

Angels' Aid

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The idea of the Hell's Angels staging a rally partly to help the chantable Lions Club at first seemed as likely as the Waffen ss male voice choir singing a few numbers at Bob Geldofs Live Aid concert. Both events happened on the same sunny day last weekend, but the Angels chose the delightful countryside near Folkestone as the meeting place for 15,000 bikers, their wives, children and Dobermann Pinschers, for a pop festival cleverly disguised as the seventh Kent Custom Bike Show Very fat men and their very fat women gyrated to Vesta and the Vomits, while bolting down pills, beer and smoking large marijuana cigarettes Yet despite all this sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll and acres of menacing individuals, there were, as usual, no arrests. Had *Born to be wild* really become born to be mild, meek and good-mannered?

At the entrance to the ground a sign promised something more alarming. "Private Woodland— Danger Intensive Vermin Control Operation in Effect Positive Danger to Personnel and Domestic Animals. Very Strictly No Admittance " Thousands of the type of person most Tory mps would definitely classify as vermin poured past the sign to join the three-day tent city "I know new society 1 got an a level in sociology," said a pretty girl called Rebecca with Pre- Raphaelite hair and a Laura Ashley top She had the face of an angel but unfortunately her boyfriend wasn't one. He swatted a fly against his immense belly for effect.

Bellies seem to be almost as necessary for the modern mostly middle-aged Angel as his chopper (motorcycle) or colours (a short- sleeved waistcoat the rest of the gang have urinated on). Bikes can be specially modified to accommodate a massive paunch, which explains the interest in custom-built machines

The organiser. In a van marked Control, finally admitted to the name of Chris, giving me a beer and sprinkling his obligatory Dobermann with water to keep him cool, as if administering a blessing. Embarrassingly the dog looked rather playful There was a collection of pickaxe handles in the corner if Fang did not live up to expectations, not to mention a powerful crossbow with a telescopic sight if the troublemaker had the temerity to run away Many bikers earned large knives in their belts As everyone was being so angelic, these were presumably to help the Lions Club make cucumber sandwiches.

"We are able to run this because we are a practical unit." said Chris, as a German from Aachen entered his bike to be displayed in the small, fenced-off custom area "We can get things done because of our discipline that other people cannot." Most bikers worship this claimed toughness, which explains the tranquility Men dressed as rebels in jeans and leathers have a fawning subservience for Macht personified by the Angels.

What you have to understand about the Hells Angels is we are the most exclusive club in the world It's like the Freemasons," said Chris. "Money can get you into the Masons but not the Angels. We have become sick of so many negative headlines. But we are now educating the public, calling press conferences and talking to the right people Despite his small goatee beard and tattoos, it began to sound like the Duke of Kent's public relations for the other Brotherhood.

However, not all of the Angels' image comes from ill-researched popular journalism Last year ten members of Satan's Slaves and the Road Rats were jailed for a total of 55 years when two people were killed after a group sex session turned sour. Or there was the "quite appalling" murder by two of Lucifer's Outlaws of a 19 year old girl and her fiance. Or the battle of Cheddar Gorge Angel. Chris certainly has a colourful idea of Freemasons, or perhaps lodge meetings are a lot more lively in Kent.

As he would be the first to point out. not all those who come to the Custom Bike Show have swastikas painted on the back of their jackets Many are actually interested in customising bikes, and had arrived from France, Germany and Holland to show off machines so exotic they seem to have a whole different vocabulary to describe them A sign for Vic Stillman's confection of a motorbike announced that his Amer Saviour Sohail frame had been given power using an 810 Big Bore Kit. A member of the Albertross Asberg gang from Germany nodded approval. But more people had come for music than for the Big Bores.

"I am from Nuremberg." said Walter. "I do not have rallies like this (sic). Here we can do things that would get you put in prison in Germany. And I do not mean just with the motorcycle. One of Lucifer's Rats from Dijon in France, rode his gleaming chopper amongst the pampered machines. Hilary Shirley,

a bank clerk and a secretary, come down in a party of 50 outlaws from Bournemouth. "It's so good that everyone into the same sort of thing. We do what we want. We all get brewed and then a little later we get balled." The bank clerk had a tattoo on her tummy.

"For the last three years I've come here and it keeps getting better." said Ba[TEXT OBSCURED] Roberts, a 34 year old electrician. This best one to be at, the nearest thing to California. No, I am not going to put my bike in the show. I would be a rat bike compared to to the bikes in the show. I paid £700 for mine and have spent £1,200 on it. I cannot see ever stopping. I love bikes and the life. My wife comes usually, she fell off riding with a friend and it's hard to steer with an arm in plaster. But you get blokes coming that are 40 and 50.

Bob Phipps a lorry driver, who also was here had brought his wife. Cheryl rode his £2,500 Harley Davidson. On his t-shirt over an enormous paunch was the legend TOO DRUNK TO FUCK.

We haven't brought our kids this year because we wanted a bit of peace and quiet, he shouted over the band. "You run into the same people every year and the Angels are getting quite good at organising the entertainment and such. There's a lot of difference between the ordinary outlaw or bike rider who comes here and the actual Hell's Angels. They are really a limited company these days and make a lot of money. Most people do what the Angels say. I'm looking for one of the tattooists, a man called Needles Baker. [TEXT OBSCURED] this Viking? I want one to match on my other arm. He usually works out of an ambulance.

"Needles" was not in evidence, but a much-tattooed lady called Ann Aaron in leather dress intensively buckled at the [TEXT OBSCURED] was doing a nice line in Death's Head [TEXT OBSCURED] fringed with roses in three colours for [TEXT OBSCURED] £25. "This is my first time at an Angel's event." she said giving a price list to a [TEXT OBSCURED] a bat tattooed on her cleavage [TEXT OBSCURED] certainly seems to be brisk."

The inevitable joint was being passed around a group of Hell's Angels near the rifle shooting gallery and a stall with hookahs and hashish pipes made from [TEXT OBSCURED]en's claws, as well as other drug-taking paraphernalia. An Angel revved his bike blowing a deep-throated raspberry [TEXT OBSCURED] world. "There's truth in all the [TEXT OBSCURED] truth. Violence is a part of our world. Part of our freedom and that is all I'm prepared to say. That's why it [TEXT OBSCURED] people know what will happen if they [TEXT OBSCURED]." There was an ss symbol on [TEXT OBSCURED] a sign saying Prospect, showing he was an apprentice Angel. [TEXT OBSCURED] "Who do you fucking [TEXT OBSCURED], Lou Grant! We don't want to [TEXT OBSCURED]atement, right. You always get it [TEXT OBSCURED] we do." [TEXT OBSCURED].

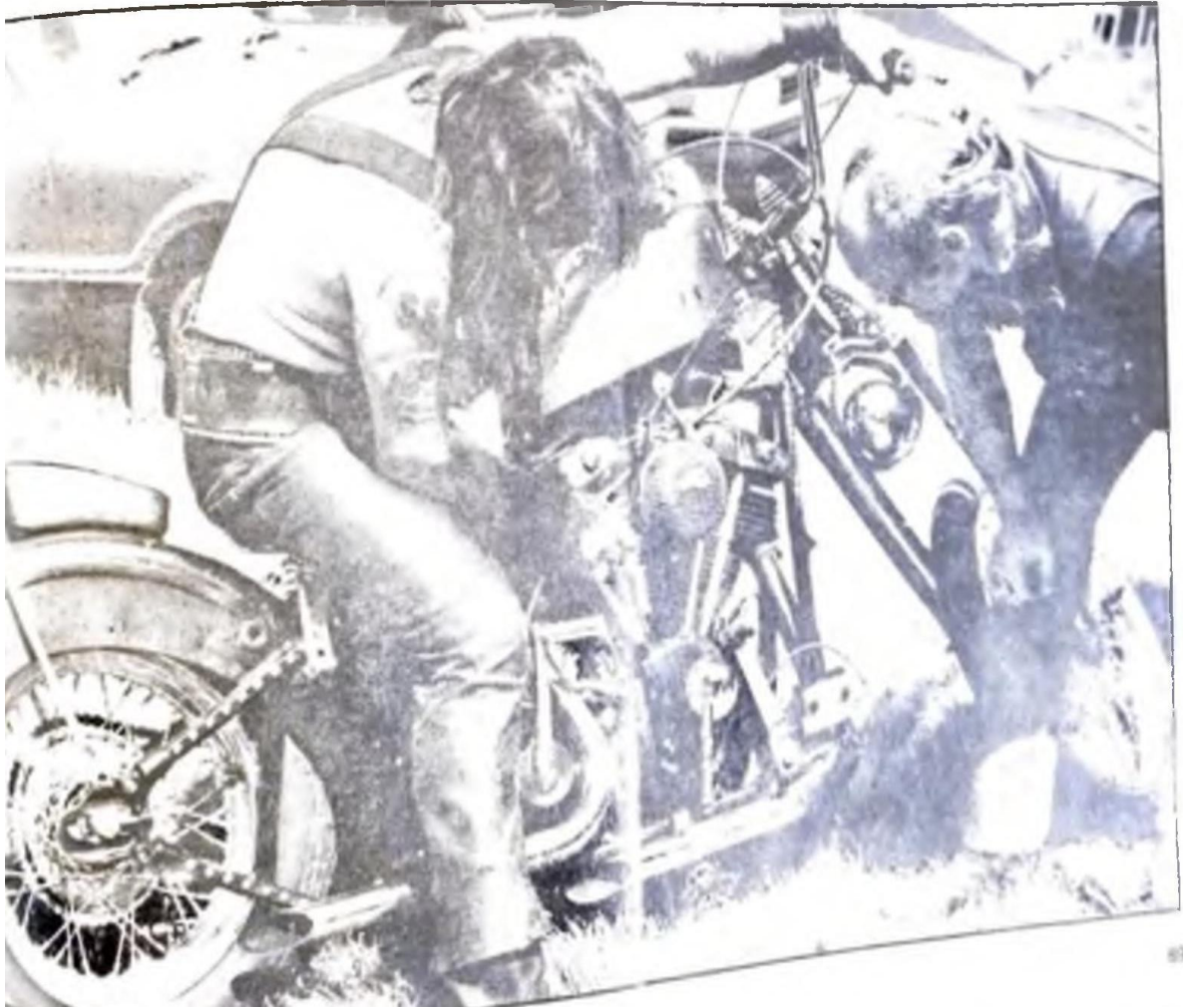
[TEXT OBSCURED]. As well as the usual marijuana, [TEXT OBSCURED] the tell-tale rolls of silver paper to [TEXT OBSCURED] heroin. "The drug squad are not here to my knowledge." said Inspector Colin [TEXT OBSCURED]rtually. "With about 12,000 people [TEXT OBSCURED]ant things on an even keel. I just [TEXT OBSCURED] and everyone was cheerioing [TEXT OBSCURED]are here to answer questions and [TEXT OBSCURED]ound property." There were a few [TEXT OBSCURED]ing the bands that did not have a [TEXT OBSCURED]al snule across them, and considering some events organised by Hell's Angels in the past have ended with patched pants on the mortuary slab it showed a touching faith in human nature.

One thing was disturbingly evident. The lack of black or brown bikers and the presence of swastikas, Confederate flags and Union jacks, symbols of the right. We like the bikers from Holland and Germany, but we don't like the other foreigners. We let them in, but we don't much like them," said one Angel at the gate after he had [TEXT OBSCURED] questioned a would be [TEXT OBSCURED] from Holland he suspected of being Chinese. The next frog that comes in here I'm going to charge £16. There's something a bit wrong about a 'French Hell's Angels.' A very [TEXT OBSCURED] Angel de l'Enfer, a few bikes back glowered at us.

"You will write something nice about us won't you?" said an elfin girl as I left. Driving through south London I saw four policemen had stopped a car containing two black men. One with a Rastafarian hat had been shoved against the wall. The car boot was open. An officer was looking inside the car. If



A pair of paunches (above). Bellies are as obligatory for the modern, mostly, middle-aged, Angel as choppers or leathers (below)



the search was for drugs it was certainly ironic. Some 40 miles to the south, a field full of whites was breaking the law with alacrity. The police too timid to intervene. As one Angel said “We sure have the pigs in our pocket man.”

The Library of Unconventional Lives

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New Society Journal, 19 July 1985, vol 73, No. 1177, Out of the Way, Pages 86–7.
<archive.org/details/paul-pickering-angels-aid>

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