



The Club

AUTUMN RUN ~ BIRDLIP, 20~22 September, 1996

Principal Organisers: Dave Martin and Norman Hyde

All week we watched the weather forecast because of memories of the Spring run of 1995. Everything for that run looked fair enough weatherwise. The ride down was not too bad, forecast was not too foul but the ride itself in the morning was one of the coldest I have ever endured.

All week, the forecast had predicted rain for the weekend! Most arrived pleasantly surprised by the weather but resigned to another wet run on the morrow. When I say most, the Honda duo of Macmillan and Hancock did a *no show* as did Tony Dennis and Eric Richard but they promised to appear (Eric later on Friday and Tony on Saturday).

FRIDAY

I arrived to be met by an incandescent Norman Hyde. The cause for the pyrotechnics was a member who suggested that the bow tie was a clip on and not properly tied as required by an officer and a gentleman. An enormous slight and it should have been settled by Marquis of Queensbury rules apart from the fact that the said dickey was making NH look like Toad of Toad Hall and could be the real reason for the quip. Our host was asked (by one who shall remain nameless) about remembering the Club from the last run but he informed him that he had only been there for two months. Ho Hum. Said Manager had orders from high office not to run out of Bass from the

cask and to universal acclaim an excellent Ale was on tap all weekend. Dinner was taken upstairs in the rightly named *Hangover (Hannover?) Room*.

The principle of ordering the meal at reception worked better this time and most could remember what they had ordered, not

like Blois. Those who plumped for the Chicken got it pre-flattened on the M5 into a patty whereas the Lamb was a huge hunk of meat not out of place at a *Rabellaisian Tudor*

Banquet. The wines were well received - so well, we heard on Saturday that 60 bottles had been opened for about 40 diners!

Guests were introduced and it was nice to meet Geoff Pulter from Everoak Helmets (riding a Ducati 851 with nothing in the silencer cans - why do they do that?), Martin Lambert from Westmonster Disinformation (Was that a deliferate spilling mostake? ~ Ed.), Alan Halford from Hyde Enterprises Pan-Galactic and Eric Richard from *The Bill*. Great to see Eric again as he is a good rider but what about the guest rules that were circulated? I think we should revise the guest concept to allow for motorcyclists from other industries, not just potential members. John Nelson was voted to be Raffle Maestro - just a stepping stone to doing the National Lottery Live - and we had more prizes than attendees which is puzzling.

How do they do that?

THE MEN'S ROOM

It's big and impressive and quiet and clean. The size...was awesome. I find big p☺<★♂☺s terrifying. What happens if it drops on your foot? If it stopped, how would you take it apart?

SATURDAY

Off the grid in good time and a gentle meander along the B4070 to Stroud. This runs right along the top of an escarpment with the Avon Valley on the right and chocky box top views in the morning sunshine. Up to Painswick then three unlisted roads heading South West to Dursley. The road wound round and round, up and down and I was too busy to see any scenery on this bit save a village called Little Scrabble on the Gravel (or similar) which had the appearance of not being connected to the rest of the world and was in a time warp. If forensic went in, I bet they would find only one finger print among the whole population.

Somewhere in this area, Norman came by while I was acting as a Marshall. Tail End Charlie (TEC) must not, should not, cannot possibly overtake a marshall, I understood. Either he could not stop or did not want to lose the momentum gained over the past few miles. Anyway, following him was a trip down memory lane as I remember my sister's father-in-law had a chair (a Panther 600) that he used to ride - and using exactly the *same coat!!* On which point, Alan Halford was dressed in Norman's cast off helmet and jacket (or did he buy a job lot?) which was most confusing. Sidecars are so improbable they will probably catch on again. (*Revisiting this screed I have just come back from the IFMA where there were lots of sidecars on show which proves my point*). Watching all the bits of scaffolding and the fixings flexing is great entertainment and very, very difficult to get by on a narrow road. That's my excuse.

From Dursley to Tetbury the A4135 gave those of us with heavier machines a breather and for all we hop heads to take the

Any road up, it churns out 435 megawatts which apparently is enough to serve one and a half times the needs of Bristol

pledge not to touch the demon drink ever again. Mind you, done that every run. Looping North from Tetbury to Nailsworth on a twisty little Devil of a road leading to the A46 and then back to the A 4135 and on to Wootton-under-Edge. Coming up the hill out of Wootton some local hero came flying by on an Aprilia 250, chucked it into a tightening right hander, knee-slider on the deck all the way round and disappeared. At first, I thought Frank Finch had swapped bikes and was on the happy pills.

More wiggle-woggles back on a Northerly track to pick up the A38. "*Since they built the M5, the A38 is deserted*" quoth

Dave Martin on Friday night. Dave, no-one told the locals. Having now dropped into the Severn Valley, it occurred to me that I had been down seven hills but only up three. How do they do that? 6 miles down the A38 then right off to the

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Oldbury Nuclear Power station.

The Staff there have obviously heard it all before - about radiation etc. But they heard it all again... They put on a very good multi-screen AV about the industry, safety, eco-friendliness etc. but as the bard said "*methinks he doth protest too much*". (Being a Brummy he probably said it in a Brummagen nasal whine and put "*Orll Roight?*" at the end). It's big and impressive and quiet and clean. The size of some of the engineering was awesome to a person who works in light engineering as I always think along the lines of if I had to make it, how would I start? Big projects I find terrifying. What happens if it drops on your foot? If it stopped, how would you take it apart? Where do you get spanners that big? A 6" AF *Snap-On* would need a mortgage etc. Sad, I really ought to go out more and get a proper job as my Mum warned me.

but they have to run it day and night at constant power output. Thus the more conventional generators must be fitted with a

twistgrip to cope with the day to night power shift. We heard that they can shut down the reactor in 6 seconds in an emergency but obviously it is slower, much slower, to crank back up to full throttle. We all went through a thorough screening in and out and Mike Jackson mused to the effect that he hoped Peter Sheen wouldn't get ideas for screening club members before and after each run. We duly noted the readings on the dosimeters on the way in and on the way out and, surprise, we had received no radiation. Strange.

Still, the recent addition of another limb, albeit with only three fingers, realistically cannot be connected to the visit so must be down to the Old Trout's cooking. And the gentle luminosity I have developed has reduced our electricity bills...

A quick nadger round the lanes and over the Severn Bridge. We were warned about passing through one at a time or the barrier will decapitate you but a vassal just let us through on the lights *sans barrier*. Draughty on a two wheeled Winnebago at the middle of the bridge. *Welcome to Wales* sign was followed shortly after Chepstow (or was it before?) by a *Welcome to England*. I saw a sign to Offa's Dyke which surprised me as I did not know Offa was of that persuasion, Duckie. Offa was King of Mercia c 750 and built this big earth work to keep the Taffies from nicking his prime game and animals which he wanted for his hunting parties so they could kill them, rather than any Friends of the Earth Bleeding Hearts nonsense. Our ancestors did not know the meaning of can't be done. It is such a big civil engineering project to be undertaken with a shovel and defies logic these days - things change. We fly over them, drive round them and the whole question of proprietorial rights of the land will be changed as locality gets lost while we smurf about the Internet in

Cyberspace. The only space left inviolate will be the bit between your ears and even that is under threat. (If anyone is interested in the rationale of the big works in early times, I recommend *The Spire* by William Golding.)

Enough musing. From the escarpment mentioned earlier to the valley of the Severn and now into wooded hillsides winding around to St Briavels and so to *The George* Public House. We were able to luncheon *al fresco*, it was that warm. Our previous Chairman, Nick Jeffery, was de-mob happy after two

years of solitary and was trying to be elfin like on the run to lunch on a Yamaha Thunderace but confessed over a pre-luncheon *apéritif* (French for dentures) it was bloody cramped for a man of his extended limb. I thought, but did not dare suggest, that wearing Nelly the Elephant over-trousers did not help the elfin look approach.

Orders placed the night before duly arrived but as Eric Richard was late, he had not placed his order so took the spare ploughmans. Norman Hyde arrived a bit late as the RAC man was sorting out a bolt for the *Acrow* kit. Don't worry, Doug Hele in the chair - worry more that Norman forgot to put it in gear on a hill. You could have had a very interesting ride... Thus, no lunch immediately for Norman but soon sorted, if a little delayed.

A run round the edge of the Forest of Dean then down to Lydney to head North into the Forest for some excellent roads save the proles out for a drive - can you Adam and Eve it? - I mean, driving about the roads of our land for *FUN!* Just as we came out of the fuel stop on the A48, a Hercules flew over at about 200ft. creating a hell of a din and dumping neat JP4. I was at the back and I swear that, to a man, we all looked down at

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our motors. Shades of times past and motors that blew? Guilty as charged.

Before Gloucester back on the A40, then the A 4136 into the Forest of Dean *Royal George*, the *George* and the *Royal*. Sadly, on the way Norman's primary drive-chain went out to lunch through the front of the chain-case. This happened approaching a left hander which all chairmen will tell you is **bad news**. Luckily, there was a slip road which Norman and Doug took to and took stock. Thank God for the RAC.

Dave Martin strode in and ordered "38 teas please" - *such power, such poise* !!- and, again, we were able to sit in a garden and shoot the breeze. The hotel looked over the Wye and there were hundreds of people canoeing, walking and fishing the river. Most enjoyable sight but that area always

seems slightly run down considering how many tourists they must get there. Norman Sometime Tail End Charles II being *hors de combat* (war horse?), Andy Smith (a.k.a. Lord Lucan for his frequent *no shows*) took over as TEC in a Labour-Party-style democratic vote at the same time as Dave Martin went round to inform everybody that D Bates, the Nick Leeson of The Club, was anointed to do the same. The power of The Club is that we all rode around the little local problems and no-one got phased by TEC Bates flying by while marshalling and waited for Lucan (a.k.a. Smiffy) to wave us on.

Tea taken, there was a gentle loop up through Ross-on-Wye then a head for home zap along the B4215 to Gloucester. David Strathcarron gave a brilliant lesson in how to enjoy a Grinalot on this bit. You sit in the right hand lane behind the car in front and at the first opportunity give it pedal on the metal and zap past. The poor people being zapped I could see looking in the mirror and wondering what the hell a Spider from Mars was doing on this earth and filling their

Back upstairs to the *Hangover Room*

before cutting North West towards Simmonds Yat (means Gate, apparently) to take tea at the *Royal Hotel* to complete the three card trick of

mirror. Somewhere along the run we were joined by Tony Dennis on a beautiful Triumph Sprung Hub.

And back to base for a triple S. All day there had been a threat but never any rain. Why do we spend so much on the Meteorological Office. Wouldn't a lump of seaweed be as good? They have got **TWO** Cray Super X mega number crunchers and score 54% accuracy from my spies in the

farming industry (Roger - my next door neighbour).

Getting comfortably round the outside of a Bass from the wood, I listened, priest like, to the confessions of Martin Roberts. He admitted

to enjoying buying a new vehicle, doing nothing to it save inserting key and fuel and gaining time. Praise be to the Suzuki GSF 1200S for convincing the man who designed the Triumph Motorcycle range single-handed as to which way is up. Similarly, while holding my confessional at my favourite altar - the bar - I heard Dave Hill of Suzy GB tell of the enormous success of the Bandito Range but they have not ordered or made enough at the factory. Who runs these companies - accountants and market researchers? What ever happened to selling and focused engineering? Is it me? (answers to Dr Anthony Clare). The young 'uns should spend time listening to Wilf Harrison and Maurice Knight on the art of selling and the volumes they were shifting then - plus the range of information and discretion given to closing a deal. Sorry, I am sure they do listen to their elders but maybe the UK arm is too far from the centre of power and decision to be heard.

for a Salmon or Steak dinner washed down by

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a rather tart red which was inferior to the Friday example. Some of those from t'night before were located and enjoyed. *El Presidente* Jackson eased into high office in his inimitable style. Simon Hill took over the rôle of *Sergeant at Arms* but wanted to be called Corporal until he earns his extra stripes. He did that night with the fines being a delicious blend of genuine goofs and Simon's, well, *different* way of looking at the world. All very humorous without any side which captured the spirit sweetly. I think it raised £ 20.00, with poor Eric Richard copping (pun) a fair chunk. From there on the memory dims. Save having the Big Bang Theory explained absolutely. You see, first there was nothing at all, then there was a firkin gurt bang (Really! Ed.) and everything was created. I am glad we have got that sorted. Eric R recounted a lovely story about the British Ambassador in Khartoum taking his lad on their daily evening stroll to pay respects to the statue of General Gordon astride his horse. Eventually the lad had to go back to Blighty to start boarding school so they took a last walk to pay respect to Gordon. The lad asked "*Forgive me father, but who is that sitting on Gordon?*". I am sure you all have memories like that of the evenings spent on the club runs just shooting the breeze with mates.

And so to break another taboo - how much more can I do to get fired? The

Alan Baker

January 1997

EDITORIAL NOTE

Rather than having to remove the Editorial tool from its quiver, I wish to correct here a statement contained on page one of Alan Baker's *BIRDIP RUN REPORT* regarding the invitation of guests not meeting the criteria set down in **The Club Rules**.

Extracts from *GUIDANCE NOTES FOR INVITED GUESTS*

"ii. Motorcyclists ineligible for Club membership

The Club welcomes members' guests falling outside the basic tenets of membership provided they have a sufficiently strong connection with the industry to ensure that they will make convivial and informed company. This enables the Club's Members to widen its perspectives of motorcycling matters by promoting discussion and fellowship with enthusiastic motorcyclists.

"... the frequency with which members may invite the same guest falling into this category will be no greater than twice every three years."

I think it's fair to say that Eric's close association with the motorcycle industry qualifies him as above.

SUNDAY MEETING. Not normally mentioned in these despatches but I was much tickled by the protestations of Doug Hele, when accused of quitting the Diss run in the report, that he did no such thing and wanted the report corrected. This developed nicely into a full resigning matter, with the club doing some very good blood letting and falling into various camps. Honour was squared and grievances settled by a fulsome apology from the scribe of the run, Dave Martin, who suggested that if someone else would like to both organise the run and write it up many years later - and have perfect recall - then they could take the place of the offender any time they wanted to stick mitt in air. Nuff said.

Le President summed up the run in such style, panache and elegance that this scribe regretted not bringing his plastic parrot (dictation kit) and placing it on the high table.

Better done and more flowing than can be put to palimpsest (look it up- and check out *sesquipedalious* at the same time) - particularly the tale of Blakey (you knew it was coming, Alan, *Mon Vieux*) doing a dodgy and MJ and three others following doing a Wimbledon of disbelief.

The beauty of the events is the smooth running, due entirely to the time and devotion put in by the organisers. For this magnificent one, our grateful thanks to Dave Martin and Norman Hyde.