seemed against us to qualify for the race that night. With 1-17 only to qualify for the two races and 18-23 only getting one opportunity to race. Surrounded by experienced TT and S100 sidecar teams. We had to do some adjustments to Oscar between both sessions and in the second practice session we really started to motor & a very surprised 15th on the grid was the result of our endeavours.

Anthea Matthewman now our chief sponsor by the way, my father and our friend Janet with small grandson Riley all made it down prior to racing to give us encouragement and wise words and support. Riley also shook our glucose drinks, thanks Riley we would really need them. The start of the S100 1st Race on the Tuesday night was like a La Mans start and I really cannot wait to see the DVD when it’s released. There were top riders unable to see the start light because of the setting sun, there was others trying to pull off the track because of overheating, there was others waving arms as if to land an alien space ship, and others watering the grass verge whilst being shook by another competitor who then promptly watered his race boots whilst the train went TOOT TOOT and steamed passed. Then the clerk of the course at the front of a little flag then a big flag then stood precariously on a bale and then we were off, well some were and some weren’t the last pairing were still stood talking to an official and had to hoof it and jump on their bike and get started. The rest of us to quote a certain TV commentator just recently played dodgems into Ballakaghin Corner.

Wishing to stay out of trouble we bided our time and picked off a few down to iron gate. A couple of overtaking manoeuvres and reovertaking with Dougie and Del No 14 was to ensue. Holding on to and fighting for 13th position we were gaining on our rivals John and Karl Schofield (TT passenger) who were just in front. Coming through Great Meadow lap 5 we had gained an incredible distance and felt that after Ballakaghin we would have the opportunity if it presented itself. So normal line into Castletown corner and a scraping from behind us somewhere could be heard and the next thing there was an incredible excrutationg pain in my right knee and I was aware my shoulder impacting the side front of another sidecar. We had been T-boned right by the white wall, and sidecar pushed at 90 degrees against the track direction. Stig took to his free flying lesson well but apparently needs to work on his landing. All his thoughts were when he saw the No 14 was oh this is going to hurt and protect the helmet at all costs then me of course.



Dean Del Boy Kilkenny passenger also tried to fly without a parachute at a greater height and upon his landing dislocated some toes he was to latter find out. Dougie Chandler received injuries to his hand. I was aware I was trapped and couldn't put any weight on my right side and somehow I managed to get out over the front and onto the road. The marshals and medics were brilliant in looking after all four of us but unfortunately the race was red flagged as debris was stroon all over the place. Pretty shocking for spectators and photographers and family and friends who were actually stood at the corner watching the incident unfold. Hats off to the photographers who put the cameras down until we were all up on our feet and Stig puffing away on a marshal's cigarette. Dougies sidecar sustained some heavy impact damage I guess you could say it was well and truly "OSCARRED".



On the other hand Oscar sustained rear wheel damage, fibre glass and water pipe repairs and a bent bracket. Upon consultation with Tim Reeves solution found to rear wheel, Tommy Bennett came down to the paddock really early the next day and inspected all the welds , and Greg Lambert put off a fishing trip and got cracking at 7am with re fibre glassing Oscars main fairing and seat unit. Returning a little latter in the day to fix on brackets and fibreglass them also.

I wish to thank other riders not competing in the event such as Eric Bregazzi and Dave Quirk who telephoned and offered parts off their machines should we need anything. Also thanks to Allan Warner for going and getting a spare Ireson wheel off his sidecar and bringing it to the paddock in case our plans didn't work. Many phone calls to Angela at work as a 118 118 directory enquiries lady and Stig took off into Douglas with our leather to Allan at Manx Leathers and to Karl Bennett to take our spare inter tyre off the rim and put the slick on and pray we didn't have any rain for the next two days. Davis worked her magic on the Stig's injuries. As one of Stigs fans calls him "Stick" well there aren't much padding on his bones, but Cathy sorted that's with special sticky padding and tape in strategic places. Ice was the order of the day with 3 left fingers and my knee and already stupid shoulder, then magic tape and Cathy's touch and wise words "Mind over matter". Passed our medicals and passed technical inspection.

Stig and I agreed to start Wednesday's practice at the back off the pack and tootle round ensuring that everything worked correctly and Oscar steered straight and that Stig could hang on and move around for the first lap. If everything ok and I didn't receive the coded taps coming along the bypass than a second lap at speed would be attempted. Completed.

Thursday was spent cleaning and inspecting Oscar, with the exception that the team had a new pit crew. Tony/Janet/Julie all missing through work commitments so Cara and Danny and another lady whose name escapes me worked with Tim. Helen bringing lunch. Washing and polishing, and passing tools and fetching and carrying. A Jenny Tinmouth Decal placed carefully over fresh paint. Oscar passed once again through the technical area and was parked strategically away from cameras.

The long delay just made frazzled nerves even more shot. Cathy's physio worked a treat again on us both. Time seemed endless. Family and friends and sponsors made it and the awning was filled with happiness and laughter. Then a father s hug and look said it all, for the first time I saw his fear for us both. Suddenly I felt small and sad at what us racers do to family and friends .The person that everyone normally looks and sees, blonde, smiling, tough, dependable, was about to crack . I didn't know whether to be sick or go to the loo. Time to get the race head on and out of eye contact and when Stig and I kissed and finally put my helmet on the tension was horrendous. I really wanted to climb off Oscar and call it a day; both Tim and Stig gave me reassuring words and looks. Then a little voice "comes on now girl you were born with three legs (Manx) for a reason". Then "Boris did his helicopter impressions and engines around us were started. Hoping that there wasn't another repeat of Tuesdays start.



Our race was calculated, careful; whenever an opportunity presented itself we overtook competitors. We made a little error on lap 4 exiting the church bends a bit close to the pavement. Gave myself a little pep talk and didn't feel the clip round the back of the helmet so knew Stig was ok. We kept reeling in another competitor in front it was Stuart Stobbart and Rob Lunt (TT Passenger 2012) and decided that the place to overtake was right at the start finish line for all the team and supporters to see WE WERE BACK!. Neither of us enjoyed our last lap, and our thoughts about a fellow competitor were our primary concern, and the bumps had finally paid its toll to Stig, who will now agree that it is the bumpiest track he has ever ridden. – Oscar had once again pulled it out of the bag, another dream made. Stig had achieved his ambition with starting and finishing his one and only road race in a creditable 15th position. Well done my darling I and everyone knew you could do it.



The S100 committee are a marvellous close group of people. Credit must be given to them all under the extreme circumstances of that day for continuing racing and the presentation with the dignity that they did. Stig and my finisher's awards along with special trophy truly have a story behind them.

So many of us riders ride at the Southern 100 because it is such a well run organisation and event. Thank you so much from a Tiny Team in your wonderful paddock.

What now I hear from you all? Time to let both of our bodies heal and recover, metal /tarmac and bone don't mix to well. Need to get some of that kryptonite stuff. Whenever possible spend time with Oscar inspecting and when can afford it replacing bits and pieces and getting the trusty engine refreshed. The hope and aim is to race in early October in the UK.....

Stig and I and Oscar are extremely pleased to announce that "Karl Schofield" is to be the TT 2014 TT passenger. So you can see the future and rebuild is going to be even better than this year, and you never know their might just be history in the making...



