

An Ace Night Out

by **Andy Ellis**

The second Wednesday of the month, as many members will know, is Triumph Night at the re-opened Ace Café on the Old North Circular Road. Although listed as a bike event, four-wheel Triumphs are made equally welcome.

Several West Kent members made their way across London, these being Barry and Ollie Gibson (2000 Mk.I estate), Dave Kirk and Kelvin Jones (2.5PI Mk.II), Dave Tongue and Claire (2000 Mk.I), Nigel Gair (2000 Mk.II), Roger Baldwinson (2500S) and myself (Bakerloo Line). Nigel was accompanied by 2000 owners Mark and Theresa from Perth in Australia. Various Club members were in attendance including Keith Bennett in his TR4A. There was also a good showing from the Other Club.

The Ace is like many of our cars. It spent many years standing neglected but has now been restored to its former glory. The café originally closed down in 1969, was re-opened for occasional business in 1997 and finally got 'back on the road' in 2001.

Although traditionally a Bikers' venue, there are several Classic Car theme nights each month. Fans of Rock'n'Roll will not be disappointed either with the Jive Aces and similar groups making regular appearances. Those with internet access can find out more at www.ace-cafe-london.com. Alternatively the phone number is 020 8961 1000.

On arrival we took up one of the long wooden tables. Several of us ordered food which took a little while to arrive but was well worth the wait. Portions are certainly generous. Dave Tongue tucked into a chilli and chips which looked as if half a herd of Aberdeen Angus had gone into its construction! These days the café is licensed. Amongst its offerings is Flowers bitter which, as a card-carrying CAMRA member, I can testify to being well kept and served. This was a bit of serendipity for me: I bought my first Triumph – a 1963 Herald 1200 – from an address not half a mile from the original Flowers brewery in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Once fed and watered (and coffeed) we drifted outside into the pleasantly mild night to look at the assembled vehicles. Only Triumphs (two and four-wheel) were allowed into the main car park with 'civilian' makes parked in their own area. Some 30 cars attended with two-seaters in the majority including no less than three TR4As. It was also a pleasant surprise to see several 2000 Mk.Is of two were estate versions. There was much light-hearted debate on people's favourite models and the merits and disadvantages of different cars.

All in all an Ace night out – and my thanks to Roger Baldwinson for giving me a lift home afterwards. I reckon we'll be back next month.