

While visiting Albania with the charity that I support I was given a ride on a Burgman owned by our contact man in Gramsh where we have been helping the schools and hospital for some years. I was impressed with the bike given the exuberant way that Adriano road and the road surfaces (rough and pot holed). So when considering a lighter bike I was drawn to the AN400 Suzuki and found one on Ebay £1500 for a 2001 model with less than 15,000 miles on the clock. I have always liked automatic cars and an automatic bike is a natural progression, don't knock if you haven't tried it, for long or short journeys the ease and convenience are great. Fuel consumption on the Burg in comparison to a big Duke over the same distance and speed (70 to 80 mph) worked out at around 70% of the Duke on both motorway and mountain roads.

I put the Burg on the road in early March 2018 and did a lot of proving miles and making additions (panniers, extra top box, throttle lock type cruise control and 12-volt charge point for sat nav with heated glove connection). I had one breakdown due to riding through deep water on the A14, water in the electrics. The Tenten Treffen near Brugge at the end of May was the first really long run and the plan was to continue to the FIM Motocamp in Sibenik Croatia leading Richard on his Ducati but as my Sat nav packed up in Belgium he led with a Garmin (magical mystery tour) unit. We had a great time camping wherever we ended the day and taking in various sights along the way, I can especially recommend a visit to Zadar on the coast of Croatia to listen to the Sea Organ and see the Salute to the Sun (Google them to get an idea).

The Motocamp was enjoyable and well organised with trips and ride-outs to various places, until the last evening when the storm that was forecast really hit and the Burg didn't want to start in the morning so a session with WD40 sorted it and Richard and I left a little later than planned. The weather on the return journey was pretty good, Just an odd shower, until leaving Germany when the rain started mid-morning and continued most of the way to Charleville Mezieres in France about six in the evening, only one stop for water in the electrics again very deep water across the road with cars aquaplaning! (WD40 and let the heat of the engine dry it out).

The next big run was planned for the FIM Rally at Trakai in Lithuania, mid July, I left home about 6 am and as I joined the A14 I was catching a slow truck so I shut down quickly and everything went quiet no drive? Recovered home by 8 and everything swapped to the Triumph fueled up and away by just after 9 am. The Rally is another story.

Back to the Burg, stripping down revealed that the drive belt had jammed between the flanges of the driven pulley, probably caused by the rapid shut down and the spring that closes the pulley not reacting quickly enough? I fitted a new belt and all seemed well. In early July I spotted an almost complete Burg on Ebay with electrical problems (same model as mine reg. a year earlier) and won it for £200. I bought it because not only was the price good but I had found that some spares were very difficult to find and a complete bike with good tyres could not be missed. I didn't know how lucky that purchase would be as on 23rd August while doing a steady 60/65 up the A6 towards Leicester there was a short "pruup" noise and then silence, it wouldn't start or even turn over! While waiting for recovery I took the drive belt covers off and found that the crankshaft wouldn't turn! so on the 24th I swapped the engine for the £200 one. Stripping the engine revealed a broken con rod just under the little end and thus scrapped crankcases and cylinder head with no reasonable reason for the failure? The replacement engine seemed fine and many more miles were covered until 7th November when a couple of miles short of the charities warehouse in Mansfield Nott's at about 65 mph that "pruup" noise again and when the engine was stripped the same failure con rod broken?