



The Club

PRESIDENT'S RUN

KIRKBY LONSDALE, 25th-26th SEPTEMBER 1998.

All safely gathered together Friday night - well, not *quite* all those who had booked. Bob McMillan and William Colquhoun DNSed. Not that that apparently worried William as his guest - Neil Henley of BSA - came anyway and had to be 'reassigned'.

El Presidente had chosen a super hotel in 'The Royal' - very characterful, rather quaint, and with a building design based on Hampton Court maze. How did the architect also manage to incorporate more floor levels than brick courses? A cobbled coaching yard, super friendly and efficient staff and a selection of fine real ales completed the scene.

Apart from the 'old irregulars' there were guests in the form of: Paul Mercer, sporting a TRX Yamaha that sounded like a crisp Ducati and with patent race ancestry, well-scuffed soft-compound Hi-Sports and his eponymous and exotic brake equipment; Andy Tribble on a Nipponised Turkish delight - an MZ Kanuni with mighty Fuji Robin (of allegedly ex-cement mixer provenance) diesel engine shoe-horned in; the aforementioned Neil Henley on a Triumph Speed Triple; and Alan McGahan, a mobile advert for BMW's product range with a K1200RS with full matching BMW gear. Also most welcome and not seen for a run or two were Peter Agg, replete with rumbustious Harley, and John Nelson and Doug Hele, who travelled in John's classic 2500 Triumph (what else?). Hugh Palin had as usual managed to 'work it' with our regular RAC patrol Matt Lowe once again attending as ever-welcome sweeper upper.

A very sociable bar layout encouraged imbibing and great social intercourse preceding and following the excellent dinner. The Tony Dawson quiz contained the usual selection of gem questions - like what was the Motorcycle Show attendance in 1925 to the nearest 5; or what was the name of the executive toilet cleaner at Slumberglade Hall. After quiz and raffle an evocative viewing of the video made of the Spring Run when 48 cylinders of mighty RR Merlin were cracked up for us in a Lancaster. Then back to the bar for a little top up.

Saturday dawned remarkably bright and set the scene for the weekend - excellent weather was to be our fortunate lot. PRTS cracked the whip and had (almost) all of us assembled

ready for the off at 8.30 am then straight to the Lake Windermere ferry with perfect timing precision to get us all to the right place at the right time.

On then via some super high-speed swervery and spectacular views to our coffee stop at Torvor where we were replenished with the best home-made biscuits experienced in my 20-odd years of Runs. All off again for the big push to our entertainment highlight - a trip on the 7½ - mile Ravenglass and Eskdale narrow gauge railway "La 'al Ratty" where a 'Special' had been chartered. Assembled for a group photo Hon Pres showed again his planning mastery by producing a sign-written header board to be placed on the sharp(?) end of the puffer to celebrate the run. Photos over we installed ourselves in the steerage class open carriages and clickety-clacked on 'The Most Beautiful Train Journey in England' to our destination, gently bathed all the while in particulate emissions. The Ratty Arms at Ravenglass did us proud for lunch and then horror. The steam-producing device apparently had suffered some nasty internal ailment, like a cold hot box or a hot cold box, or something similar, so we had the indignity of being transported back behind a mere compression ignition internal combustion-engined contraption. Efficient it might be but interesting it ain't, although there was a morbid fascination in watching and waiting for the wheels of the device (which appeared to have been taken off a Triumph Tina) to self-destruct, taking the coupling rod with them, so frantically did they rotate. Alas it did not happen.

Firing up on return we then pass-stormed to no mean effect over Hard Knott and Wrynose, fortunately without (reported) incident, to Langdale and Ambleside. Equipped with oxygen masks to cope with the slight verticality of being 1500 feet above sea level we then took tea at The Old Coaching Inn on Kirkstone Pass. Then back home either the short way or, according to choice, over Shap. H Spoons and I took the Shap route and were rewarded with rapidly thickening mist and poor visibility. As the M6 of its time it must have been a sight to behold the sub-100 hp trucks, with dodgy brakes and solid tyres (no, I don't mean Harley Davidsons) grinding their way over. For a triple-discd sticky-tyred modern bike of similar power output (H Spoons' James Bond Replica, not mine) not a problem.

A bit more bench racing back at the Royal then another super meal and Serjeant at Arms jocularly pointing fun at one and all - and raising useful amounts for Club funds as well. A final top up, then to bed to recuperate for Sunday breakfast and brief meeting. Returning south homewards the weather simply got worse and worse.

A hearty thanks to Peter and helpers for a super run.

ATTENDEES AND ACCOUTREMENTS

Wilf Harrison	BMW R80	Peter Sheene	Honda SLR650
Keith Blair	BMW R80RT	Geoff Selvidge	Kawasaki ZRX1100
Dennis Bates	BMW R1100RT	Nick Jeffery	Kawasaki GT550
Alan McGahan	BMW K1200RS	Tom Waterer	Kawasaki KLR250
Mike Jackson	BMW R1200C	Andy Tribble	MZ Kanuni/Fuji Robin
Diesel			
Maurice Knight	BMW R850	Keith Davies	Moto Guzzi Centauro V10

David Strathcarron	BMW K100	Peter Meek	Norton Commando 850
Graham Goodman	BMW K100	Martyn Roberts	Suzuki GSF1200 Bandit
Nick Hopkins	BSA B31	David Hill	Suzuki GSX750F
Peter Agg	Harley Davidson Glide	Neil Henley	Triumph Speed Triple
Norman Hyde	Honda Fireblade	Paul Mercer	Yamaha TRX850
David Martin	Honda Blackbird	Tony Dawson	Yamaha FJ1200

PERSONAL VIEW

I managed to proverbially cock my leg over probably the most disparate selection of machines I have ever ridden in a day. First the Honda Blackbird - so smooth, so tractable, so easy to ride ... and so brain-fryingly quick. Then the BMW R1200C custom - who would have thought a few years ago that BMW would be capable of making at first attempt such an on-the-nail rendition of a cruiser? Next the Guzzi Centauro. Methinks the press have not treated this machine very fairly - traditional Moto Guzzi virtues but real performance as well. And saving an incredible experience for last - the MZ Diesel. My oh my Mr Tribble must be a patient person! Nevertheless a certain charm for all that with the transmission (expanding pulley) being vaguely reminiscent of an anemic Moto Guzzi Convert despite the engine thumping away like a demented dumper truck's trying to batter its way out of its mountings.

Nick Jeffery
9.3.99