

ISDE Poland 2004

The Six Days Diaries

Report 11 – The Trip Home!

Day 6 of the 79th ISDE had been one to remember. A great performance in each race by the Brits, a big barny at the end and the Spanish excluding themselves promoting GB's Juniors up to fourth! Then, the results being scrubbed! Back at the hotel, the night had been filled with riders reminiscing about the week's events, the great things they'd done, the crashes they had or nearly had. Outriders like myself were telling tales trying to keep up, but failed miserably!

Not many people believe me, but the outriding (when done properly) was pretty demanding as well. By the time I'd seen Chris away from each check, unlocked the bike and slung on the big rucksack, I didn't have very long to get to the first crossing point. On average I would see Chris about three times each check, as well as at each check and each test! I usually had about 3 minutes from the time I arrived at the check until Chris did, so that meant I had three minutes to get fuel in my bike, get myself fed and watered and get Chris' spares ready, which normally meant a filter. You can probably see that during the day I didn't get much of a break. Even when I got back to the Paddock, I had about 15 minutes to set up all his tools, stand, filter, two tyres and lube up his mousse's. Then on other days we had to swap forks and shocks as well!! I really needed my sleep at night that week. Great holiday this, up at 5.45am every day! Brilliant.....

Sunday dawned bright, but it soon got pretty murky. I'd gone downstairs to start loading the van, leaving Chris to finish packing his gear in the room. When I got into the car park, I couldn't see the van, but as I'd regularly tried to get into the wrong van during the week, I simply thought my mind was playing tricks again. I started to get a bit concerned after a few minutes searching resulted in me not finding the van. Dread filled me. My last thought was that Trevour had moved the van last night, and still had it with him. I went back to Chris and gingerly asked him if Dad had shifted it. I could tell by the colour draining from his face that he feared what I had. A quick call to his Dad revealed that he hadn't moved it and the van was gone!

Some dirty, low life, thieving, gypo b@\$tard had helped themselves to his Sprinter. The realisation slowly flowed over us that not only was the van gone, but so too were his 2 125's, a brand new ISDE special 250, all his spares, every tool he owned, his ISDE painted team GB helmet, loads of casual clothes and all his CD's. Chris has pretty much been living in the van for the last couple of years, so to have suddenly lost it all really hit him hard. I felt pretty pathetic having only lost my riding gear collection, helmet, boots and bum-bag. I also lost my passport. And my good Oakley sunglasses. B@\$tard\$!

We were really bummed out. Chris folks flew round and mum being Polish, started to kick up hell and got the Police round to take statements. A very animated and heated conversation saw lots of hotel staff rushing around, the Police arrive, the car park attendants and hotel manager called in and even the local MP getting involved. All were trying their best, but in reality we pretty much knew there was nothing that could be done.

We were amazed the van was gone. Each night, the hotel had arranged for security guards to patrol the small car park. The fact that the car park was so small was a benefit; cars and vans were huddled together making it almost impossible to get doors fully open. The three guards were there all night, complete with their two dogs. There was even a remotely operated barrier covering the entrance to the car park.

We were stuck in Kielce for most of the day now. Chris & I had to give statements to the Police, with his mum interpreting what we said. Trevour & I went up to the paddock to see if the KTM guys were still there. As we'd taken delivery of the 250 and all those spares, but not yet paid for them, technically they still belonged to KTM. We also needed to get the frame and engine numbers for the Police. When we arrived, we got stuck in the biggest car-boot market ever to hit Kielce! The entire paddock was filled with stalls and all remnants of the ISDE had gone. We'd need to get in touch with KTM later in the week.

Back to the hotel, and some serious Police big-wigs with plenty stripes on their shoulders were getting involved. At least they seemed to be taking it seriously. All the GB support crews were really sympathetic and offered help and support – thanks guys. I had to make another separate statement about my passport and bad news – now we have to get to the consulate in Warsaw (3 hours drive) for an emergency passport. That comes in at a cool £120, which incidently was confiscated when I got back into the UK. I now have to get a full 10 year passport at another £40 and plenty more hassle.

Trevour & Liz were brilliant to us and I can't tell you how grateful we are for their help. They drove us to Warsaw, just in time to get the passport, then all the way back through Poland and halfway through Germany. At about 4am, Trevour had done enough driving and pulled into a rest stop for Chris or I to continue. Unfortunately, Chris and I are big girls' blouses and therefore were fast asleep in the back! No chance of us waking up! At 6am Trevour started driving again and our only stop now (other than breakfast) would be into Guido's in Belgium. Guido runs the engine tuners Pro-MX and had fettled Chris's barrel, so was very keen to see the piston and barrel. He agreed with us and confirmed it looked as if the piston had suffered a metalurgical failure, causing part of it to break off and jam down the side of the barrel. The sleeve had a massive deep groove



scored in it and was really now unusable. Great! The only bike parts that weren't in the van were the knackered piston and barrel, and now they were both getting skipped!!

Onwards and upwards though! All four of us had a pleasant ferry journey from Zeebrugge over to hull, which meant we also had a shower and a bunk – and a buffet meal!! For a wee lad, Chris fairly eats! I think at this rate he'll be on a 450 soon. Mind you, after he'd told me about his training regime and the amount of riding he does, I suppose he'll need his energy.

On the way up the A1, we'd decided Chris needed to stop off in Newcastle to visit principal sponsor Gavin Lindscott of Bikesport. Gavin has been supporting Chris for a few years and he's a regular visitor to the toon. This visit was less happy, as the story got told in detail again, and Chris picked up a helmet to replace the two stolen ones.

I had called Stephen Lafferty at Ride-On Motorcycles earlier, and also stopped off in Glasgow to get some new gear. I picked up a new Lazer helmet, Scott Goggles, Thor Race Gloves, Shirt and Jeans, Thor Body Belt and Knee Protectors and Alpinestars socks and Boots! That little lot cost me the best part of £600 and I was only there 15 minutes! It really makes you realise how expensive the gear is when you have to buy it all at once! It was needed though, as next weekend I've got the last Scottish Enduro Championship at Stonehaven. I'll be writing a review of some of these products over the next few weeks, so keep your eyes on Charlie's website.

Chris is also sponsored by MXM Graphics who supply bike graphics and print his shirts. Frank Thornton was good enough to help me out with getting my new Thor shirt printed up in time for Stoney, so thanks very much Frank!

That night I eventually got home to my wee Rach, and things started to look better straight away. Most of you will know that we will be getting married next April, but only if Rachel lets me come back in from the shed. I was banished there after she got wind of the "Erotic Messe" visit! As I said in the first report, every ISDE leaves you with some stories to tell, 2004 is definitely no exception!

Let me just finish by saying a big thanks again to all of those who'd helped us & in particular to Trevour and Liz Hay, who really did go out of their way! I also need to thank all the support crews of the ISDE, Stephen and the guys at Ride-On and everyone else who helped Chris & I get through the fortnight – it was certainly one holiday I won't be forgetting in a hurry!



After the final MX, Chris and I rode the course back to the Paddock and this section was typical of the going. What you can't see or appreciate from the photo is the bumps or that the ground was rock hard and covered in about 6 inches of talcum powder – with the odd big rock and tree root lurking underneath! I'm glad I didn't ride 6 days of this!!

Now, I'm fairly certain I know what they sell in the shop on the left, but I'm not so sure about the one on the right!!
(Apparantly it was a hairdressers!)



Trevour unloads his small "overnight bag" (all three of them) on the ferry home!