



The Club

Club Run Report

The Yorkshire Dales

April 2001

The fun and laughter started with the calling notice. As the Royal was deemed unfit for such a gathering, the notice informed us that we should assemble at the Whoop (pronounced as in Whooping Cough) Hall Hotel located on the BSA A65. Accommodation was limited to beds B31. I've a sneaking feeling that Nick was the draughtsman, aided by the fact that his address was on the letterhead. The Foot (and Mouth) note was registered and although this did not stop the run, it added some interesting bumps in the road.

The date acted as a spur for me to finish rebuilding the CX650 Turbo which had turned into a sisyphian task. I just managed to finish it in time and tacked on 157 miles the previous weekend. Just as a precaution, I went to give it a blast on the Wednesday before to find the starter had packed up. I rushed up to the Honda shop to order a new one only to find that they cost £541.63 plus VAT! Gulp. What about a standard CX500? Same price! How on earth can Honda justify a price for an item, which is more than the worth of bike? Off to the breakers for forty quids worth. Job done.

From the West Midlands, there is only one route up to Cumbria - the dreaded M6. It was predictably seized solid in various places and I experienced that horrible trait in the English motorist of having my progress impeded by blocking. It is only momentary but it is indicative of the way some people are. As the road cleared, I was passed by a family in a Civic who had been particularly obstructive only to see the 12-year-old in the front seat mouthing something at me. His face was horribly distorted in rage. I have to ask, for what purpose? He had obviously taken his cue from his father, as he was too young to have formed his own opinion. Not normally given to road rage, I admit I was tempted to turn his ring piece into a reasonable representation of the Japanese flag. (*Why? Are you gay? Ed*)

During one of the jams, I passed Wilf Harrison who was trailing his BMW to the meeting. He was fulminating massively during the weekend on the railways. His argument is that something is worth investing in if it has merit in its own right. In other words, railways could not be invented now because they are too restrictive and inflexible in comparison with the car. A suggestion that was reinforced when

later, on the M6, I passed a complete train, locomotive, carriages et al. Ask yourself, "Why do they go by road?" Wilf's solution is to tear up all the railways and convert that land area to "truck-only roads" thus solving the traffic problems (keep in mind that there are 20,000 miles of railways and the Hatfield fiasco cost £633m for less than 500 miles of rail only replacement).

It has merit but I feel you might not be able to sell that, Wilf. John J2J Prescott has announced that his department is to allocate 26 days of tax income (£26 billion) to invest in the infrastructure to increase rail capacity by 20%. As rail accounts for 8% of the traffic in this country, this means the increase in the total traffic flow will be 1.6%. All of this for £26 billion. On second thoughts, Vote Wilf, my friends.

The run notice suggested leaving the M6 at junction 31 and traversing the moorland roads into Kirkby which was an excellent suggestion. Just as I arrived in Kirkby, hail started to fall in a vicious manner, giving rise to sad thoughts such as "Just like a Club Run". It passed and I had a wander round the centre for a short while until the hail restarted. St Mary's Church on the edge of Market Square dates back to the twelfth century. It was actually started in 1093 and finished in 1130. No note was made whether the length of construction time was due to complexity, lack of workers, money or the usual trouble, i.e., persuading the builders to return to finish the job. What stood out a mile in this and the RC church on the other side of the square (plus the thingy in the middle of the square) was the small size of everything. The people could not have been over five feet high (152.4 cm

for those of you who have gone metric every inch of the way). Both Churches looked down to the Devil's Bridge spanning the River Lune. How kind of the good burghers of Kirkby to save Mephistopheles getting his tootsies wet. Was the bridge to let him in or out?

And so to base camp. The De Burgh family built Whoop Hall in 1618. I have failed to find out when it became an Inn. It was bought by the Parrs in 1985 when the A65 ran between the Inn and a barn opposite. The road was straightened soon after that which enabled John Parr to convert the barn to accommodation and build a bridging piece so the structure is now in the form of a U. John regaled me with the tally of bikes, cars and trucks which had failed to negotiate the sharp bend on the East side, clouting the corner of the Inn but I'm afraid the number has slipped my memory. He was also proud of the fact that the original conversion cost £225,000 which was more than knocking the whole thing down and totally rebuilding. You all know where I stand on heritage so I am pleased that we were able to enjoy an old fashioned coaching Inn but with modern facilities.

The Inn also has the resident ghost of a murdered coachman and squeaks and squeals are regularly heard. Mind you, hearing tales of squeaks and squeals in the night at an Inn could have a different explanation. It does not have to be an incubus or a succubus to produce such noises, you know.

The previous landlord was a famous musical hall dame and female impersonator. He went out with his son for a days shooting. There was an accident and he died from his own gun.

The locals had their own theories. Thus we were encamped in an Inn with two mysterious deaths attached. Bodes well.

The Inn was a mile or so from the town, standing on its own so you are all spared from my usual philippic on architecture and architectural history which has the merciful bonus of cutting this report to a bite sized portion. The development of the Inn continues with a paddock given over to a caravan park with power and water points for those who like to get away from it all and watch the telly in comfort. It was a perfect demonstration of a region which has tourism as its number one business. The chap manning the tourist office in Kirkby told me they were about 10% down on last year but nowhere near the disaster zone portrayed in the Press. The townsfolk were incensed about a picture in a national newspaper showing the main street of Kendal deserted. The picture was at least twenty years old as it did not show a shopping development built nineteen years ago which should have been clearly visible.

On the ride up, I was squirming with pleasure at the thought of the new outfits on parade on the Spring Run. London, Paris and Milan - eat your hearts out. What vivid hues would be evident on the galligaskins this season? However, recalling last Spring, of the six new outfits present, five were black. Forgive me if I missed your fetching new number but I did not notice any on this run.

Slipping into an off-the-shoulder gownless evening strap, I ventured into the warm evening sunshine. Martyn Roberts and Nick Hopkins had just returned from a "recce" and reported all

was well. There were about a dozen disinfectant baths on the run but all were well signposted. MCN had printed a big scare story that week about how dangerous they were but the organisers decided they were clearly marked, the speed limits applied were perfectly adequate and therefore no problems should be experienced. A rather worrying aspect of this whole FMD outbreak is the damage to the very fabric of our society by people sitting in offices in the capital, trying to impose central control over local comprehension of how to husband our countryside. The intentions are the usual "for the good of the people" but the reality is stifling the natural production and control of the food chain. We were riding next day in the Yorkshire Dales where 60,000 people live and work with 32% of them in the farming industry. Surely they know how to do things better than Whitehall? As ever, Keith Blair hit the nail on the head by saying that the British buy everything on price and ignore quality.

Guess who came on a Benelli 150 Adiva Scooter? No prizes for guessing Nick Jeffery. To add to the amusement, it had a huge advertising sign on the back claiming it was the world's first convertible scooter. This means the roof could be folded away in the "boot" on the back. This had the rather unfortunate side effect of filling the boot thus rendering it useless. I am sure I am missing something here. Welcome again to Dave Taylor on his R1150RT which looked an ideal bike to ride up from the south but, having said that, he came flying by all weekend so it appears it is a scratcher's tool as well.

The car park soon resembled Trailer City. A lot of members coming up took the Captain Sensible route, as Cumbria is a long ride from the South East. Maurice Knight brought out his trusty GS400 Suzuki for the simple reason he could not load the BMW on the trailer on his own. David Strathcarron brought out his K100 rather than the Tupperware Totty Trap. He trailed it behind a Citroen Picasso which gave him minutes of amusement trying to set the locks and alarms via a selection of buttons on the key fob. During the time I observed him, he had not cracked the right combination of buttons to push so he left it unlocked.

Frank Finch was on his new company vehicle, a Yamaha YZF-R1. It was two days old and still running in but that would not have provided a problem for Frank to keep up. And so it proved. Frank and Martin Lambert were “giving it some” down one of the valleys when they were surprised to find themselves being tracked by a Police helicopter. This has to be a first for a club run. Interesting to see the heated gloves and waistcoat kit were already fitted. It strikes me that we could load him up with tatties and open a SpudUlike stop on the run. He was in the Saturday Telegraph the week after as a typical biker. So typical bikers lap the IoM at 112 mph? I think they do him an injustice. David O’Neill turned up as our first foreign member complete with Paul Peters his right hand man. Paul came on the Scottish Run and loved Scotland so much that he returned in the summer with his girl friend for a riding holiday. He said that, looking round on the Friday evening in Fort William, he was a bit disappointed at seeing such a bunch of old fogies and thought the run

would be boring. On Saturday he said, “Where the hell did they go?”

Geoff Selvidge rode into the car park to be greeted by somebody “mooning” him from an upstairs window. He recognised Martin Lambert from that view which is desperately worrying. Peter Meek has sold his Commando and turned up on a Diversion 900, which he was getting used to. It was good to see Simon Goodman back with us after his recent medical problems. In all, there were 27 club members and 9 guests assembled for the weekend. One of the last to arrive was Dennis Bates towing his Diversion. He extolled the virtues of his speedy, off-loading ramp which had taken hours of careful drafting on a CAD system, aided with 3D Computational Fluid Dynamics and Finite Element stress analysis. Looked like a bit of a wardrobe door and length of angle iron in all honesty but after a crisis moment half way down the ramp, the bike was finally off. Might I suggest you avoid IKEA, Dennis? By this time, some of us had started on the kitty before Dennis arrived in the bar to signal the start and collect the first float.

As the visit of interest was to the Black Sheep Brewery next day, it was decided to do some market research on the product. As well as the Black Sheep Bitter, there was a special beer called Riggwelter. This is a local word used to describe a sheep which has fallen on its back and is unable to get up again. For those fans of corybantics with semantics, it comes from Old Norse where “rygg” is shoulder and “velte” is to overturn. Just thought you’d like to know that. No? Oh well. At 5.9%, it is a fair name for a beer. The wags were

soon asking for MIG welder, TIG welder, RIG welder or anything close to the real name. Close enough was good enough to get served and it was a good strong traditional ale. The standard Black Sheep Bitter is a fair pint, too. As an aside, can anyone think of an English word to rhyme with pint?

Supper was laid out in the dining room as a series of round tables so no problems with being isolated on the end of top table as last time. Chairman Norman Hyde got into his public speaking stride immediately and introduced all the guests rather than the relevant member introducing his invitee. Oops!! - forgive me, too much contractual law work recently. You will have to believe me if I tell you that one American lawyer working on a case with me is called Max Shaftal! Maybe I should mention that my solicitors are Norfolk and Goode (say it quickly). Seriously, the first is correct and I made up the second.

Dennis had invited along Malcolm Nash of the Nash Insurance dynasty. He was warmly welcomed, as it appears a majority want to be friends to get an even lower premium. Mike Jackson had invited Dave Dew, now ex-Honda and working as his own boss of Motocom. This is a real working PR and communications company, not one of those froth and bubbles dot.bomb nonsenses, you understand. Norman Hyde brought along Dan Sager (sorry about the spelling of your surname last time Dan) with strict instructions not to come on a grey import. Tom Waterer brought along the boss, Mark Foster, of the MCIA empire based at Starley Powers. You know them, used to be a trade association but turned into an

exhibition organisation. Dave Martin brought along his son Jonathan who has just joined Yamaha as an Assistant Sales Manager. The ZZR600 will have to go, my boy. As mentioned above, David O'Neill brought along Paul Peters from HOCO parts. David Hill brought along Mike Russell de Clifford from Three Cross which also got him a loan of a V Raptor. Nick invited Tony Jakeman who has "gone legit" and joined the Suzuki staff. Martin Lambert brought along Denis Matthewman from Kawasaki who had brought up a 1955 Norton ES2 which was very tidy but had bits from various Nortons to make it functional rather than pure. Instead of Matt Lowe, we had the pleasure of his boss, Norman Winchester, from the RAC.

Apologies were received from Doug Mitchenall who is waiting for an imminent next course of treatment and did not feel up to the rigours of such a long journey. Peter Sheen had family celebrations and offered his apologies on a letter dated 2991. Mike Evans was engaged in creative accountancy, also known as the year-end accounts. Richard Davies was planning to attend but needed a minor operation which prevented any riding. Before you lot rush off in the wrong direction, it was above the collarbone and below the brain but no further details are public. Blakey strikes again. He fell off an electric drill in the garage which then started up and drilled itself into his clutch hand. Simon Hill was engaged in driving his Jaguar round a race circuit. Martyn Roberts informed us that Pro Drive, the company for whom he now works, had been instrumental in getting the Jags to handle and had been behind the test drives. I gather this is not publicly known as Ford

claim to be all-supreme in all departments.

A restaurant rule of thumb is that the more verbose the descriptions, the worse the food. The menu contained all the usual weasel words such as pan seared, sweet, smooth, laced, rich, creamy but the dishes were a fair selection. I am always impressed by the logistics of getting forty plus souls refuelled at one and the same time. (Talking of souls, when the scientists clone a human, where will the required new soul come from?). Certainly, the restaurateur has to choose the menu to suit diners who are all arriving simultaneously. David Strathcarron and your scribe chose the roast beef. This is not a dish which suits mass catering if you like your beef pink, we discovered to our chagrin. David's face was at times a splenetic mask as he dissected the Phillips Stick-a-sole on the plate. The usual proprietorial disputes ensued over those tables where the wise virgins were conserving their wines and our table (no names) who were hardy trenchermen. No territorial gain was being permitted so I approached the counter where the wine was stored (the waitresses having wisely retired before paramedics and riot police were called) and retrieved a bottle of the excellent Antario Chianti. Safely landed with the nectar, it came as no surprise to have no less than five corkscrews proffered from pockets.

Martyn introduced the run with evident glee and almost apologised for having it in his childhood area but hoped we would enjoy it. It involved heading northwest then riding up and around the top of the Yorkshire Dales before swooping up and down the

hills around the Nidderdale on the way back. The usual caveats were chucked in about sheep dips, one-in-four adverse camber down hill sections and one I did not care for - a diesel spill. The manner of all these introductions remind me of a Victorian MC warming up the audience at a Music Hall where feats of daring are to be performed without a safety net. Today, it could be to get the litigation lawyers off your back on the grounds "I warned you".

The raffle double act of Martin Lambert and Geoff Selvidge bounded into action with glee and gusto. It's reminiscent of "Alice in Wonderland" where everyone shall have prizes. With these two, they are delivered in such a dismissive way ("a pair of cardboard gloves that will not survive the first rain and your hands will be stained for life") that it is a joy to watch your carefully chosen and paid for (?) donation rubbished so comprehensively. Or is it the industry's way of getting rid of things that do not sell? Jonathon Martin won the Thrust book on Richard Noble which was then sold to Norman for £10 which was then expropriated by Father Dave for the Kitty. Jonathon, having Dave as a father is the best training for life at Yamaha you could have, mate. You'll survive. I noted an increase in promissory notes or IOUs in earlier parlance. The famous Andy Smith Yamaha voucher tale was retold where it took over two years in the delivering.

Suddenly it was 11.30 and the minibus was here for the outplacated to go to their dwellings in town. While the Whoop Hall was excellent, the town guesthouse needed some restoration - such as pulling down and rebuilding. No

activity in the town so the outcasts were abed by 01.30. Norman Winchester (RAC) went to the non-ensuite WC, returning to find his door slammed shut. The Landlady told him, "Just moved in, old boy, no master keys. Nothing I can do" Norman found entry tools in his RAC van. During the Saturday, they had the door fixed. The following night, Dave Taylor repeated the experience and enlisted Norman's help. However, while helping, Norman was locked out again. These two great lummoxes then swept the debris into a corner to make it look like one load of builder's mess instead of three break-ins. The fried bread for breakfast had the ability to reconstitute itself so well; it not only sucked in the grease originally squeezed out but also swallowed the egg, followed by the sausage and then the tomatoes.

Saturday dawned clear and bright. Looking out of the bedroom window, I saw the bikes were covered in a rime of frost and ice which was not so tempting. I went for a short constitutional. It was too cold and there was not much to look at so aborted it in quick order but not until after noting the main road was dry. Bob Trigg carried on his flirtation with the same waitress from the night before. Good man, Bob but it slowed down the coffee service, mon brave. I toyed with the idea of a kipper from the huge platter but they had been through the same heat treatment process as the beef the night before and resisted a determined stab of the fork. I settled for the standard heart frightener.

We were able to assemble *en masse* in the courtyard in front of the hotel without blocking any roads. However, I am now going to have a whinge. I do not think that bikes on the

Club run should be unsilenced or barely silenced. As entry to the Club is restricted to senior executives in the motorcycle industry, I feel we are an active advertisement for motorcycling. Going through small communities and disturbing them unnecessarily is following the wrong *labarum*. This, as you all know, is a personal but strongly held view. I raised it some time ago at a Sunday meeting where it found no favour but I see no reason why I cannot abuse the privilege of scribe to mention it again. Do not get me wrong, I am all in favour of acts of minor civil disobedience such as riding fast (and safely) and not paying full respect to arbitrary speed limits or white lines that make no sense to a biker or using the other side of the road when clear. I would never vote for a fully detailed and documented constitution including how to ride. Ye Gods, we would wind up with a mission statement and all that fluffly crap. On that note, I read recently that Air Traffic Control have the best mission statement ever. *Keep planes apart*. Job done.

We struck out towards Kirkby Lonsdale and then headed north west up towards Kendal. Just before Kendal, I noticed this strangely familiar, bouncy, blue egg in front going quite indecently fast. I thought no more about it as it was mightily cold on this stretch. Before Kendal, we cut across to the A684, a smashing road, for a blast down to Sedburgh. That damn blue egg was still bouncing its way round everything. I caught a glimpse of it side on at one turn and I am sure there is something inside trying to break out. It was curled up, as far as I could tell, with a creased leathery skin of darkish hue and a shiny white cranium. If it is still in sight at the

next stop, it will be worth examining for some form of Alien Life Force (ALF). Like so many of these UFOs, they are in the gun-sight one minute then they step sideways and disappear.

Having had a good attack on Scarsdale, we turned up to Cowgill via a minor road then chased the Settle to Carlisle Railway along to Stone House. The station at Cowgill is called Dent Station but it is four long uphill miles to Dent, the town it was intended to serve. Just past Stone House, there was the truly wonderful Artengill Viaduct, built in stone, carrying the railway over the road. Considering it was built in 1870, it is a wonderful soaring 11 arch construction. The base stones still have the imprints of fossils clearly visible. I know because I stopped to gawk. As Wilf was mentioning earlier, you would not build anything like that now, in that location, for that little traffic. A few, huge, six lane motorway bridges through the Alps make sense but a single line viaduct of such scale was mind blowing. Just for the record, Stone House was the centre of a polished, grey, limestone industry, which was flogged off as “marble”. And thence on to the B6255 to Hawes. Somewhere along this section, there was the first of the disinfectant road traps with one small flaw. No disinfectant. It was dry. How does that work?

Dropping down towards Hawes, there was a humungous dip. Dave Martin was following Simon Goodman at eighty plus when Dave suddenly realised that Simon was now part of the USAF. Willy G had not meant this Dyna Glide to glide in active and poetic detail but a third of a ton of good ‘ol US iron was doin’ just that. While musing,

DM suddenly realised that Soichiro, maybe, had not meant the Bed Pan to be part of the RAF either. Damage was limited to bruised family jewels, not bent iron.

In Hawes, we pulled into the Wensleydale Creamery for coffee. Go to one entrance, get disinfected on the way in: wrong entrance, get disinfected on the way out, go to right entrance get disinfected on way in and partake of a caffeine frenzy. Warm now and really enjoying as it is good easy riding and God is in Her heaven. The ALF in our midst had broken out of his cocoon and was wandering around in a lanky pecking manner like a flamingo. Not easy on the eyes but at least it appears friendly. Hyper enthusiastic creamery owner desperate for repeat business gives us doggy bags to take the left over but paid for bikkies on the trip. In a full face helmet while riding a bike, my friend? Nice and kind thought, though.

Chairman Hyde had a word with Nick, Tail End Charlie, advising him that it was not necessary to wait for the RAC van as they were big boys and would be able to follow the course with Hugh and John Nelson navigating. By doing so, Nick was making the last marker wait too long. Nick explained he was just being polite and it was his first time as an organiser. Later in the day, Nick waited for ages for one missing rider to emerge from the shop at the tea stop. The miscreant was the Chairman who had been purchasing cheese. Chairman’s privilege, one presumes.

Ee now, weese finally headin’ t’reel country wit “teehatches” ‘an’ dales ‘wit proper names ending in “thwaite” to meet and match. Climbing up Whether Fell out of Hawes, we had some superb

views over the dales before dropping down the Langstrothdale taking in Oughtershaw, Deepdale and Yockenthwaite - ee, lad tha's reet names, tha' knows. The ALF had discarded the top of the egg shell and was working its socks off down the hills, only to find the speed dropping off going up. Do not know which planet it comes from but, by heck, they can't 'arf ride. Martin Lambert had swapped with Denis Matthewman and discovered the joys of the traditional gear change and brake. He likened it to rowing, everything was backwards and he was surprised any forward motion was achieved. Achieved it was, causing Simon Goodman to heap praise on Denis at the lunch stop on how well an ES2 goes. Denis, as all good bikers would, revelled in the praise of such a renowned chassis man and chose not to correct him as to who was riding it.

During this section, it was noted that the disinfectant dips had gone from dry straw to hessian matting to now redundant carpets. Maybe there could be a competition for Best Dip Designer carpet with Gross Lloydman judging and Carol Smillie hyper enthusing over "Wait till you see this, you lucky punters, this will transform your livers". At least they were now wet with something. Maybe it is a Machiavellian streak in me but I thought I saw a repeat pattern (a fetching, blue background with red commas rampant? Ring a bell?) which led me to believe there was a job lot of carpet remnants suddenly finding a home. In the same way, a mate in the North Yorks area told me that the nocturnal cattle movements during the crisis were at an all time high because they had the perfect chance to get all the animals paid for in one go, cleanse the

farm and start again with a nice piece of real estate. Surely not?

Thence a gentle to the lunch stop via Buckden on the B6160, to just South of Leyburn to join the A6108, to luncheon at Masham (pronounced Mass Ham, not Mash Ham, by the way). This was a section of the run where I felt everyone could take stock of why they were here. No traffic that could not be taken within minutes, lots of bends, scenery to kill for and no big decisions. The first time run organisers, Martyn and Nick, asked the then chairman "How shall we organise the run?" That Chairman, who shall remain anonymous (Dave Martin), said "Do the run you want and if they do not like it, tough. It is your run". I liked the "A" road ride to Masham as it was a bit of everything. Sixty miles an hour felt fast. A fuel stop just before Masham enabled us to assemble for a "reet" treat at the Black Sheep Brewery.

Masham is also famous for sheep which play such a large part in the local economy that they have a Sheep Fair each year. This year, they have a problem with Foot and Mouth in the area so the show organiser, Susan Cunliffe-Lister - who happens to be Willie Whitelaw's daughter - has asked all visitors to make their own sheep from wool and cardboard instead. Sounds a winner to me. The local breeds are the Hebridean, the Manx Loghtan, the North Ronaldsway and the Shetland according to the Island Heritage web site. They don't sound like local breeds to me. Anyway, the wool is gathered, washed and carded in the traditional manner without bleach or chemicals employed. It is then made into all sorts of clothing that itches like buggery. You can spend a holiday on the farm with seasonal

attractions such as “April to May - watch the lambs being born; June - watch the sheep being sheared; August - watch the fleeces being sorted”. The August date is in my diary. Sounds gripping!

We had been informed the night before that we were to divide into two groups, one group to luncheon and then tour and the other group to do the reverse. Duly stickered, we were then herded into the tour *en masse*. We were greeted by Jim, a professional Yorkshire man who had once been told that he was funny. He started out as mildly amusing but then became extremely grating and finally exasperating and annoying. You could see the group collectively losing the will to live as he ground out his tales in a voice that was a caricature of a Yorkshire comedian but without any real wit or humour. The tale he told was, however, fascinating regarding the son, Paul, of the Theakston family who have been mashing ale in Masham for five generations. Paul was forced to leave the family firm after it was taken over by Scottish and Newcastle Brewery in 1988 because his ways did not fit. He assembled a crack team from his old firm and started up again in the old maltings once occupied by Lightfoot’s brewery i.e., the Lightfoots who had been taken over by the Theakstons in 1919. They have made a great success and their ales are extremely popular with both pubs (over 700 stock it) and supermarkets to the extent that they are expanding like crazy to meet demand.

We had an over-comprehensive tour, going, in fine detail, into the various types of hops, malted barley, crystal malts, mash tubs, water (they pump their own) and then to the six, equi-distant, 25mm tubes for running of

the partly fermented liquid (the wort) into the “back under” before going into the big, Yorkshire slate, square vats where it was sparged (sprayed) before going into the barrels with a jug of finings (fish gut) added to act as a clarifier. Who discovered that? The same bloke who decided that snails are edible, I bet. At the end of the tour there was a collection of early, fish-eye bottles. These were used for storing fizzy water. A marble is held in the neck restriction by the gas pressure. To get to the liquid, you either used a pusher to depress the marble, giving rise to an audible “pop” (hence the epithet for soft drinks) or if you wanted to consume one of Dr. Codd’s famous, flavoured pops, you hit the bottle on the base with a wallop and hence Codswallop.

This tour took an hour by which time we all felt we had lived the life cycle of a barrel of ale from hops to glass. A free half of ale was necessary to dull the pain. Soup and sandwiches for all taxed the staff beyond their capabilities. Sorry to be so cutting about it as it was a superb idea for the visit of interest. It’s just that Jim was too much. Jim, remember, if you go on an ego trip, you tend to keep rotten company. After the run, I had a look through their literature and it must have been written by Jim. “Welcome to the Black Sheep Brewery - we hope *ewe* will enjoy, the Br”*ewe*”r of the year, the search for the Holy Gr (crossed out) ail is over” and more of the same. They even lapse into the posy language of wine writers by stating that the Riggwelter is “a deep, chestnut brown, full-bodied beer with a rich, near- white head and the aroma of fresh coffee. A wonderfully complex palate with hints of coffee, bananas and liquorice leading to a classic Goldings

hop finish". What tosh! Pass me the barf bag.

The ALF had decided it was all too much and retired to his shell and slammed the lid shut again. Who can blame it? Heading west out of Masham, we took a one-track road along to Leighton Reservoir and on to Lofthouse at the northern end of Nidderdale. We followed the Nidderdale down past Gouthwaite Reservoir which was a great bit of road. The Stean Gorge in upper Nidderdale is known as Yorkshire's Little Switzerland. There was a brick wall on the left-hand side but you could see a couple of bends in front at all times for some fun bend- swinging. We wound up in Pateley Bridge which was bustling with Saturday market traffic. Departing westerly up the climb to Greenhow Hill and then a steep drop down to Hebden and on to Grassington. This road, the B6160 is to be recommended. Tea was taken 10 miles further on at the Kilnsey Park and Trout Farm. On the hillside above Kilnsey Park, a spring bursts from the limestone and produces a flow of crystal clear water (quoting from their guide). It used to feed the stew ponds (whatever they are) and then was used to generate electricity until the National Grid arrived. Now it feeds the lakes where you can fly fish. It was superbly done. The souvenir shop had an excellent selection of trout in various forms and local cheeses. David Strathcarron thought one of the cabinets had a glass top and went to rest his cup of tea. It did not.

We must have all been glad it was a fine, warm and dry afternoon for the road up to Malham Tarn was a blinder. It was signed-posted as a one-in-five incline but this included

downhill, adverse camber hairpins that would not have been fun in the wet. At the end, it was gated and Bob Trigg tried to get into conversation with the farmer working in his yard next door. `Appen he was not a conversationalist. North out of Langcliffe, we followed the same Settle to Carlisle Railway line up to the Ribbleshead Viaduct. This is a truly impressive structure with its 24 arches carrying the railway in a gentle curve over the streams on Blea Moor.

The Midland Railway Company drew up the plans in 1865 to construct this railway. The construction of the Viaduct and the Blea Moor Tunnel started in 1870. The workers simply put up their own shantytowns of wooden huts and moved their families. They gave them names such as Sebastopol, Inkerman, Jericho and even Belgravia. They built a brick works at Sebastopol. This saved transporting them to what was deserted fell land which was not practical. In the 1871 census, there were very nearly 1000 people living in this area, working on the railway. The conditions were grim with no effective sanitation. In the summer of 1871, there was an outbreak of smallpox at Sebastopol and Jericho. This coupled with the unsafe working practices meant that over 200 people died during the seven years of the construction. Most were buried in the Church of Ingleton Fells (now called St Leonards) and full records of the names and shantytown or workings are recorded. Although a memorial tablet was erected in the church by the workers and the company, a new memorial was opened in the millennium year 2000 recalling those who died. On the whole length of the line, there are 26 viaducts (plus 6 bridges) so God knows what the total death toll for the line was.

We pulled into the kerb to get a photoshoot with the Viaduct in the background. So there we were, some forty souls, poncing about in a field in a Foot and Mouth area, before jumping back on bikes and heading off to all corners of the country. Was this wise, on reflection? From here, it was a free-for-all back to Whoop Hall, watching out for speed cameras. Simon Goodman reckons there are currently one million cameras installed with the Police stating they are aiming for eight million. This is about the only thing the Police seem to be able to deliver. They are hamstrung over any other activity for potentially appearing to offend the sensitivity of some poor criminal. Peter Meek told me of a “bang to rights” burglary and vandalism case he was involved in and the Police just did not want to know. Peter could not tolerate it and pressured them to act. If we can cull animals without incurring the wrath of the Animal Rights lot, why not the scum element in our society?

Back at base, there was the usual swapping of bikes for a blast up the road. Everyone agreed that Mike Russell de Clifford’s (is that one guy or a team?) Navigator was a superb grunty tool. Why is it those town trailies do not sell in the UK as they do over there in johnny foreigner land? I was crawling all over the Turbo to see what had fallen off or was loose after the total rebuild when David O’Neill innocently asked what all the oil was doing over on his side of the bike. As I have had massive problems with an oil leak on the turbo, I nearly died. I scrambled to my feet to check it out. David collapsed laughing. It was not funny. Well, maybe it was but it missed me at the time. We

remembered well the dictum from brewery Jim. “Monday to Friday is for mekkin, Saturday is for suppin”. So we did. A lot of instant experts were holding glasses to the light and commenting on the hops, the bouquet (hint of nutty slack in this, pal) so that the bar looked like a CAMRA night out.

I was chatting with Keith Blair on the subject of noise and illegal pipes when Malcolm Nash claimed he was insured with his race cans fitted. I do not see how that can be because the Association of British Insurers require each policy to contain a clause to the effect that the “owner has a duty of care to maintain his machine in road-worthy condition at all times”. Fitting products which are sold as “Not for Road Use” negates that clause so all the clowns out there with race pipes are uninsured - all the estimated quarter of a million of them. Scary stuff.

Dinner. General consensus is that the food over the weekend was excellent. I loved the description of the wines on the menu claiming that the Cabernet Malbec was “vibrant blackcurrants on the nose, with a fruity palate” or the Chardonnay which was “a rich full wine with tropical fruit flavours and oak complexities”. Looking round the room, I failed to spot those with blackcurrants on the nose or others searching for oak complexities. It looked much more like a bunch of lads who had had a great day on their bikes and who were working on Dorothy Parker’s edict that she drank to ensure that body and soul were kept as far apart as possible.

The Quiz was explained by Tony for those, like me, who do not even

understand the questions. Our Norman Hyde got it right and claimed the RAC membership. Keith did his slick whip round the room and prised coin from each and everyone for being exceedingly silly at some point over the weekend. That is such a difficult thing to do. I must offer my admiration to Keith and his predecessors. It would be easy to be sarcastic or insulting but this rarely happens, to the credit of those who undertake such a terrifying job. Dave Martin did tell me that three times in eight years he felt the room go cold when he had misjudged a remark which is a hell of a record.

At the meeting on Sunday, we read from the Agenda dated 23rd, i.e. the Monday - shurely shome mistake, Mr

Goodman - that the Autumn Run is scheduled for October 12th-14th. Hugh Palin thought this was wrong. So Nick Jeffery called Peter who confirmed the date as 12th-14th October. See you there.

PS: my thanks to Nick Hopkins for sending me copious photocopies of extracts from Alfred Wainwright's book "Wainwright in the Limestone Dales", the "Railway Years in Chapel le Dale" and the anorak book of the century, the "Two way Guide to the Settle Line" by James R Wood (his words, not mine). He did this on top of, with Martyn, organising a super run. Diamond geezer.

Alan Baker

Members and their machines

Graham Goodman	1085cc BMW R1100GS
Martin Lambert	1199cc Kawasaki ZRX 1200S
Dennis Bates	598cc Yamaha XJ600S Diversion
Nick Jeffery	125cc Benelli Adiva 150 enclosed scooter
Alan Baker	649cc Honda CX650 Turbo
Wilf Harrison	798cc BMW R80
Bob Trigg	749cc Yamaha FZ 750
Keith Davies	1180cc Triumph Trophy 1200
Norman Hyde	1157cc Suzuki GSF1200S Bandit
Maurice Knight	385cc Suzuki GS400
Geoff Selvidge	599cc Kawasaki ZZ-R600
Keith Blair	740cc BMW K75 RT
Tony Dawson	1188cc Yamaha FJ1200
David Strathcarron	987cc BMW K100
Dave Martin	1084cc Honda ST1100A Pan European
Tom Waterer	652cc BMW F650gs
Nick Hopkins	944cc Ducati 944 ST2
Peter Meek	892cc Yamaha Diversion 900
Frank Finch	998cc Yamaha YZF-R1
David Hill	996cc Cagiva Raptor
Mike Jackson	649cc Kawasaki 650W
Martyn Roberts	1157cc Suzuki GSF1200S Bandit
David O'Neill	748cc Honda VFR750
Dave Taylor	1130cc BMW R1150RT
Simon Goodman	1450cc Harley-Davidson Dyna Super Glide Sport
Hugh Palin	(Navigator) Ford Transit RAC Rescue Unit
Norman Winchester (RAC)	Driver

Guests and their machines

Denis Matthewman	1955 490cc Norton ES2
Tony Jakeman	749cc Suzuki GSXR750
Jonathan Martin	599cc Kawasaki ZZ-R600
Mike Russell de Clifford	996cc Cagiva Navigator 1000
Dan Sager	599cc Suzuki Bandit 600N
Paul Peters	849cc Yamaha TRX 850
Mark Foster	1188cc Yamaha FJ1200
David Dew	848cc BMW R850GS
Malcolm Nash	999cc Honda VTR 1000