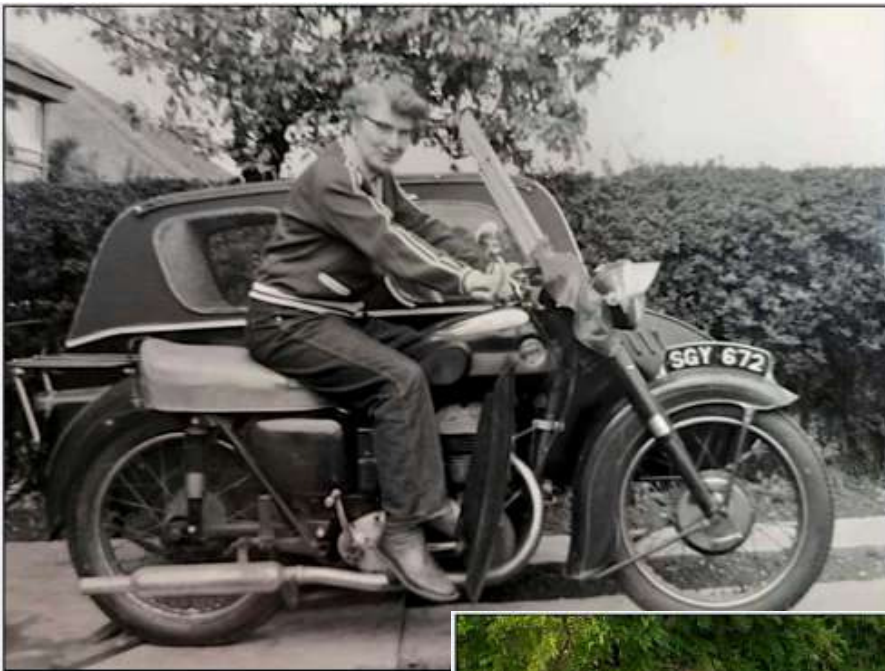


As the year draws to a close, our social gatherings have dwindled but there will be a burst around Christmas time that I am unable to report on at the moment.

However, Capital did get involved in giving a special birthday treat to a 105 years old lady and some of us once again participated in the Belgian Friendship Weekend.

The birthday ride was organised for Joan Emerson who rode her own sidecar outfit until she was 87 years old. She rode in Wayne's outfit, with a guard of honour of over 60 bikes of assorted makes and sizes including GoldWings, to celebrate her 105th birthday in early October. What an absolutely brilliant day out.



◀ *Joan in the 1950's*

▶ *Wayne and Joan*



Joan was born in Bishops Stortford and as she grew up in the town, she became a keen motorcyclist, riding solo motorbikes and machines with sidecars for decades. In 2017 she wrote a book, *Lady on a Motorbike*, published by the Bishop's Stortford Museum, which recounted her years growing up in the town and her experiences on the road. Thanks go to Wayne, Taz, Trudy, Roy and Barry for supporting the ride on Saturday 7 October.

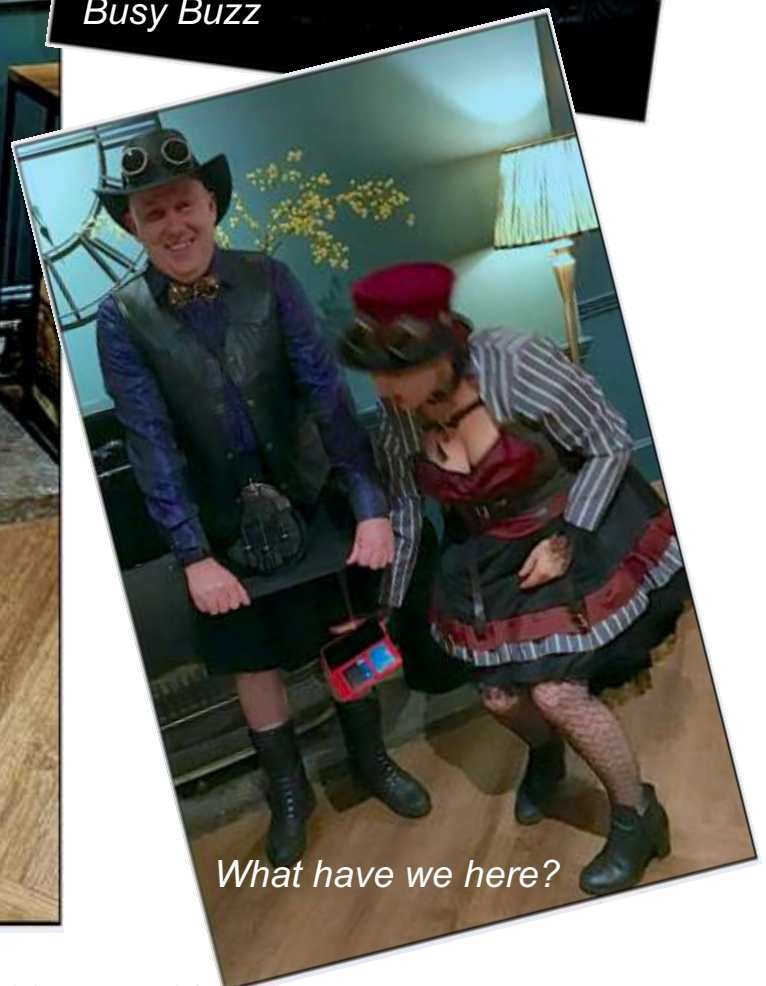
Yetti and Ginny sent their version of events at the Belgian Friendship Weekend, held this year in Peasmarch, near Rye, East Sussex. My thanks to them for the following report and to Buzz for supplying the photos.

Afraid the bike stayed at home - it was not biking weather at all, plus, Ginny had more than her normal "little bag" for us to fit in and take one the motorcycle. Six Wings did turn up - Chairman Nigel & Hilary, Rob & Shaz (who were all ticking off a few more Chairman's Challenge locations), Tony & Teresa, Jason, Paul and Chris Hinds. Even the Belgian contingent arrived in four wheels and, it has to be admitted, that it was a wise move for them.

Friday night was the usual gathering of friends and catching up with the Wingers from across the Channel - just five of them this time - Fredrick & Ellen, Edwin & Diana and Rudy. Much beer and food was consumed and many laughs were had.

Saturday came, and yes it was raining again, so a trip to Rye was scheduled and it would have been rude not to pop into the Waterworks Micropub for a pint or two of real ale whilst there. We then met up with Phil and Mick in another watering hole. Then off to the Waterworks Brewery & Tap Room site to listen to the band they had on before

going back to the hotel for our meal and dressing up in Steampunk attire ready for a fun evening. The evening ended with the usual "2 to 1 Club" staying up to see the clocks go back and the end of British Summertime. Note: you have to stay up later in Belgium as they are one hour ahead of the UK so it's called the '3 to 2 Club'.



Sunday dawned and yes, a bit more of the wet stuff greeted us but as we had cars, it was a ride to Tenterden Railway Station for a ride on the heritage steam train with cake and tea. Steam seemed to be the focus of the weekend. We met Buzz there as he had just got back from his steam train ride with Taz & Trudy so they all waved us off on our journey. Buzz then managed to get to the stations on the way before us via his car on the road and was busy taking pictures of us on the train at each stop!



◀ *Steam Ride passengers*

▶ *Dressed for Halloween*



At one stop, we visited the restored carriage that carried the WW1 Unknown Soldier and had a group photo. Back at Tenterden station, we had to visit the Old Dairy next door. Sadly, not a drop of milk to be seen but plenty of beer and another band to listen to. It was then back to the hotel for grub and a relaxing evening discussing what we are all up to next year on the Wings. It's going to be a fun-filled year by the sounds of it. It was a great weekend as always. Have forgotten how many of these we have done over the years so will have to check the T-Shirt collection. A very big thank you goes to Chris and Sarah for all their hard work organising the event.

Looking forward to the next one already!

Capital organised two very successful events in 2023 - Cap Fest weekend in January and the Greatest ShowMole Wing Ding in June. We have supported many Wing Dings during the summer and other GoldWing - related events too and we thank you for supporting us. Some of our gang have ventured to Europe to attend GWEF Treffens and enjoy the mountains and the valleys across the continent. Others have holidayed independently on their motorcycles in Europe and as far as Nepal and Tibet. We will all keep going on, exploring and enjoying the company of fellow Wingers, until the time comes that we can do it no more. We remember our dearest friends who are no longer with us, particularly Joe Sene, who died in April. Our love continues to go out to Margaret and Joe's family for their loss. So, on behalf of us all at Capital, we wish you a happy and peaceful time with your families and friends during the Christmas and New Year holidays and a healthy and safe time ahead. We look forward to meeting up again in 2024.

Miss (Helen) Whiplash

