

CLUB RUN, FORT WILLIAM, APRIL 14th to April 16th, 2000

For the first Club Run of the new century the gallimaufry assembled in Fort William and assumed a Hibernian hue. Fort William is such a suitable venue because its credentials in the world of motorcycling are legion. Having the home of the Scottish Six Days Trial as our base was fitting and so were the roads but more of that later.

The logistics of a run were such that fulsome details were sent out by Andrew Smith and Dave Martin offering transport for bikes from the south via a Yamaha truck and driver plus accommodation at Kirby Lonsdale. The tone of the application was hectoring with lots of bold type and exclamation marks. The Club is supposed to be for "senior executives in the motor cycle industry" but it implied they could not do something as simple as work out travel arrangements. What are you trying to tell us, lads? A little while later, there arrived another missive extolling the virtues of the run. I mistook this as a plea for entrants whereas the run was very well subscribed with 29 members and 9 guests as appears to be the case for the mega runs.

I could not make it to Kirby Lonsdale as the current day job (working for Rolf Harris' hit squad, maiming animals to fit the scheduling) is keeping me pretty busy so I leave the reporting to.... but he let us down. I have had a few snippets fed to me about the goings-on at the Royal. Apparently Nick Jeffery was sitting amongst the throng when the lights went out. He was there physically but no sign of intelligent life evident (don't start). An ambulance carted him off and he returned later perfectly well again. At first, it was thought he had suffered from a diabetic condition but it transpired he fainted sitting up. Normally, when you faint you fall over and the blood runs to the head and normal service is resumed. Not our Nick, oh no. Anyway, they fixed him by some mechanism such as turning him upside down and he was right as rain.

Dave Martin, however, suffered the following ignominy. He had been imbibing from about 4pm to well after one in the morning. The Royal was full so 6 had to decamp to rooms in a local pub. Dave had shown willing by volunteering to decamp but only after pulling rank and getting the best room, the one with the en suite. At 4am., his bladder woke him. Forgetting where he was, he stumbled out of the room, dressed only in his grundies, to go down the hall for a "gypsies" and shut the door. Yup, it was locked on his return. He went down to the bar, found a huge bunch of keys and tried everyone without success. Back to the bar, found a solitary key but this did not work so returned to examine the big bunch again systematically, sitting on the throne for, by now, his digestive system decided it was joining in the current recycling vogue. By careful monitoring of each key, this time he found one that allowed him ingress and finally turned in at 5.30am. I am fearful of what would have happened had any other guest chanced upon Dave Martin, lurching about the pub in his scants just before dawn. Does not bear thinking about for too long. I think I'll lie down for a bit.

Again, I decided to trailer the bike to a run for various reasons. I mentioned this to Peter Meek using weak excuses such as "the 900 Diversion is not suited blahty blah". He was horrified as he was thinking of buying one to save his Commando which he had ridden up from the South. What I really meant was that I did not fancy sitting on a bike for 400 miles of principally boring motorway travel with no suitable luggage system. If I still had the Pan European, there would have been no question but on an every day scoot such as the Diversion, I could not face sitting on its uncomfortable seat, exposed to the general elements,

especially as I hadn't ridden since the last Club Run, save a short visit to the Malvern Show. Maybe I am representative of a particular part of the industry client base; a bike in the garage for high days and holidays.

Then Glasgow at 5.00 p.m. A lot of money has been invested in the city and the road system is not too bad but it was just solid with volume. While sitting in the traffic, I mused over Glasgow and what a town of extremes it has been. From building some of the greatest ships and locomotives the world has ever seen, it has the dubious reputation of being the only town in the UK to have had tanks on the streets to quell a potential uprising (1919). That is, if you ignore the Chartist riots in Manchester in the 1850s on the grounds that the tank was not yet operational. Both disturbances were based on the unreasonable expectations implicit in the socialist movement and both caused the towns to stumble and miss the intended goal - Glasgow's GDP is about three-quarters of Edinburgh and much of inner Manchester looks like a third world town.

Much evidence around me of the blight of the architects and the town planners. Because Glasgow has been a centre for radial municipal socialism for so long (first council-owned water supply in 1859), the natural attitude is that the council should provide everything. It had the highest density of public housing in the UK, all organised by the town hall but it has just had to admit it cannot afford to keep this housing stock and is selling 94,000 dwellings to housing associations. On the route out of Glasgow, there was a new development on the slopes of the hills on the west side of Dumbarton. These little boxes in white, all rectilinear, all lined up in neat orderly rows, showed as much imagination as a caravan site and probably satisfied some planner's dream. I bet that, on approaching, it would be the same as getting near horses, cows or sheep in the countryside. They look great from a distance but close to, they have flies around their eyes and crap hanging off their coats. I wonder what that estate will look like in a few years.

And so on, up the achingly beautiful west side of Loch Lomond in the evening sunshine, out into the hills and a taste of the roads to come. Good surface, open for miles and scenery to knock your eyes out. I was at peace as I eventually rolled into the Milton Hotel and Club at 7p.m. What a site! Ben Nevis covered in snow right alongside the hotel, basking in the evening sun with shirt-sleeved members and guests ambling around, helping each other with loading, unloading, bench raising and generally beating their gums to death. Deep joy.

In the room was another touch from the organisers, a mini bottle of Glen Morangie. Mike Jackson seriously considered donating this as his contribution to the raffle. What a tightwad! With the pace notes was a mini credit card with telephone numbers on the back, to prove we were on the run and qualified for the kitty bar. Talking of which, welcome back Dennis Bates who had lost none of his skill in peeling notes out of wallets.

Called to dinner by Dave and Andrew wearing tam o'shanter complete with Russ Abbott ginger dreadlocks, we seated ourselves around the outside of a huge rectangle of tables with a defined top table for the Great and the Good. One of the guests was Gordon Blakeway, the famed trials rider from the fifties and sixties, invited by Dennis, Mike Jackson and Bill Colqhoun. He won seven Scott trials, the Welsh Two Day twice, and a Gold in the ISDT in Wales in 1961. His principle successes were Ariel mounted as one of a trio of Gordons - Jackson, McClaughlan and Blakeway. He now runs a hostelry not far from Fort William on Loch Strontian and is an avid sailor.

He answered questions from the floor after we had watched a film of the 1952 Scottish complete with wisecracking commentary from Allan Jeffries. The inevitable question arose over who is a better rider from different eras but I thought that the film answered that. In 1952 they had no power, no brakes and no suspension and did what they could with what they had. The same applies today but the envelope is much bigger so comparisons are pointless. A winner is a winner. Gordon won every one of the classes he entered but sadly never won outright, a point he admitted after being asked which year did he win the SSST? Tactless question or what?

The tales of trade sponsorship were mind-blowing in the sheer scale of the expenses outlaid when you consider this was the fifties, plus the tales of the night-before-partying (an example quoted was of the winner being the one who could hold his ale best) and the night-after parties. Gordon painted a very vivid picture for us of an important part of our sporting history and set the scene for the run on the morrow.

After an irreverent grace from Norman Hyde concerning God's gift to man of turning water into wine and man's ability to return it to its original state, the guests were introduced. Mike Russell de Clifford from Three Cross was welcomed back as the guest of David Hill as was Les Pockett from Deutsche Bank, courtesy of Geoff Selvidge from KMUK. Dave Martin brought along his son Jonathan who looks every bit as handy as his Dad if it came to a rumble. Peter Agg brought back Alan McGahan (he came on the 96 French Run) who had ties with the industry as the importer of Technomotor, the schoolboy scramblers, back in the seventies. He continued his ties with biking by sponsoring Paul "Loopy" Lewis in 1985 on a Suzuki and then ran his own Ducati Team in 1986. Martin Lambert brought along Peter Perrin from KMUK to keep up the their heavy penetration.

Welcome back to a cloggie contingent, David O'Neill (honorary cloggie) as the guest of Simon Hill (or Dave Martin or Frank Finch as they bobbed up and down, each not remembering who had invited whom) and Paul Peters (100% cloggie) as the guest of Bob Trigg (quasi cloggie having commuted to Holland every week for 20 years). David is the MD of HOCO parts and Paul works for him. They had a goodly distance to cover on the ride to get to Scotland so were most welcome. If you remember, they did the same on the Blois run. Bob had come up from the West Midlands on a FZ750 with Dutch plates. One way of avoiding speeding tickets?

I will pass on making any comments on the meal, except that it confirmed my long-standing impression that the Scots like to keep their food simple. This is ironic because the next hostelry to the Milton, going out of Fort William, is Inverlochy Castle which is a serious, world class hotel offering the finest food imaginable with impeccable attention to detail and service that would shame other pretenders. They present a world class bill as well, believe me.

Geoff Selvidge acted as barker for the raffle with Martin Lambert as his leg-man. It was nearly honestly done but with some hint of fitting prizes to the recipients, Martin being particularly acerbic with some of his comments (poor Tom Waterer's box of Roses has now taken a permanent place in club folklore) and superbly witty with the rest.

Andrew and David had provided a twin-sided, full colour map of the run including enlarged sections where appropriate plus all telephone numbers. I assume that means we all ride with mobiles these days. The run was scheduled for 220 miles. The explanation for it being so long was that the roads are so open, it will be a breeze. Taking a quick look at it, we were to go north west to the Irish sea, then North East to the North sea, nearly hitting Inverness, then south west along Loch Ness and back to the Hotel. Looking good!

The bar in the next room was in full swing with a dance band. I never did meet Gay Gordon for whom they were all calling, sadly. Peter Sheen was so incensed by my remarks in the last report about his extra few pounds (I actually said “fatter than before he was ill”) that he went on a diet. Relax, Peter, this palimpsest is only a bit of nonsense, not to be taken seriously.

Tom Waterer was full of the new dynamism of the MCIA, now that the industry has funded and staffed it properly. I have my reservations about it becoming too commercial and losing sight of the core competence of a trade association which is as a facilitator and negotiator for the whole industry. Commercial activities are focused and selfish and there could be a clash with the trade, demanding that they stop chasing income and get back to roots. Yet history says that the industry will not willingly fully fund the MCIA solely by subscriptions so time will tell.

Nick Jeffery continued the saga of Renault Trucks and David Hill the Italian industry developments. He had little to complain about, I thought, as he was at Aprilia for business on Friday, borrowed what is reckoned to be one of the best sports tourers in the market (the SL1000 Falco), just had to drop it back on Sunday and poodle home. Jammy bugger. The people at Aprilia were a bit worried about lending a bike to him. They tested him by asking him to follow a staff member to see if he could keep up, only to find Dave glued to his back all the way.

About midnight a tall, bright-eyed lovely appeared behind the bar. There was an immediate gathering in of stomachs. Hippo the Greek, one of my favourite philosophers (he was the one who said “I know exactly what time is but I can’t explain it”), reckons that the male libido is like having a lunatic chained to you who sets off like a wild horse immediately any totty comes on the radar. No matter that, for most of us left in the bar at the time, top totty is one who can boast a nearly full complement of her own teeth, we all were thinking of gathering her up by bumpers and buttocks, casting her loose from her stays and... Mac, the driver from Yamaha, told some hair-raising tales of nuclear weapons littered around Europe by the Soviet bloc from his experiences with the services.

And so to bed too late, to be sure (well after 2 o’clock last time I looked). By the way, Andrew Smith was definitely “all in” by this time but would not quit. He had ridden up from the South, setting off at 9.30 Tuesday evening and arriving at 6.30 am Wednesday to make sure all was in order - on an R1! What a star!

Dave Martin led us away spot on time and we headed up the A82 towards Inverness. Just think about it, that’s a long way from home. Inverness is in another country, for goodness’ sake. After a few miles, the local traffic just died away and here we all were on superb roads. It will be unfair to keep on remarking on the roads on this run as they were so completely different from anything down south, just take it as read. Suffice to say they were in beautiful condition, open round most of the bends and stonkingly enjoyable.

Forking left at Spean Bridge, we dropped down to the edge of Loch Lochy and were presented with a problem. The choice is: a) look at the scenery or b) look at the road. I got it wrong at one point and had a wake-up call when the rear end stepped out under some trees so I decided that scenery should win for the morning ride. It occurred to me that all the names on everything were familiar. There were Glengarrys, Laggans, Glen this and that. What a fantastic job Scotland has done to promote itself. It has been my experience that wherever you are in the world, there is a Scotsman telling you how great Scotland is. A great place to come from?

At Invergarry, we left the A82 and took the A87 for the Kyle of Lochalsh. A new entertainment came upon us. Whilst we had been generally bend swinging, we now encountered “Z” bend signs of incredibly precise definitions e.g., Z bends for 310 yards, Z bends for 420 yards etc. They must have a surveyor who determines which bend is worthy of a sign and how far in advance the warning must be placed. The difference was that these signs were almost an invitation to enjoy for the severity of the curves was no more than in the previous section. Instead of shutting off, the reaction should have been “you’ll enjoy this bit”.

Running round Loch Garry - which is at the foot of Glen Garry - we went north towards Ceannacroc Lodge then left to the Kyle. We had a viewpoint break around here somewhere but I had Loch, Glen and Z bend overload so can’t remember exactly where it was. Andrew Smith was pleased for the break as he had been riding with his visor in his hand since the start. When he flipped it down, it came off in his hand and was rescued by Dennis Bates. Frank Finch solved the problem with a dexterity that was born from getting into Ford Escorts during a previous life (I jest).

Along Loch Cluanie and into Glen Shiel and then to Shiel bridge. We ran round the north side of Loch Duich and onto the petrol stop. We “seized-up” the local garage before pulling into the Lochalsh Hotel for coffee. The hotel is huge, so much so that we wondered where do they or did they get the custom to justify it. I caused some mirth as I removed my surgeon’s gloves, giving them a trial run in preference to Marigolds. They do have the “gossamer” appearance of another product which promoted quips about enough for a fortnight (I have ten digits, not fourteen) but I thought enough for a good night only. Think big.

Taking coffee outside, seated next to a mine that was a memorial to a mine-laying squadron based in Loch Alsh, you could look at the mouth of the Loch to another new bridge and then on to the Isle of Skye and another world. Places which have Scandinavian roots with double “a” in the middle such as Raasay or Caan or accents on the “o” as in Mòr. Places of a different culture and life and you can see why they do not believe London can sensibly govern them or, taking it further, Brussels and rule-making that could fit their lives and that of the Greeks. Agreed, nobody is born with the concept of nationalism but surely it inculcates one’s thinking, being brought up in the Highlands rather than Peckham.

While waiting for the off, I watched Frank Finch get ready. Jacket, helmet, gloves, then gloves plugged into wiring, start motor and adjust thermostat for comfort. The motor cycle and motorcyclist is not the simple artisan and basic transport any more. Neither is a motorcycle a cheap form of transport if you take the cost of riding gear, tyres, insurance etc. Not much of a getaway vehicle either if you have to plug your gloves in.

And now for something completely different - an unlisted road! It went through some small villages and met up with the A890 just before Stromeferry and led on to Strathcarron Station and the Strathcarron Hotel for a photo call. David Strathcarron had been pedalling a TDM (on loan from Andrew) at an audacious pace all morning. He did not look spectacularly fast as there was a complete absence of climbing all over the bike as is the modern fashion. He sat straight up on the bike and was deceptively rapid. I swear he did not ever shut off! Everything was taken at 90 mph whatever the degree of bend. Remember, this is with a dickey foot, requiring a helper at all times to dismount. With David in the centre of the massed ranks for the photo call and the Strathcarron Hotel as the backdrop, I pray some great pictures become available.

The owners were invited to join David and two lovelies appeared to meet his Lordship. They were greeted with David's courtly charm. Around me, the lower orders were musing about the Scottish equivalent of *droit de seigneur* and whether we would see David flip 'em on their backs. Steady on - I think not, chaps!!

From there started the fastest part of the run, up towards Ashnasheen and onto Gorstan, made very entertaining by the sudden S bend over the railway just after Achnashellach Station. The A 832 road to Gorstan has the name "Strath Bran" which I assume is Gaelic for 'kin quick as I heard mutterings at lunch of "it pulled 157 on the clock..." from Norman who, as ever, was on a loan bike. This one being an R1 from Andrew. Were there any bikes left at Weybridge, I wonder? Nick Jeffery was on a Fazer on loan from ... **(FILL IT IN)** which was most interesting as he had come up from Oxfordshire on a Malaguti 250 scooter but used a 600 sports bike for the run. It must have its own logic for logical is our Nick. I must ask him one day.

I think it was just before Gorstan that Martin Lambert and Peter Perrin, each on an XZ-9R, came flying by on a series of bends, flat on the tank, neatly tucked in, really hauling and looking great. I wish I could do that. Similarly Keith on the Guzzi Californian and Richard Davies on the Laverda 750 S were swapping bikes and going for it. Maybe the heroes were really hungry for a quick squirt up the A835 (name Strath Garve - 'kin bendy?) to the Altguish Inn for luncheon. Just before the inn, we were passed by a stream of bikes coming in the opposite direction. We wondered if we were going the wrong way but they were just a few lads out on a blast.

The inn was a spartan, bleak, isolated affair at the foot of a dam but a big cheery fire and a pint, surrounded by a vast collection of grins as big as I have seen anywhere was an amazing sight. Each had a rictus planted on his mush and lots of hands were recalling the swoops of bends conquered *con brio*. I had a look round outside but it was a moonscape with rocks as black as obsidian and very cold. I remarked to the landlord (a gushing southerner, loves it up here, the life etc. Uhh... why did the natives leave?) on the cold. He told me it had been minus 3 at lunch time the day before when he was painting outside but it didn't matter because the paint does not run at that temperature. Give this man optimist of the month award.

Frank Finch decided he had missed something as he had not had the stew so another dish of it was brought out. It was exactly the same as the first stew he had consumed. Mike Jackson has fallen totally in love with the W650 (*sans culottes*) and extolled its virtues. He reckons

that this is what the old Triumph company should have made. His mucker, Bill Colquhoun, was out on his totally rebuilt Commando which was probably put together the way they should have been in the first place. Peter Meek's Commando certainly holds its own with almost anything but Peter's riding has a lot to do with this. I remember him on another run on an Ariel single and shaming the likes of your scribe.

Pudding orders were not completed with military precision so the 5 minute board went out. However Keith Blair and Paul Peters were not going to be denied their Sticky Toffee Pudding so they "hung in" there. One arrived which was democratically divided and consumption commenced. Another arrived and was also put through the divvying-up process which had now got as slick as a F1 pit stop.

So back to the high road and the return to Gorstan. As the heroes had seen it on the way to lunch, they were going for it. Although last out of the inn due to entertainment with the puddings and chatting to the anglers, I was among the first away but I must have been last into Gorstan, that many bikes came by. A grand sight watching Simon Hill with Nick Hopkins glued to his tail, really enjoying the full width of the road and carving beautiful turns. After Gorstan, we headed south on the A832 to Muir of Ord, then down to Beaully and took some road or other. I tried using the route notes and a map to reconstruct it but it does not follow. The notes say take a left and then right onto the A33 (isn't that in Hampshire?). I think we went through Stuy to Cannich and thence back to Drumdroichit but what does it matter? The weather was great, roads deserted, scenery overload and were we in Heaven? Does Dolly Parton sleep on her back? At the fuel stop, Dave Martin finally crumbled to peer pressure and took a tarpaulin off his Corbin seat. Moreover, Paul Peters was really enjoying himself as Scotland has slightly more topography than Holland.

We took tea in the Official Loch Ness Exhibition Centre, not to be confused with the Original, Genuine, or Authentic Loch Ness Centre, all of which were spotted on the way out of town. I think the Centre is fabulous in the true sense of the word. This is an industry based on what is surely a myth in this day and age and yet it supports the area, replacing farming or fishing with tourism. At the entrance, the Tam o'shanter and ginger hair, sported last evening by the hosts, were on sale. There were no further takers. We filed in for the 15.30 film show which I gather was very good. I got as far as the twelfth century monk giving the monster a piece of his mind and banishing him to the deep for consuming the last virgin maiden in the village and my eyes just closed. I was not alone, I gather.

The exhibition and gift shop were a giggle, based on "a thousand reliable eye witness accounts" of a mythical beast in a lake with a volume sufficient to swallow three times the earth's population and so on. Duh? Moving across the car park, we took tea and Nessie scones etc., in a cafeteria which had the capacity to seat 100, open 364 days of the year etc. So you can see this Nessie nonsense is quite a business. Their web site is "dubU, dubU, dubU". loch-ness-scotland.com for those curious to revisit - or see the film they missed.

On the way out, I chatted with Peter Agg about his custom Bemer which he loves - but he still keeps the Harley. The only problem, he discovered on the run, was that if you mount from the right hand side or fill the tank from that side, your over-trousers fry on the right hand silencer. He also had a problem with the left hand twist grip becoming loose but this was proudly fixed by one of Dennis Bates' rubber bands, made in the old manner from an inner tube. I followed

Peter for a while and the bike certainly seemed stable enough, bend-bashing at 80 to 90. God knows what the wind pressure is like at those speeds with those high bars.

Picking up the A82, we dropped down to Loch Ness and saw the ruins of the Castle at Urquhart which is the famous backdrop for all the Nessie sightings - suspicious or what? If the loch is so big, why does yon monster only appear at one location, unless it has developed a taste for "local grown" maidens. From then on, it was more loch side (Loch Ness followed by Loch Lochy) bend-swinging straight back to Fort William except one short stop just before Spean Bridge. This was in a lay-by just round a fast lefthander which tested my PFM discs well. Peter Sheen and Maurice Knight failed the braking test and overshot. The reason for the stop was to gather all together so we would arrive in a group. I swapped with Nick Jeffry to try out the Fazer for the short blast and thought it was delightful and so much better than its stablemate, the Diversion 600, which I thought was an underpowered clunk (sorry Dennis).

When we arrived, hot toddies awaited us which explained the grouping. Another nice touch. After a gargle, I had a spin on the Tiger that Tom had been energetically exercising all day. I loved my early Tiger so was very curious even though I think the styling of this new model is ludicrous. The first thing I noticed is how mechanically noisy it is in comparison with the Fazer or my Diversion. It sounds horrible and clattery but it goes very well, steers a treat and has the brakes the old one should have had but I still think it looks ghastly, so there.

Dinner was preceded by piping in the haggis. This ceremony was fully explained by an over enthusiastic chappie who ran through Burns' "Ode to the Haggis", explaining in too much detail about its rounded buttocks and so on. What's he like - oh, he's Scots. Nuff said. He then went out and re-entered with the haggis on a tray, circulated the table with a lady caterwauling on the pipes, presented it with a flourish, read the ode in full and then dived head first into the haggis, scooping great dollops into his mouth. The masses were aghast - haggis was the first course! The mortally wounded haggis was carried off by the lunatic and the piper continued to belt out some banshee wail.

The portions of haggis arrived. Alan McGahan asked the waitress if this was the same haggis, only to be told, "Strewth", (for she was an Aussie) "nah, we get it from a soddin' great catering pack. That one will be repacked for the next dining room in 30 minutes time". So much for Scotland's famous dish which tastes exactly as if it were made from lamb's offal and proves my point about the Scots and eating. Only the Scots could write a poem about sheep's intestines, tatties and neaps and claim a culinary and literary masterpiece. It could explain why the thinking ones leave and get a life.

Mike Jackson ran through the quiz in the absence (again) of Tony Dawson. It now has a space for your name - yippee - but still has loads of questions about the MCIA and this one even had a daft dig about Tradex. Tony, we will not forget that you are at the pinnacle of corporate governance (being a director of the MCIA) but may I remind you about the fate of Bob Ayling? Watch it, high flyer. It was won by David Neill with 24³/₄ points (do not enquire too deeply about the marking system, it will burn your brain). Nick Jeffery was incensed as, by his reckoning, he had achieved 26¹/₂. He had - but for incorrectly crossing out rather than leaving the correct version on a multiple choice question. The special raffle mentioned in the briefing notes was a signed first edition of the Triumph History written by John Nelson and this went to Martin Lambert. We heard from Dennis that Doug Hele and Doug Mitchenall were unable to attend, both having been unwell. A brace of Get Well cards was passed round

for all to sign. They have written their thanks. While on that topic, the signed menu sent to Tony Dennis was well received and a letter of gratitude received by Dennis. Tony is still not fit enough to go out on his Norton but I am sure we all send our best wishes.

Keith Davies had been making copious notes, as ever, through the day on all our transgressions, aided and abetted by some serious ratting. Keith really has got into the swing of this session and having watched his face at every stop, frowning and scowling as he records the frailties of the troops, he bursts into a radiant smile in the evening and wrings every last drop of blood out of the miscreants. Have you noticed that since Alan Blake acquired his Pan Euro, he has not starred in the Sergeant-at-Arms? Is this because he now owns a bike and not using a company machine? He can't be growing up, can he?

Dave Martin handed over the chair to Norman Hyde so we go from insouciance to raillery at a bound. The bar beckoned. We rallied to the call and fought our corner valiantly but were vanquished by the locals in the ability to stay up all night. At least, I think we were as I was one of the last to quit my post while under heavy fire from the local lassies who were looking for bonnie laddies to dance the fling. The one who picked up me, one-handed, demanding a dance with menaces was a big panty woman. I confess I broke down under such pressure. On reflection, an M.C. was mine for the taking. Another opportunity lost.

Sunday morning saw Mike Jackson and Bill Colhoun off at 3.30 am to go to the Staffs show where Mike was involved in the auction. The rest of us idled through breakfast and then set off when ready for there was no meeting which seemed strange. There is something about that final meeting of the weekend with its banter that seals the event.

Ambling over the Glen Coe pass, Dave Hill came tooling by on the Falco and further on, Andy and Dave and another came flying by. Simon Hill and his crew in a rental car came by with a cheery wave on the way to the airport - that's the way to do it. Down by Loch Lomond, Nick Jeffery tooled past on the Malaguti which sounded like a genset on Ecstasy but was pulling something over 70 mph - which with Nick's frontal area (height, not width) is not bad.

Thence the seven hour grind down the motorway and thoughts on the weekend. There were other stray thoughts such as: a) the reason why you cannot have everything is that you have nowhere to put it and b) why isn't the suspect nicked while being photographed for the "Wanted" poster? It was a fabulous weekend but then they all are. It suited some because it was seriously quick but Mike Jackson said it was too quick and confirmed to him why he was not a road racer but a moto crosser.

It has been difficult to recount because the run was more dominant rather than the stops. For example, I didn't ever manage to catch up to the leader all day because the super heroes were flying by, being dropped off and flying by again. Thus my view was restricted to over the bars with never an occasional roadside observation and time for rumination. Graham Goodman thought it would be a hard run to follow but I thought that was said about Normandy, Blois and, in all honesty, all of them.

Graham also remarked that, with his digital pictures plus my copy, he gets through loads of expensive paper so allow me to remind you of the suggestion that those who have e-mail should receive their copy electronically. Only two responded to Graham in the affirmative. It

would help the finances or shall we stop the report and pictures and have one master copy only? Maybe we should discuss this at the next meeting.

One statement of fact is that the weather on the Club Runs in the twenty-first century is better on average than the last century. For this and all the other excellent detailed planning and executing, I offer our warmest thanks to Andrew Smith and Dave Martin. Nice one. See you on the Frank Finch and Tony Dawson run on 29th September in Buxton.

Alan Baker

PS. Jonathon Martin was caught for speeding at 98 mph on the way home. You're in England laddie, not up in the freedom of the Highlands.