

The Club Spring Run 2023

Bradford-on-Avon: 14th – 16th April

Organisers: Dan Sager & Graham Matcham

All eyes were on the weather in the week preceding the run; would it be fine or a continuation of the 'wet as a wet fish on a Friday' stuff we had been having for quite some time. Indeed, your scribe had been to Bradford-on-Avon seven days earlier, helping co-organiser Dan recheck the first part of the route and to sample a few storms of Biblical proportions, which threw down hailstones big enough to hurt, even through thick gloves!

In the event, the weather was kind on the run but that recce had proved fruitless as, on the day, Dan turned too early (after completely missing the correct turn the week before) and, almost literally, led 39 bemused followers up a garden path! Still, at least I had an hour in Bradford to look around so the recce wasn't entirely wasted...

Bradford-on-Avon is a town built on Roman origins which grew rapidly in the 17th Century thanks to the wool trade. Although only a short gladius lobe to Bath, itself steeped in Roman history, it would appear not to have been on a major Roman road. But it did mark a crossing point on the river Avon, hence the name 'Broad Ford on the Avon'. Perhaps it was a purely agricultural area in them days?

From the hotel down to the town centre, there is a steepish descent with a challenging bend half way down, I say challenging because there is a mahoosive shiny metal manhole cover right on the bend and your poor sap of a scribe had to negotiate that, and the bin men, in a downpour on the way back up to meet Dan! Anyway, I digress.



The town centre is quite compact with clear evidence of its wool heritage in the converted mills, now 'bijou residences'. In my meander around the centre, I came across a rarity in these modern times – a tobacconist. Well, a shop dispensing packaged coffee, tea and chocolate as well as pipes and smoking accoutrements. It was run by a biker called Ed (*left*) who rides a Yamaha XV950R he calls Danielle. Apparently his now ex-wife wouldn't let him have a bike so he bought it with his divorce settlement and named it in her honour!

The town also boasts a couple of Olympians: Ed McKeever the Kayaker and Swimmer Jazz Carlin, both are commemorated by plaques on the river footbridge. In fact there are many high profile Bradfordians but let me just relate a tale of one – Will Carling OBE, born in the town in 1965.

Back in 1994, England Rugby Captain Will met a certain Princess Diana whilst working out in a Chelsea gym; rumours were rife that the two of them were bonking. Around the time the story was breaking, your scribe attended a large 'motivational' sales conference at the ICC in Birmingham; Carling was the keynote speaker. Halfway through his motivational address a (then rare) mobile phone rang out from the audience. Without missing a beat Will said, "Fuck me, if that's her again, tell her I'm busy." He brought the house down!

Of course, the most interesting bits about Bradford for club members are the links to motorcycles. Firstly, via the rubber industry and then, post war, the production of Royal Enfield models Crusader, Meteor, Meteor Minor and the Constellation. And, if you're interested, Marcos Cars were also built here.

The rubber company, S [Stephen] Moulton and Co, was set up in 1848. A range of rubber goods were made including buffers, springs and hose pipes for Isambard Kingdom Brunel's burgeoning Great Western Railway. Tennis balls, gas capes for the Crimean War and strangely, elastic hot-water beds were all made at some stage before the company (by then the Spencer Moulton Rubber Company) was sold to the Avon Company in Melksham in 1956 - the past employers of Alan Blake and Graham Matcham of course.



The name 'Moulton' may be familiar to you by way of the folding small wheel bicycle that carries the same name. The late Dr Alex Moulton CBE RDI Feng (*left astride his Honda*) was the great grandson of Stephen Moulton and after the war, joined the family rubber business having left the Bristol Aeroplane Company where he had spent 2 years as PA to the Chief Engineer, Sir Roy Fedden.

When the company was sold to Avon, 'AM' set up Moulton Developments to concentrate on design of vehicle suspension systems – amongst which numbered the Mini. From this business came the Moulton Bicycle launched at the Earls Court bicycle show in 1962.

Royal Enfield arrived in the Bradford area much later in 1941, when they moved into the safety of the old underground stone workings at Westwood Quarry. Here they manufactured Type 3 Predictor sights for anti-aircraft guns and control equipment for Bofors guns. They shared the space with a repository for the art collections of the British and Victoria and Albert museums, expatriated during the Blitz. Some items from Buckingham Palace were also stored here.

The pictures on the right show the entrance to the factory and a couple of post war ads. If you would like to get a feel for the place here is a linky thing to click to take you to a short YouTube film. [Westwood Quarry RE Factory](#)

Post war, as well as the underground factory, they spread out into the surrounding area too, building bikes initially from spare parts. The Westwood factory continued building the Constellation until RE's UK demise in 1970.

On a more sinister note, during 1950/1, scientists from Porton Down carried out the 'Westwood Trials'; a biological warfare experiment where aerosols containing live Anthrax type pathogens were sprayed into the air conditioned space vacated by the art depository to simulate an attack on a building. These pathogens were then expelled via the entrance tunnel used by the RE workers, who allegedly knew nothing of the trials. Luckily it seems no-one fell ill as a result. Scary stuff eh?



Friday's forecast for the ride to Bradford was very Marti Pellow – Wet Wet Wet! After meeting up with Ian Kerr and Roy Pinto at my gaff we rode off to pick up my guest Simon Belton, just by junction 11 of the M4. A hold up back on the (not so) smart motorway saw us leave an exit early and after the snotravle that is Newbury, we enjoyed a 'spirited' cross country ride via Marlborough and Silbury Hill to get to the hotel early doors with nobbut a couple of showers to dampen our enthusiasm.

David O'Neill was quick to come out of the hotel to greet us with a cheery handshake and a request to help him unload his inter-galactic BMW from the back of his hire van. Donning sunglasses to avoid the dazzle from the flouro paint scheme, the bike was gingerly manhandled down an exceedingly narrow ramp and re-united with Mother Earth – a perfect re-entry.

Whilst this was all going on another behemoth BMW rocked up with the svelte figure of Steve Lomas aboard. After introductions all round, it turns out that Steve was Neil Tuxworth's guest. The pair had overnighted at a place in Moreton-in-Marsh and shortly after departure, had become separated, not to meet up again until the hotel bar. That in itself somewhat stretches credulity but more was to come: Tux as we know eschews most forms of technology and so was relying on Steve's satnav to be pathfinder and without him he was, well, stuffed! With a supreme act of self-sacrifice, Neil had entered a den of iniquity – MacDonald's – to ask for directions!

Now all good stories have to have a running gag (think Trigger in Only Fools and Horses: 'Alright Dave?' and of course, the broom) and this was ours. Neil Tuxworth's disappearing guest, MacDonald's and of course, for good measure, the scooter that identifies as a motorbike!!



With 30 members and 10 guests on this run the car park was soon filling up with a wide variety of two wheel exotica. One was perhaps hoping to see a new generation BSA Gold Star alongside of Dan's Royal Enfield but no, the only BSA offering was Nick Hopkins' 1955 Small Heath built 500cc B33.

Nick as you know has more than one BSA to his name and told your scribe that he came on the bigger one because he "Didn't want to hold anyone up". Hold that thought for a moment as it came back to bite his arse later!

The introduction of the weekend's guests was always going to be a marathon and so it proved.

Norman kicked off by introducing his son Alexander, a Veterinary. Apparently a Vet can legally operate on people whereas a Doctor cannot legally operate on animals. He went on to say that Alex had in the past threatened to put him to sleep: at which point it was suggested that we have a whip-round!



Frank was short and sweet introducing Gary Hartshorne of Bridgestone tyres. This was Gary's 2nd run as he had joined the autumn 2016 run to Co Wexford in Ireland. A long time between runs for the affable Gary!

Mark Fenwick, UK top man for Hoco Parts, was introduced by David O'Neill. Joining MCN as an Area Manager in 1999, Mark's time on 2 wheels appeared to be a catalogue of broken bones sustained in sport and testing; indeed it sounded like he could have given Barry Sheene a run for his x-rays!

Club history was made when Nick Hopkins introduced his guest Barbara Alam, the first female to join a run. Barbara is a well-travelled tour guide with Globbusters as well as working with husband Craig in Rowan Public Affairs, where she is the Secretary of the All Party Parliamentary Motorcycle Group.

Top image clockwise from top: Alex, Gary, Barbara and Mark.



Your scribe introduced one of the club's great servants in Simon Belton - on his 1st run. How so? Well during his time in marketing at Kawasaki, Yamaha and KTM he has provided more bikes for more members to use on runs than even Keith Davies! Simon is now semi-retired after his time at Oxford Products.

Simon Hill introduced the first of 3 SCH Moto Prep guests in Chris Lee who runs the Moto Prep Centre at Sywell. Nigel Bosworth introduced Max Barnes who also works at the Sywell Centre and finally Stephen Burgess introduced Lee Davis, a born again biker, who is the CEO of Stephens SCH Empire, including the Southampton stevedoring operation and Moto Prep.

Guest Steve Miller is another CEO, this time the gaffer of Steve Callahan at Dawsongroup plc. Apparently in 6 years of riding Steve has amassed 17 bikes!

Neil Tuxworth rose slowly from his seat with the words "I'd like to introduce my so called friend, Steve Lomas". Steve was a professional speedway rider for 12 years riding for Weymouth, Hackney, Wolverhampton, Edinburgh and Boston as well as guesting for many others. Now the owner of specialist wire wheel building company Five-One Wheels.

Clockwise from top: Steve Lomas (in his Speedway days), Simon Belton and Steve Miller and the MotoPrep boys - Chris, Max and Lee.



It was a classic bit of theatre when Dan and Graham delivered the run briefing. First off Dan paced the floor and 'projected,' (think Rumpole of the Bailey delivering a final address to a jury) as he explained the plans for the morrow. When he was drawing to a close, Graham stepped up and explained that there would be a small diversion around the lunch stop area.

With his audience in the palm of his hand, Graham told us that he had been contacted by the Marquess of Bath who had heard that a group of eminent motorcyclists would be passing close to his Longleat Safari Park and wondered if we could help him with an experiment...



It seems the 8th Marquess had been advised that the park was missing an opportunity by not allowing motorcycles to ride through the safari enclosure and wondered if we would like to try it and report back.



Predictably, the Elf and Safety Team at the park had insisted that only one rider should attempt this and so it had been decided that a name should be drawn out of the hat to see who would be getting up close and personal with the lions.

The Chairman was asked to make the draw and the lucky winner was ... Norman!

Calling our hero forward, Graham then presented our own Great White Hunter - 'Hemmingway Hyde' - with suitable head gear, whilst continuing to frighten the bejeezus out of him for a little longer; before explaining that it was only a prank and bestowing a stuffed Leo to a much relieved Norman! I suppose it will come as no surprise then, when I tell you that your scribe's subsequent investigation revealed that all the tickets in the hat had the same name on them...



Which leads us nicely on to the Club's other great institution: the raffle.

Re-introduced by Chairman Ben last autumn in Scotland, this time around, the Tuttmeister General was Andrew Smith who, as we all know, generally makes sure that the bringer of any prize considered unworthy *will* receive it back! He's a sort of club Secret Santa really.



The raffle table carried no boxes of Cadburys Roses or UKIP promotional DVDs this time; nor was there any evidence of those lastminute.com bottles of hotel wine. But there was, perhaps, a certain disdain in Andrew's voice as he told us that the prizes fell into one of two camps: either the contents of top-boxes, tank bags and rucksacks various or recycled Christmas books, with the latter, he opined, making up 47% of the prizes!

Nevertheless, he did a grand job of, if not exactly polishing the proverbial, at least sprinkling glitter on it! In this entertaining task, he was ably assisted by Tim Albone who handed the prizes to the happy (and some not so!) winners. With the prize table emptied, the formal proceedings were at a close shortly before 9.30.

For aficionados of the 'full English' it's fair to say that breakfast was disappointing; no fried eggs, and bacon so undercooked that I swear Alex Hyde could have resuscitated it! The Continental approach (Graham's favourite!) was certainly the way to go. Given that Organiser Dan is an official ambassador of the *Bury Black Pudding Twisters Club and Institute*, the omission of this super food from the breakfast fayre was somewhat puzzling!

It was a shame really as the dinner service on both nights was very acceptable. Still we come on club runs for the camaraderie and riding, not a gourmet weekend. But, I am sure there are others (Tom) like me who mourn the loss of a good plate of kippers, or a nice bit of finny haddock, on a club run breakfast plate. You know, the stuff we are not allowed to have at home by the order of our nasally sensitive, significant others! (*Ed: No, it's just you and Tom!*)

With breakfast duly dispatched, it was time to don the gear, wipe the early morning dampness from the bikes and form a haphazard line behind Dan, who would be our morning leader. There is always a certain 'jockeying for position' as no one wants to be the first corner marker; in this case dropped off 50 yards from the start at the end of the hotel drive!

Dan told me later that as he turned out of the hotel and headed off, no one followed him meaning he was already waiting for the pack inside the first half mile. Damn those Enfields are quick!

Anyway, we sorted ourselves out in the short distance up to the tricky right turn onto the A363, heading for the topside of Bath.

Soon after the junction, where a friendly car driver stopped and waved a good portion of the pack across; we were riding through woodlands. The roads were still damp with the run off from Friday's rain. A close inspection of the excellent (scaleable) route map already up on the club website, shows this stretch of road between Farleigh Wick and Bathford to be called '*Sally in the Wood*'. With a name like that it just *has* to be investigated!



The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre website wshc.org.uk proffers three explanations. The first of these is the one favoured by ghost and ghouls¹ hunters and that is that a young girl, dressed in white, ran from the woods and was knocked down and killed by a young couple in a car. Her ghost haunts the eerie woods "where no birds sing".

The second theory is related to a skirmish in the Civil War when the Roundheads were ambushed in the woods by the Royalists ahead of the battle of Lansdown in July 1643. You know, as in 'Sally [forth] in the wood'.

The populist (and supposedly true) theory concerns the widow of a local gamekeeper, Sarah Gibson, who was known as Sally. When her husband Jack died in 1783, aged 58, she was turfed out of her tied cottage by her late husband's employers, the Skrine Family of nearby Warleigh Manor. She went off to live secretly in the woods in a gamekeepers hut and eked out a living as a 'white witch', or as we would probably call her now, an herbalist.



Now, as well as dispensing potions to the local sick, she used to stand by the roadside offering her wares to passing travellers who, if they refused to buy, would be cursed: a bit like the 'gypsies' with their bunches of nicked heather in your local town centre. Apparently there have been 8 fatal accidents on this stretch of road with 7 of them being unexplained and that, supposedly, supports the theory.

Sally Gibson did actually exist apparently and died a black cat's whisker short of 100 years old. If you are interested in the whole 9 yards of this story [click here](#) if not, read on dear reader!

Shortly after this gloomy section we joined the bottom end of the A46, following a short stretch on the A4. Heading north on the A46 there were great views to the left (west) side of the road around the Tadwick area, just before we swung west on the A420. From here on, it got a bit nadgery; partly because the target was to do a couple of passes over the Clifton Suspension Bridge and to get there we had to go north of Bath and south of Bristol. Not only were the roads busy with other people were trying to avoid the centre of these conurbations, but they also had more than their fair share of traffic light controlled, deserted, road works.

But the main issue was, to quote Jimmy Anderson (the hapless Brother in Law of Reggie Perrin), there was a 'bit of a cock up on the navigation front'...

¹ What do you call a ghouls hunter? And what if there are 2 of them? (A shamefully paraphrased Jasper Carrott gag, circa 1973!)

Just beyond Keynsham, that's the K-E-Y-N-S-H-A-M of the 1960s Football Pools Predictor Horace Batchelor (who used to advertise extensively on Radio Luxembourg if you remember), a comparison of my satnav recorded track and the planned route we had tried to follow on that recce the week before, deviated. We ended up on a narrow track called Highwall Lane. The picture on the right, courtesy of Mr Google's excellent Street View, was taken on a good day: there's little in the way of the slimy mud and gravel that was much in evidence when we tackled it.



Of course, all the GS riders were straight up on the footpegs styling it out and Tom had a grin so wide he made the Cheshire Cat look miserable. The rest of us just tried to avoid the embarrassment of going a pisser!

Dan had no option of course but to press on and hope to regain the planned route without too much time lost. Look hard at the route on the website and you will see the blip!



With the correct route regained it was onwards and upwards in our tour of south Bristol's traffic jams and road works via Chew Magna, Bristol Airport (almost) and the quaintly named Barrow Gurney. During World War 2, Chew Magna was chosen as a 'Starfish Site' where fires were lit and automatic anti-aircraft guns were fired to fool the Luftwaffe into thinking this was Bristol and thus diverting the bombs. It worked of a fashion.

I was quite excited when we passed through Barrow Gurney imagining that its name came about because it was on an old coffin route. Alas subsequent investigation has revealed that it is probably a derivation of the name Nigel de Gournay who won the land fighting for William 1st. However, the town once had 3 mills and one of these was converted by a Bristol tobacconist to make snuff – and that's the closest link I can come up with between mortuary trolleys and snuffing it!

A short route deviation was planned into the route so that we could enjoy not one but 2 crossings of the Clifton Suspension Bridge. The views from the bridge are spectacular and I just wish my old worn out knees would have allowed me to go all GS and stand on the pegs for a better view, sadly they did not.



It was a busy place on this fine Saturday morning and so other than at the pay barriers, there was no stopping to admire Brunel's great triumph. Actually, that's not true, there was a smidgen of a break after Nick H stalled his Beeza making a tight turn to re-cross the bridge and it went all moody on him and refused to restart for a few kicks.

Left: the 'holding point' prior to the 1st crossing of the bridge

The bridge took 33 years to build so it was one of, if not the, first project that IKB embarked upon. But sadly he never saw it finished as he died 2 years before it opened.

It is one of the few bridges of the era that has not required any significant strengthening. Apparently they tested it with loads of up to 500 tons during construction. The weight limits now are 4 tons laden or 2.5 tons axle weight, if you're interested. There is some debate in engineering circles as to whether the design of the bridge is down to IKB or the engineers that completed the build, Barlow and Hawkshaw. They redesigned the bridge with a sturdier deck and triple chains in place of the planned double ones of Brunel.



With a span of 214m and a drop of 75m to the high water mark, remarkably only 2 men died during its construction. But the bridge does have an unenviable history of suicides, notably Nicolette Powell the wife of Georgie Fame in 1993. Most odd was 22 year old Sarah Henley who jumped off the bridge in 1885 but survived due to her billowing skirts acting as a parachute and her landing in soft mud: she lived to see her 80s! In 1957 an RAF Vampire flown by P/O John Greenwood-Crossley attempted a victory roll under the deck but he crashed into Leigh Woods killing himself and causing a landslip that blocked the Bristol to Portishead railway line.

And speaking of Railways, as most of you know, Dan quite likes trains and when he is not being a Fabulous



Biker Boy, he enjoys nothing more than volunteering on the Chinnor and Princes Risborough heritage line where he has already risen to the heady heights of Station Master!

It should have come as no surprise then that the coffee stop was in a railway carriage; albeit off the beaten main line behind the Garden Centre at Tickenham, by Clevedon.

We rocked up in the garden centre car park and created chaos by circling the car park,

'Rebel Without a Cloche' style, parking anywhere and everywhere we liked – nobody argues with the Chrysanthemum Chapter of the Hells Grandads! No, not even when we formed a long queue to get into the café, or when we purloined the Ladies loo as well as the Gents: we're well hardy us! Well at least down to H1c, which in this case is an RHS tender plant rating rather than a Kawasaki motorcycle!

Jumping off my bike, TEC Graham told me that this would only be a quick stop as we were already an hour behind schedule: well we would be wouldn't we? It was a train after all!

With this, and the length of the queue to get a brew in mind, I elected to just 'splash and dash' and spend the time in the car park listing who was riding what. Your scribe is therefore indebted to 'Casey' Sager for providing pictures of what I missed!



Leaving Tickenham Garden Village we set off heading south in the general direction of Cheddar Gorge. The first couple of miles were pretty featureless; a pass under, then over the M5 in short order followed by long straight roads down to Yatton, a town voted one of the worst places in Somerset to live! In fact, according to Garrington property finders, Yatton sits at number 1,254 in a list of 1,372 locations surveyed. The sooner we were out of there the better!

Once Congresbury too had passed under the wheels, the scenery and road became much more interesting. A brief flirtation with the A38 came and went as did the unremarkable village of Shipham and then came Cheddar, which was, predictably, heaving!



I hadn't been to Cheddar Gorge (or as it's known locally, 'The Cheesy Crack') since a synchromesh car gearbox was a novelty, so I was looking forward to riding through it. But on this particular Saturday, it had to be endured rather than enjoyed. Not only was the traffic heavy it was an obstacle course of wobbling cyclists and pedestrians for most of its length.

The speed limit in the gorge was reduced to 30mph some time ago to combat the 'boy racers' as the local papers describe them and it's a hotspot for the Avon and Somerset Plod happy snaps vans. I would imagine that the best time to ride it would be at about 3.30pm on an October Monday afternoon. Shame really. There are plenty of videos on YouTube if you want to relive the ride, just put 'Cheddar Gorge Motorcycle' in the search box.

Leaving the crowded gorge behind, we followed the scenic B3135 across to the A37, passing through Red Quarr and Green Ore, nods to long gone mining operations methinks. Blink and you would miss them both, although there was a set of traffic lights at the latter easing the crossing of the A39 trunk road.

Once on the A37, lunch was almost in sight although first we had to pass through the eastern side of Shepton Mallet and another place crying out for investigation; Cannards Grave.

With a couple of dozen houses and a farm, Cannards Grave doesn't even warrant a dedicated Wiki page but it does have 2 pubs: the Highwayman and the Well Inn (arrowed). The Well Inn used to be called the Cannards Grave Inn and the pub sign pictured a gibbet.



In the 17th Century the landlord was one Giles Cannard, also known as Tom the Taverner: respectable host by day, thoroughly bad lad by night. He allegedly got customers drunk so he could rob them and also sold the details of others to local highwaymen. He may even have been a highwayman himself, or a forger, or a sheep rustler, or all 3!

Stories differ between him hanging himself so he wouldn't be tried as a forger and him being the last man hanged for highway robbery. There is also another story that a Tom Kennard, the last man apparently hanged for sheep stealing, was executed on a gibbet at the adjacent crossroads. You pays yer money and takes yer choice!

The Natterjack Inn served up a great lunch, big plates of assorted sandwiches and chips, just the ticket! Ah, ticket, that's a clue because dear reader, this is another establishment with a railway connection.

The pub used to be called the Railway Hotel and was part of the station buildings at Evercreech Junction on the Somerset and Dorset Line. It will come as no surprise I'm sure when I tell you the line was axed by Beeching in 1966, after which it was cleverly re-named The Silent Whistle until becoming The Natterjack Inn in 1974.



Anyway, the scran was excellent and unusually for the club, there were even leftovers!

For no other reason than to make Dan happy (even though he prefers Diesel to Steam), the picture left is an LMS-type Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2T #41242 (built 10/49, withdrawn 4/65) at Evercreech Junction on 21st July 1962.

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Looking at the aforementioned map on the club website, you will

notice at once that the lunch stop was only about a third of the way around the route and so one could assume that the afternoon's ride would be on quicker roads, particularly as we had to negotiate the outskirts of Sherborne, Wincanton, Wareham and of course the Sandbanks Ferry and Poole! We best crack on then...

Leaving the Natterjack it was on down the A371, a good riding road, past Castle Cary to where it branches off to run parallel with the A303. For us it was straight on at the roundabout to follow the A357 for a couple of blinks of an eye until a right turn onto the B3145, heading for Sherborne.

Your scribe got quite excited when looking closely at that junction on the map as directly opposite is a footpath which is marked as 'Slopers Lane'. With thoughts of old BSA or Panther motorcycle connections to unearth, it turns out that it was nowt to do with bikes after all and was named after a local gadge called Sloper who was a serious religious type. And that's all I can I tell you!



Scooting to the east of Sherborne, I'm sure that quite a few minds wandered, momentarily, back to that very damp run of spring 2012, organised by Gerald Davison and Keith Davies, which was based at the now demolished Sherborne Hotel. We would be riding (very) short sections of that run again and also an (even shorter) section of the 2007 Sherborne run later in the day.

Heading south from Sherborne on the quick and flowing A352, we picked up an unclassified road just below Middlemarsh; which is nothing to do with the similarly titled novel *Middlemarch* by George Eliot. There are some excellent names in these parts and this road is called Tiley Knap. Riding it ensured that members' eyes were spared eyeing the member of the Cerne Giant!



Ed: I know that Martin Lambert will be disappointed to have missed the big white chalky cock, so here it is.

We passed through Piddletrenthide in spring 2012 and if you recall from that run report, the plethora of villages with 'piddle' or 'puddle' in their names around here was because they were in the River Piddle valley: the puddle variants were renamings to avoid causing offence to Queen Victoria when she toured the area. Further investigation this time has revealed that the name Piddletrenthide came about as a result of it being assessed for 30 hides in the Domesday Book; 'trent[e]' being the French word for 30 of course.

The soulless A35 dual carriageway took us topside of Bere Regis, a village with one shop, two pubs and a cheese barn. It was though, the setting of Thomas Hardy's work, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. However, mention must be made of the adjoining village of Shitterton. Dorset is awash with references to toilet functions! This strange name literally translates as 'farmstead on the stream used as an open sewer'; that surely could be anywhere within Thames Water's jurisdiction!



Left: The village sign was stolen so many times the villagers clubbed together for this 1.5 tonne block of carved Purbeck stone!

Branching off the A35, the gang took Sugar Hill, an unclassified, virtually straight road down to Wareham; gateway to the Isle of Purbeck. Tea-break was looming large as we passed the 'Silent Woman' public house before arriving at our scheduled stop. Dan rushed up, grinning from ear to ear saying "Did you see the Silent Woman pub back there? And here we are at the Halfway Inn!" Only he knows what goes on in his noddle... Good job the next pub wasn't called The Old Cock Inn; he would have crashed his bike!

Right: Tea in the sunshine, clockwise from top left – Silly Scribe, Majestic Maurice, guests Lee and Chris and guest Max.



Pleasant as it was sitting in the sun and dunking rich teas, we still had plenty of miles to munch and a ferry to catch, so it was onwards and upwards across the Isle of Purbeck riding past the Civil War reminder that is Corfe Castle and via Studland to Shell Bay and the Sandbanks Ferry.



Left: the view of Corfe Castle courtesy of Mr Google again.

Predictably, the queue for the ferry was long; the good weather had brought the crowds out to this popular area. Luckily, whether by prior arrangement or the 'norm', we were able to use a dedicated lane to get through the ticket booth. Once passed that, it was a shortish wait for the next ferry.

Right: Not long now, thar she blows!



Once aboard and under way, the crossing to Sandbanks only takes around four minutes. Good job really as it was already past 4 o'clock and we still had 60 miles to do once we disembarked...



The bikes were directed into the boat's right hand lane so that they would be first off at the other side. Now, remember that thought I asked you to hold on page 2? It's recall time!

As the ferry ramp ground up the Sandbanks slope, and the bikes up front were waved off, in the middle of the pack was the hapless figure of Nick Hopkins whose recalcitrant BSA refused to chime up, again. KERPLUNK, twist, twist. KERPLUNK, twist, twist; come ONNN! KERPLUNK, twist, twist, boll-OCKS! With the car drivers getting increasingly testy at the delays, we filed past the purple faced Nick and left him to the care of the crew! Luckily, as they pushed him down the ramp with a well-aimed boot, Nick bump-started it and rode off with a cheery wave of thanks.

Pics: On-da-ferry, a couple of interlopers but mainly all ours...



With a 3 finger salute and a dib-dib-dib to Brownsea Island, the birthplace of Lord Baden-Powell's Boy Scout movement, it was off the ferry to negotiate 'Millionaire's Row', aka Sandbanks, and head up towards

Poole and the quicker A-roads back north to the billet. I didn't notice on the day but we passed through Lilliput just before Poole, I suppose it's so small you miss it. Tony Blackburn (an early adopter of the Jet Ski by the way) apparently lived here at some stage and Fred Karno, he of chaotic circus fame, saw out his days as part owner of an off licence: "A bottle of Mackeson, twenty Woodbines and a pie in the face please Mr Karno."



Something else I didn't notice on the day (but is clear on the route map left) was what seems to be a missed turning, just above Upton. It looks like we went one roundabout on the A35 too many; either that or Graham took us that way to see Lytchett Minister, a pretty unremarkable village really.

Once safely on the A350 it was a quick blat up to Blandford Forum, turning right onto the by-pass just short of the Hall and Woodhouse brewery at the Badger Roundabout, named after their most excellent best bitter no doubt. North of Blandford, the A350 follows the western edge of Cranborne Chase on its way up to Shaftesbury, passing through Compton Abbas and west of the airfield where we took tea and cake in 2012.

From here on it was wide open spaces and a fast road with Shaftesbury being the only point where we went through any significant built up areas. Even the last section of B-road from Rode (*Ed: how very apt!*) had an early, dead straight bit 2.25km long with a slight kink left before another long straight leads you into Bradford-on Avon.

Negotiating the centre of the town we crossed the historic Town Bridge. Originally a 12th Century packhorse bridge it was widened in the 17th Century and the small building on the eastern side has been variously used as a chapel, toll



house and a keep. It is topped off with a copper gilt fish weathervane called the 'Bradford Gudgeon' which gives rise to the local saying 'below the fish above the water' for someone in jail.

Well, excuse me! As a retired, maggoty old angler who has pulled hundreds of these little blighters out of the cut in Leicester, that ain't no gudgeon! If anything it's a Perch, or possibly a Zander, so there! Gudgeon indeed, pah!

Left: It's all a bit fishy if you ask me! Inset: the 'Bradford Gudgeon' with a real one above for comparison.

If my puddled brain serves, it was nigh on 6.30 by the time we were back at the hotel. For some it was straight to the bar whilst for the majority it was a hasty freshen up and on with the glad rags as dinner was scheduled for 7.30 and we had to sample more of that fine ale aforehand! And what a pleasure it was to find that Alan Blake was in the garden and would be joining us for dinner.



I was chatting with Alan when Maurice came outside, the dialogue of their greeting was: *AB: "Ey up you old bugger!"* *MK: "Hello you old bastard!"* Priceless, I wouldn't have missed it for the world! I sloped off and left them fencing with their walking sticks...

Clockwise from top left: Blakey in fine fettle; Rick and Arthur cutting it fine; Mark Fenwick and Chris Lee chat with Alan H; Nick explains to Barbara why his Beeza wouldn't start; Frank and guest Gary Hartshorne; A chap who looked like Dr Who actor Peter Capaldi (it wasn't him) and his missus who were at a wedding celebration at the hotel.

Saturday dinner selections were a much more even affair than the previous night but again, the cheese option was the most popular choice for 'afters' with more choosing that than the Crème Brulee and Brownie added together. The vegetarian main of mushroom tagliatelle was again the least popular choice. Still, it was all good tucker.

The Chairman rose to speak and declared that another milestone in the club's history had been reached: the first Club Run with no bread rolls! He went on to toast Absent Friends and whilst this usually refers to our chums who have sadly passed the chequered flag and left us, this time we saluted Simon Hill too who had arrived on Friday but then had gone home again first thing Saturday, feeling poorly.

Was the third milestone of the weekend reached when Andrew proposed the loyal toast – to the King? Queen Elizabeth II passed away just a week before the autumn run last year and as I couldn't make that one, I don't know if it was she or Charles III who was toasted. Someone will put me right I'm sure.

CLUB RUN SATURDAY DINNER		
SOUP Alan Blake Arthur Woodroffe Ben Matthews David Clarke Frank Fenwick Graham Constanter Mark Fenwick Nick Jeffery Peter Fenwick Simon Hill Steve Cullen The Mice	HAM HOCK TERRINE Alan Blake Arthur Woodroffe Ben Matthews David Clarke Frank Fenwick Graham Constanter Mark Fenwick Nick Jeffery Peter Fenwick Simon Hill Steve Cullen The Mice	CHILLI SQUID Barbara Allen Chris Lee Craig Clegg David Fenwick Graham Constanter Mark Fenwick Nick Jeffery Peter Fenwick Simon Hill Steve Cullen The Mice
CHICKEN BREAST Alan Blake Arthur Woodroffe Ben Matthews David Clarke Frank Fenwick Graham Constanter Mark Fenwick Nick Jeffery Peter Fenwick Simon Hill Steve Cullen The Mice	WAKE & CHORIZO CASSOULET Alan Blake Arthur Woodroffe Ben Matthews David Clarke Frank Fenwick Graham Constanter Mark Fenwick Nick Jeffery Peter Fenwick Simon Hill Steve Cullen The Mice	MUSHROOM TAGLIATELLE Barbara Allen Chris Lee Craig Clegg David Fenwick Graham Constanter Mark Fenwick Nick Jeffery Peter Fenwick Simon Hill Steve Cullen The Mice
CHEESE BOARD Alan Blake Arthur Woodroffe Ben Matthews David Clarke Frank Fenwick Graham Constanter Mark Fenwick Nick Jeffery Peter Fenwick Simon Hill Steve Cullen The Mice	CREME BRULEE Alan Blake Arthur Woodroffe Ben Matthews David Clarke Frank Fenwick Graham Constanter Mark Fenwick Nick Jeffery Peter Fenwick Simon Hill Steve Cullen The Mice	BROWNIE Alan Blake Arthur Woodroffe Ben Matthews David Clarke Frank Fenwick Graham Constanter Mark Fenwick Nick Jeffery Peter Fenwick Simon Hill Steve Cullen The Mice



Chairman Ben also thanked Dan and Graham for the hard work and organisation they had put into making the day's run a resounding success. Anyone who has organised a run will relate to that feeling of tired satisfaction one gets when arriving safely back at the hotel: for some it can turn into hyper-elation on the Saturday evening. For Dan however, exhaustion was the order of the day. (*Ed: the time on Dan's Mickey Mouse watch reads 7pm!*)

Well slap me with wet celery and call me Alice, Nick Jeffery didn't win the quiz! Yes, you read that right; for the first time, it seems, since God was a lad we had a different winner. Quizmaster Frank had put together a fine 10 question contest that also included some general knowledge stuff as well as bike related questions. In all there were 39 points to be had and the victor, with an excellent 34 points, was Nigel Bosworth. There was no prize as I recall, only the satisfaction of scoring more points than the 'Brain of Bledlow'.

For those who couldn't make the run but would like try their hand at the quiz, it is included at the end of the report.

Put your puddings up for treacle, it's that man again. I mean, of course, the Sergeant at Arms, Steve Callahan, ably assisted by pot-man Tim Albone who, after also assisting in the distribution of Friday's raffle tut, must surely now be the Club's own Debbie McGee!



The Sergeant walked straight into controversy with his very first words when he fined **everyone** for not giving generously to the Friday raffle. He was challenged by Andrew who stated that he had checked beforehand with the Chairman who had said no charge should be made. Unmoved, the Sergeant fined the Chairman twice and everyone else once!

Moving on he referred back to the autumn run for two 'matters arising'. The first was for a game of 'blind man's bluff' where **Andrew** was charged with not producing a route map and when challenged said, "Just press record on your satnav and you'll have one!" Mr Smith was thus £3 down already!



The second charge brought forward from Scotland was levelled at the Sergeant at Arms on that run, **Martin**, who delivered his charges dressed as his alter-ego, a slightly camp Judge Rinder.

The next item on the charge sheet was entitled 'The Invisibles', a term coined by Simon Hill at dinner on Friday that referred to those of us who are so worried about being caught they never do anything wrong: in this case, not wishing to be fined for leaving the indicators on, they didn't use them at all! The list was extensive: **Chris Lee, Alan Halford, Paul Haskins, Tim Albone, Gary Hartshorne and Max Barnes**. (As a footnote here, your scribe is a perennial indicator leaver-onner and so to avoid the inevitable fine, spent an arm and a leg to buy a new bike with self-cancelling indicators to avoid a £1 fine!).

Alex Hyde's wrapped exhaust headers were penalised next with the Sergeant suggesting they were merely a fashion statement rather than the tuning modification that some websites purport them to be. And whilst Alex and his Pa tried in vain to raise the fine between them (neither brought cash apparently), **Andrew** was again hit for dropping his skid lid. He claimed a nearby female personage had panicked him.

Arthur MacDonald had seemingly pointed out, direct to the Sergeant, that his blindingly dodgy strides were worthy of a fine. And then seemed surprised when Steve agreed!

Chairman Ben, described as the 'largest man amongst us' was indicted for riding a mini-moto on the run. Visions of John Wayne on a pit pony spring to mind...

Next a couple of slightly off the wall fines were levied, firstly on **Craig** for believing that lighting a fag would make taxis appear (he was out posted) and secondly on **Dan** for being 'fashionably late' but the SAA didn't specify for what! And continuing in the same 'wacky' vein **David O'Neill** was charged for spending more on painting his bike than the Sergeant did on his house. (*Don't ask me, I just record 'em.*)

They were coming thick and fast now, the two Nicks were nicked: **Mr Hopkins** for claiming his Norton was more reliable than his BSA and **Mr Jeffery** for 'marking his territory like a dog'.

Methinks that the Sergeant needs to have a word with his snouts as he fined **Maurice** for a lack of his usual blaspheming. See page 12 Steve! However he did have a word with **himself** and chukkiied up a pound for forgetting his notebook and pen and having to rely on his phone to list the misdemeanours.

Neil Tuxworth was again fined for his machine's identity crisis; he continues to insist it's a motorcycle. And **Martyn Roberts** also paid for saying his Honda was the best bike he has ever owned: rather than his Triumph Triple with the engine he designed!

Roy 'Mr BSA' Pinto had double trouble, firstly for not coming on a BSA and then for scarpering when Nick's BSA failed to start. But then he was also fingered by an audience nark for taking a picture of said BSA, presumably for a shameless soshul meeja post. He's always been a fan of triples! £3...



Nigel Bosworth's fashion faux-pas of wearing 'fishing waders' was penalised as was his claim that 'next year we'll be millionaires' as a result of his patented magnetic cable tidy. I'm just sorry I don't have a picture of either!

Rick Parish's was next. When the Sergeant had asked him pre-run for a list of attendees and it wasn't forthcoming, Rick replied that he had been "off grid for 3 weeks". The Sergeant maintained he was just on holiday. Poor Rick was also nobbled (again) for the extension he has fitted to his bike. In Scotland it was opined that he had taken the heated towel rail from his room, this time it was called a diving platform.



Roy was back on the charge sheet. He had said "If you're not the Sergeant at Arms can I swear at you?" Steve said "Do what you want." Roy duly had a good swear and then asked Steve why he was taking notes. He replied "I'm passing them to the Sergeant at Arms", Roy replied, "Well eff that, I'm really in the shit now!"



Simon Belton was fined for parking his bike in a blue badge space at the tea stop. When he pleaded that he hadn't noticed the sign, the fine was doubled and he was referred to Specsavers!

Stephen Burgess was accused of being the real reason for Simon Hill's early departure home. Apparently they had both come on the same model BMW but Stephen had upstaged Simon by having an Akrapovic exhaust on his.

The Sergeant's guest, **Steve Miller** came under fire for route deviation in the afternoon. He hadn't got lost apparently, just decided to go a different way. Suggestions from the floor that the inviting member should be fined as well were waved away but the **Sergeant did fine himself** for using a hotel towel to dry his bike before the off. However, this was merely a diversionary tactic as he then **fined his guest again** for not only using a chammy to dry his bike but also having a cup of water to wash it.

Tom Waterer had apparently decided not to fill his bike at the fuel stop as he 'wanted to see when it ran out'. Thus he needed to find an alternative filling station in the afternoon. He did announce though that it did 85mpg!

Craig, and I guess we knew this was coming, was charged with 'breaking with tradition' for having his wife Barbara on the run but, worse, getting another man to invite her as his guest. **Nick Hopkins** was fined too, for complicity!

And finally, **Barbara** was fined for following all the run rules and doing everything right all day and not being a rebel like the rest of us!

After the Sergeant had closed his book on another successful run, there was one member who dodged a potentially massive bullet. Your eagle eyed scribe was talking with the always immaculate **Andrew Smith** when he noticed his tie: it was from a different club. But Andrew hadn't realised until it was pointed out! Whoever is appointed Sergeant at Arms at the autumn run please put this at the top of your charge sheet. And should Mr Smith later deny the charge, here is the evidence!



And so another excellent run drew to a close and members and their guests slowly drifted out of the restaurant and into the bar, or bed, whichever was calling the loudest.

The turnout had been very good for the second run in a row and augers well for the autumn under the guidance of Neil Tuxworth and Nick Campolucci. The proposed route looks wonderful with the Humber Bridge, Oliver's Mount, Heartbeat country and the home of Bangers and Cash, Thornton-le-Dale, all on the itinerary.

I'll see you there and, whatever you do, do NOT call it a scooter!!

8. According to ACEM which of the 'big five' European markets had the largest percentage growth in motorcycle registrations in 2022? (3 points for correct answer)

France / Germany / Italy / Spain / UK

9. Bristol's famous Clifton Suspension Bridge was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. How old was he when he died in 1859? (3 points for correct answer)

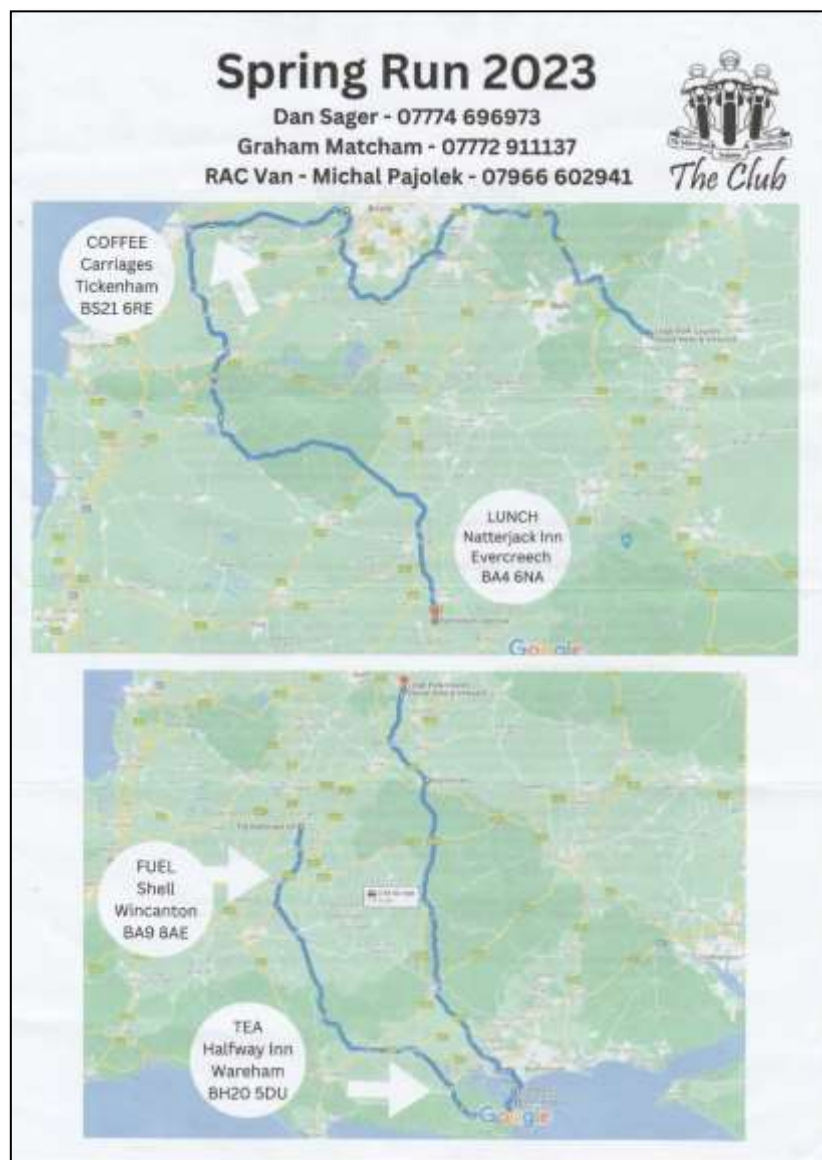
38 / 43 / 48 / 53 / 58

10. Excluding scooters, what was the best-selling motorcycle in 2022 in the UK? (3 points for correct answer)

BMW R 1250 GS Adventure / BMW R 1250 GS / Honda CBF 125 M / Royal Enfield Interceptor 650 / Royal Enfield Meteor 350

Tie Break if needed (it wasn't!): Since 1994 which six riders have won more than one British Superbike Championship title? (1 point for each correct answer)

The Route (There is an excellent scaleable – means you can zoom in and out – map on the Club Website)



Quiz Answers

1. Will Carling
2. Rossi – 5, Stoner – 2, Hayden – 1, Quartararo – 1, Bagnaia – 1
3. Dennis Bates
4. Group Captain
5. Blue
6. AJS, Gilera, Norton, MV Agusta, Yamaha, Suzuki, Honda, Ducati
7. Texas, Arkansas, Illinois, Massachusetts, Kansas
8. Spain +6.3%
9. IKB age 53
10. Honda CBF125 M

Tie Break

Mackenzie – 3, Hislop – 2, Reynolds – 2, Kiyonari – 3, Byrne – 6, Brookes – 2



Be sure to also check out
the full photoreel on the
Club Website!