

Sixth Annual Gathering

On October 14-15 Ervin Bittner hosted the Register's 6th Annual Gathering at his home in West Chicago.

Despite the weather's being a tad cool, there was a very good turnout, with ten Register members and twenty-seven Czech machines arrayed across the lawn.

Bob Schenk and his Record-Breaking 354 Manets, Cezetas bask in the sunshine. This was more than Irv had last year, and Register member Bob Schenk brought the last two bikes which more than broke last year's record. The center of attention was Irvin's Bohmerland, especially when he started it. Several visiting Harley riders were visibly shaken at the sound of that machine, far louder and more authoritative than anything they were riding! There were CZ's and virtually every model JAWA, Manets, Cezetas, a Praga and one Ogar and Irv's Tatra automobile. Besides the display of Czech motorcycles, there was a wonderful assortment of sausages and Czech beer, all served up by Bittner family members and friends. There were as many Czechspeaking people there as English speakers, and one young Indian graduate student, Issac Cheriya, also came. Having left his Yezdis behind Issac was glad to see all the JAWAs and his enthusiastic reaction to the day is elsewhere in this issue. He joined the Register after the Gathering. Irv and his family and friends were perfect hosts and the time flew by. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and the Czech machines simply gleamed in the sunshine. Few of us have ever seen that many JAWAs or CZ's in one place at one time before.... at least not in North America.

Don Kueny hosted three of us at his home in Kenosha, WI for the event, Vic Simmons, Bill English and I. Don drove us back and forth to Irv's home some 75 miles away, and he and his wife Maureen entertained us from Thursday through Monday. He even had motorcycles for us to ride during our stay. Attending the Gathering, besides the people I have mentioned, were Boyd Limberg, Bob Martin and Dave Collins. Dave sold a 354 in need of a complete restoration to Bill English... more about that elsewhere in this issue as well! Even though it never got above 45 f Vic rode a bike to and from Don's house to Irv's and pronounced that he had had a fine time. The bike was not a JAWA, however. The Register owes a large thank you to the Bittners and all their friends for a memorable Gathering. Those of us who stayed with the Kuenys are also very much in their debt. Perhaps again next year?

We shall see.

Mike Thomason

Wanderings International, December 2006