



Membership of the Motor Cycle Industry's Executive Clubs is restricted to invited Senior Executives of the Motor Cycle Manufacturing and Importing Industry including components and accessories

Starley House, Eaton Road, Coventry, CV1 2FH  
Telephone Number 0203 27427  
Telex 31590

## AUTUMN CLUB RUN, RUGBY

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People don't understand. They think we are stark raving bonkers.

Why would 30 Good Men and True put a week end aside each autumn simply to spend most of Saturday riding a motorcycle around the landscape in pouring rain. Yet that's what a lot of us have done and - Sod's Law permitting - will continue to do in the autumns that lie ahead. One has to say that whilst certain aspects of these Autumn Rain Rides are a trifle uncomfortable it would be very difficult to kick the habit; thereafter staying at home and (along with the Queen) watching the wrestling on T.V. So, Rollo Denbigh's Rugby Run will go into the record book as another fine Run inconvenienced ever so slightly by a spot of precipitation.

The kindred spirits and their guests duly converged from all directions upon the Dun Cow Hotel, Dunchurch. This convivial hostelry sported a generous Car Park area which always makes it that much easier for the "unloaders" to indulge in a spontaneous session of bench racing. The more senior Members in our midst were delighted to monitor the arrival of Peter Bolton complete with a sparkling GS80 which was literally bolted to the trailer upon which the machine travelled. A few stalwarts helped Pee Bee detach the Bee Emm during which occasion a so called m/c industry observer was heard to ask whether Peter - in his Puch days - had ever managed to screw down the Austrian factory management quite as tightly as this bike was secured to the trailer! His reply is unprintable in a respectable family Newsletter such as this.....

Then, as sure as night follows day, a great thirst descended upon the multitude whereby a congenial pre-dinner gathering in the Bar was the only way in which this predicament could be resolved!

Dinner, to a high standard, passed pleasantly. Ambience, and several other fluids, flowed in abundance. The Clerk of the Course who would appear to have recently installed a Colour Photocopier in the Estate Office gave an outline briefing on the events of the morrow or at least what he thought (and we, too, thought) we'd be doing. Like other worthy organisers before him Rollo was momentarily put off guard when he ■■■ mistakenly thought Dave Martin was actually paying attention.... this incident set most of the mood for the remainder of the evening - during which time a gallon or three of Warwickshire's finest was downed only to be almost immediately re-sprayed against a glazed wall. It would be nigh impossible to recount every anecdote related or record every friendship renewed; in fact your newsletter noter was so happily attached to an unfaltering supply of draught Guinness that he noticed nowt 'twixt the end of the supper and the beginning of breakfast next day. Nevertheless a number of our more restrained and/or disciplined Members confirmed that it was a fine old evening.

---see p.2---

The Route Card was nothing if not factual. Turn left, turn left, turn right, over A5, turn left and so on. To be honest if one was choosing a good day's motorcycling one wouldn't automatically choose the Rugby/Leics area; neither did a quick run through the Route Card dispel any of these misgivings. But one needn't have worried. Almost immediately after the 9 o'clock start we were in good motorcycling country. The Coffee Stop was a 41 mile meander away through the meadows. The village names, through which we passed, reflect the rurality of this part of the route. How about: Kites Hardwick, Leamington Hastings, Ashby St. Ledgers, Yelvertoft. The meadows were green but the weather was grey. One prayed that the coffee would be black, and hot. In the final approach to the Coffee Stop at Foxton Locks we passed close by grim looking Gartree prison. Whilst a fortress of that size is unlikely ever to be filled with motorcycle tycoons (or should that be ex motorcycle tycoons) many of us had a quick ponder concerning all the motorcycle folk we knew, or knew of, who had been - or were about to be - detained at Her Majesty's pleasure. None of 'em, thankfully, members of The Club.

Foxton Locks was an interesting spot. I have always thought of the Grand Union Canal as a flooded early nineteenth century motorway cum waterway. They should have called it the WI. Foxton is perhaps the Spaghetti Junction of the canal system because it encompasses a Y junction together with a formidable series of locks. The pub itself is located in the crook of the Y which only goes to prove that our great great grandfathers knew a thing or two about planning for 20th century tourists. We had made good time to Foxton so there was no great pressure to remount too soon. The inclement weather discouraged sitting outside but it was not difficult to fantasize about balmy summer evenings in this place complete with punts, pints of Pimms, pretty girls ..... yes, there is life beyond the world of motorcycles.

Lunch was 35 miles further on. Yet again the chosen route, with Leicester's mighty conurbation barely ten miles to our left, was a cracker. A look at the map, cold, gave no clue that there was such excellent riding this close to a large town. So, it was a happy group of riders who converged on the Noel Arms at Whitwell, which could just as easily have been called Atewell. There was a choice of Menu, about which we had decided the previous evening, but having dutifully taken down all the details Rollo had committed the cardinal sin of "enjoying his own party" with the result that he had forgotten to telephone it all through on the Friday night. A frantic session on the stately 'phone, early Saturday morning, saved the day - needless to say it was another good lunch in a very long series of good lunches. At times, it seems these Runs parallel commercial television. There are people who insist they enjoy the ads far more than the actual programmes. Similarly, as senility approaches, I can see the Coffee/Lunch and Tea Stops proving more enjoyable than the motorcycling. In fact, the ambition of a proficient Club Run organiser is to present a well balanced package during the 40 or so hours that the Members are under his stewardship. It is, perhaps, timely to remind ourselves that in the early Seventies neither the motorcycling or the catering was to the standard that The Club have enjoyed over the past decade. The bikes are better, too!

We were due to cruise on Rutland Water in the afternoon but wind conditions were too severe. However, we rode around the perimeter of this massive man made lake secure in the knowledge that if the decision to set sail had been an affirmative one our excellent lunch would have been in imminent danger of being re-cycled! Meanwhile, Rollo had been back on the mobile 'phone (they are an option on full dress Harleys) and had persuaded the folk at Foxton Locks to take us for a cruise on the canal, instead. Talk about thinking on your feetboards.

Soon after leaving Rutland water we came upon quaintly named Uppingham, well known as a boarding school for the sons and daughters of minor gentlefolk. If I was Mayor of Uppingham I'd do my best to twin the town with Effingham and Blindingham but maybe he doesn't see this as a priority. From Uppingham the road descended via some challenging sweeps and curves through the appropriately named village of Blaston and then, less dramatically, back to Foxton. The Rugby Run comprised 5 riding sessions interspersed with the appropriate Catering Stops and so on. In my view the Whitwell to Foxton section was the best of the five mini-runs.

It had started to rain back at Foxton so we boarded hastily and set forth at a steady 5 knots. Luckily we were in a covered boat so helmets could be removed. You can imagine, however, the sight from the bank of a boat at this pace filled with beleathered motorcyclists most of them kitted to travel at 125 miles per hour. One old chap on the towpath thought we were distinctly overdressed for the speed that boat was achieving. Canal statistics are an impressive if slightly saddening experience. The helmsman was a true canal enthusiast and regaled his immediate circle of listeners with how it used to be, and how it is now. It is a great tragedy, in a way, that the railways arrived before the UK canal network had fully established itself. According to our guide just 20 years more would have provided the canals with the expansion and development they needed - as it was the railway network very rapidly made canals redundant and many hundreds of miles of waterways fell into disrepair. Present Govingment investment/expenditure on the canals, he said, is about £50m p.a. but they really need three times that! We told him that this was beyond the Club's budget but if ever we got around to pushing the boat out .....

It was raining harder as we disembarked and set off for the Denbigh Tea Rooms at Monks Kirby. It was a damp ride over to Newnham Paddox where Family Denbigh graciously opened up their home to 30 sodden steaming guests together with a few dry(er) old sticks, ex the RAC Van. If the Club were to hold a Referendum it would be interesting to pre-judge the result of just how many Members and their dear wives would happily accept three dozen dripping motorcyclists clomping into the house on a Saturday afternoon, some of them with the appetite of locusts. Somehow or other we stripped down in the hayloft until a dry layer appeared and then, provided the wearer was still respectable, in he went over the Axminster and got on with his cucumber sandwiches. Whilst there might have been some Members amongst us who had not previously taken Tea in a stable everybody was immediately at ease - quite a few of us in fact would have quite contentedly remained chez Denbigh and not got back on a bike until the following Spring! It was a sumptuous Tea which exceeded anything this consumer has experienced over two decades of Club Runs. All too soon, though, it was once again time to battle the rain even if several gallons of the stuff were already trapped, but well below body temperature, in the riding kit so willingly discarded 30 minutes before.

The dash for Dunchurch was definitely one damp ride, much of it along the Fosse Way and much of that at a very high velocity indeed. As so often happens on rainy Runs there is a greater enthusiasm for a warm bath, upon reaching Base Camp, than there is to try somebody else's hot motorcycle which, in sunny conditions, one would be queuing up to put a leg over. On this occasion only Dave Martin and the irrepressible Nick Jeffrey were seen to sample other people's motorcycles. Naturally enough it was Simon Goodman's exciting looking Goodman that kept these two stalwarts out of the bathtub (not the same bathtub, you understand) and thrashing through the puddles. If you haven't yet set eyes on Simon's creation then you have missed what could easily become a milestone motorcycle. The Goodman has been loosely described as a modern day Norvin

combining as it does a Featherbed frame and vee twin power courtesy of Harley's New Evolution engine. With state of the art tyres, disc brakes etc. he has used the best available parts from several worlds. Production will undoubtedly prove more daunting than sales but if the numbers start happening here is a machine that, like Tritons and Metisses in days of yore, will succeed sans any input from Japan. A refreshing thought.

And so to Dinner. There is a positive correlation between the grottier the riding conditions through the Saturday the greater the enjoyment of Saturday evening's social side. Some say it's the Thawing Out process at work although the Rugby Run will be better remembered for its rain rather than for low extremes of temperature. I suppose there were some Members present still trying to get warm after the snow we ran into on the Diss Run the previous April, and one does sympathise ..... our timings preclude that a Run will ever coincide with a Heatwave but that would be a nicer kind of problem to face. The company was embellished by 3 fresh Arrivals who joined us pre Dinner, in the Bar. (Peter Britton, John Nelson and the President himself, Doug Hele). Thirty years earlier (1961) we could have believed their excuse that "Ed Turner insisted we worked on all day at Meriden". Maybe they'd been watching the wrestling.

Dinner was leisurely and congenial albeit a mite boisterous. Maybe they were hoping Dave Martin would keel over, or would suffer loss of memory, before The Fines. The Fines are now to Club Rubs what The Troubles are to Northern Ireland ..... if you see what I mean. They are very much part of it. Dave Martin was in scintillating form. Someone said it was something he drank and somebody more knowledgeable said it was far more likely it was something he rode. Whatever, he took money from Members and their guests almost as if they were in the Misdemeanour Business on a full time basis. He also expanded Club Funds by around Twenty Guineas. By contrast The Raffle was pretty non controversial but it too swelled The Club coffers. Members have traditionally never failed to respond with a wide variety of Raffle donations - over many years - so it is opportune to record the Committee's genuine appreciation of this generosity.

Your scribe apologises at this point for his inability to chronicle the highlights of our President's very witty impromptu address, after Dinner, or to publish some of the wittier Fines imposed by Sergeant at Arms, Dave Martin. In the first instance I mislaid the notes and, concerning the Fines, Dave's scrawl so kindly provided simply proved unreadable - maybe they are in Italian - so this Run Report will be slightly shorter than heretofore.

Meanwhile, the evening continued to unfold part of which was another upside down pint sinking session by Simon Goodman, standing on his head. Members who saw this feat (and Simon's feet) very generously donated a further fifty quid to Club Funds. One hardly dare imagine how good a motorcycle Simon'd build if he spent more time upright! The evening continued late and liquid. One feels Bill Smith would've approved even if it meant attending (and paying attention at) The Club General Meeting a few hours later that same morning.

Thankfully, Hugh Palin was warmly (though belatedly) commended through the Chair for yet again providing RAC back-up. This is such a comforting "belt and braces" type of mobile asset that we must never ever take this for granted. The highlight at the Sunday morning meeting was a presentation by Peter Sheen outlining the forthcoming Spring Run to France, slotted for 23-26th April, which I shall henceforth refer to as The Normandy Landings. (Since September 91 we have been kept well informed about this Run which will undoubtedly prove to be a masterpiece

of organisation. The Montgomery and Eisenhower project of June '44 seems a very under organised affair by comparison). Certainly the participants concerned are anticipating this little overseas adventure with great enthusiasm.

The Clerk of the Course (Organiser) of The Autumn 92 Club Run - to be held in Hampshire - was asked if there was anything the Meeting needed to know at this stage. With uncharacteristic brevity he replied "We must all remember to ride on the left". Mais oui, c'est vrai!!

The General Meeting then drew to a close, and we all dispersed. Every departee had undoubtedly experienced a most fulfilling weekend and one can be sure that Rollo's Rugby Run will do absolutely nothing to decrease the popularity of these weekend gatherings, irrespective of whatever the weather decides to do.

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Footnote I. It would have been sensible, somewhere in the text above, to have mentioned that both our Chairman and the Clerk of the Course brought along their respective 20 year old sons. What a revelation they proved to be. They kept up; they were polite; they laughed at Members' jokes no matter how corny and they appeared to enjoy the general proceedings. They were both a credit to their fathers & we shall be delighted to see them again.

Footnote II. Kindly note that the 1992 Autumn Club Run, based upon Stockbridge in Hampshire, has a revised date - October 9th, 10th and 11th.

Willie Wheelspin

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