Spring Run 2025

9 – 11 May

Tavistock

Organisers:

Andy Mayo

Roy Pinto

Can it really be ten years?

Well chums, as the well-known song goes: '*Here we are again, happy as can be, all good friends and jolly good company'.* Ten years on from our first visit to the Bedford, we were here again for our third visit to the ancient tin Stannary of Tavistock. Riding in, nothing much appears to have changed in the town or at the hotel in the intervening years, there was a carousel operating in Bedford Square that wasn't there before though.

Which reminds me, I read that the man who invented predictive text died recently; his funfair is next Wembley…

Back in 2015 if you remember, UKIP was in the ascendency ahead of the Brexit vote and our old friend Keith Davies was caught in earnest conversation with their campaigners. Now, Mr Farage is back in the ascendency again with his Reform party. What goes around eh?

The EU, political parties, governments and more have come and gone in the intervening years but the Bedford continues to welcome us with open arms and a refreshing pint of Jail Ale served by a cheery Bar Steward who looked vaguely familiar[1]…

Jail Ale is a product of the Exmoor Brewery in Wiveliscombe but at the time of the run, production was being transferred to the Hogs Back Brewery near Guildford: Covid and rising costs were to blame apparently. That's as may be but one inescapable fact was that the ale had travelled further to be there than some of the members and guests quaffing it!

In fact, the Bedford had changed a little as a number of rooms had been re-fettled since our last visit; your scribe was lucky enough to be allocated one which was nice, although the lack of hot water in the shower was not so! Turns out the trendy brass fittings had been installed upside down. (*Ed: Aussie plumbers I suppose?*)

Craig Carey-Clinch had organised the previous runs based here, along with Graham Matcham (2015) and Ian Kerr (2022). Our organisers this time around would be Andy Mayo and Roy Pinto who gallantly stepped into the breech to organise their first run after Arthur Macdonald's plans for a run in Nottinghamshire were scuppered by a health scare. The record will show the Newbies did a fine job!

Owing to an early Easter this year, the run was put back to May from its customary April scheduling. This, together with some fine settled weather, conspired to ensure that the pre-dinner bar-chat was liberally sprinkled with traffic delay stories. I suppose that as the number of inhabitants on our crowded island continues to increase, this ain't going to change anytime soon, thank goodness for motorcycles and (responsible!) filtering…

Hail fellow well met!

With the Treasurer's iron grip on the kitty prised open, the aforementioned Jail Ale and other refreshing liquids could begin to flow to slake the thirsts of the steady stream of arrivals…

Left: clockwise from TL:
Andrew holds court.
Martin helps Lester to hit a high C.
Guest Simon Belton and Roy: 2 Kawasaki old boys.
Is Boz on another job interview?

Right: clockwise from TL:
Nick and Tom talk earnestly.
Tyres or helmets; what's the craic?
Nick and guest Barbara Alam chatting with Neil. The ever-genial Tim!

[1] Cover picture courtesy of Ben Matthews

Let the formal, informalities begin…

Included in the welcome pack was a sheet detailing table allocations and everyone's meal choices for both nights: our organisers, rightly, were making sure that members' dodgy memories were not going to delay service. It did imply though there was a seating plan for both nights – there wasn't and the usual free for all ensued!

Friday night, it turned out, was to be a buffet and so table by table(ish!!) we sallied forth to fill our boots.

Thinking on, it is quite probable that on arriving at the head of the queue, everyone helped themselves to whatever took their fancy which sort of makes a mockery of pre-ordering; other than to help the Chef with quantities, even that though is dubious. With no serving staff on hand to administer portion control, some of the tureens were running very low by the time the last table went up (mine!!). We clearly have some big appetites in the club…

Who's that over there, next to thingummy?

The Chairman's first request of the night was for members to introduce their guests; they were, in the order of introduction *(images L to R, top, middle, bottom rows):*

Steve Miller, introduced by Steve Callahan was on his 2nd run, Steve is CEO of vehicle asset management company the Dawson Group.
Ben Hall, General Manager of Watsonian-Squire, was introduced by gaffer Ben Matthews. On his 3rd run, 'Little Ben' is now a member after being proposed at the AGM on Sunday morning.
Gareth Hughes was the guest of Stephen Burgess. Arriving on Saturday morning, Gareth is the CEO of Vmoto UK, a Chinese manufacturer of electric motorcycles and scooters.
Barbara Alam, also now a member following the AGM, was on her 3rd run as a guest of Nick Hopkins. Barbara is an experienced global motorcycle tour guide and Secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary Motorcycle Group as well as working with husband Craig Carey-Clinch in Rowan Public Affairs.
Martin Marshall probably needs no introduction after an illustrious career with Honda, Yamaha and Piaggio before becoming a multi-site Retailer in his native Peoples Republic of Jockland. Now back on the right side of the fence, Martin is Sales Manager for Royal Enfield.
Richard Sluggett was the guest of Andy Mayo for the 3rd time having attended Fort William in autumn 22 and Louth in autumn 23. Richard is a garage owner with a penchant for motorcycles.
Simon Bulmer is a colleague of Gary Hartshorne at Bridgestone UK; he is one of them there Bean Counters it seems.
Andrew Pirt is a retired garage owner and was on his 2nd run, this time as a guest of Tim Albone. Andrew too was on the Fort William run, that time as a guest of Rick Parish.
Simon Belton joined us for his 2nd run as guest of your scribe. Now semi-retired after a long marketing career with Kawasaki, Yamaha, KTM and Oxford Products, Simon is a Brand Ambassador for Jaguar Land Rover.

With the guests introduced, Chairman Alan also formally welcomed Steve Lomas to membership of The Club.

What's the plan for tomorrow boys?

Roy and Andy delivered the briefing for Saturday. There was an audible groan as the 08.30 start was announced; I'm not sure why. We are told by Treasurer Rick that our consumption of the falling down water is dramatically less than it used to be so surely everyone is bright-eyed and bushy tailed of a morning these days?

Andy thanked the Chairman and Treasurer for their help in planning the run, likewise his partner in crime, Roy. The team at the Bedford Hotel had been first class to deal with too he told us. Our now Euro-exiled chum Dave Martin was originally booked to attend and would have had a quiz tucked under his arm but as he had not been able to come, the quiz hadn't either. So much for brushing up on the history of Reiju and Derbi!

With our route passing through a heavy agricultural area on the morrow, we were told to be on the lookout for Farmer Palmer and his slow-moving tackle: likewise, the gravel, potholes and canyons where once white lines resided in the centre of the sub-prime (in parts) road surfaces! Oh, good! Still, we could look forward to coffee and biccys (served by Andy's good lady) at 60 miles where, just for Dan, there be trains…

Now here's a thing…

After the briefing, the Chairman asked all present to wish Martin 'Liberace' Lambert a very happy birthday, which we duly did. Now as you know, your scribe is a curious sort and so I thought I would find out what I could, astrologically, about people born on 9th May. So just for you Martin old stick here's what *zodiacsign.com* says about you…

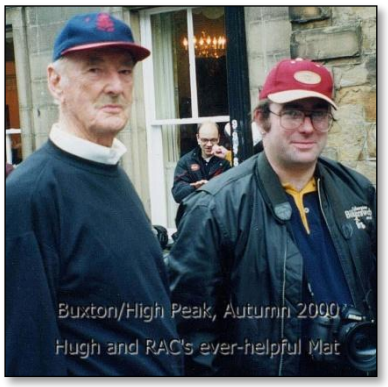
What They Excel In
A person born on May 9th excels in art, psychology, and any form of creative work that asks for their sensitivity to be employed. They are very good orators and their communication and expression skills could make them even better in acting or any form of role play. Their mind is made for big and important issues, for music and art, and it won't give them a chance for rest if they aren't in flow with their personal mission and inspiration.

That, I think you will agree chums, is uncannily accurate! Martin, *zodiacsign.com* also says your strength is 'mission' your colour is 'rose quartz' and your shape is 'blur' which, I believe, I have perfectly captured in this photo…

When the President speaks…

Our President, Norman, resplendent in a Union Jack tie, stood to give us his reminiscences of the late Hugh Palin MBE TD. Hugh was a Founder Member of The Club and our Chairman 1967-69 and President 1993-95. In business (amongst other things) he was a Director of Norton as well as being a past President and Executive Chairman of the MCA, now the MCIA of course.

When he was a non-Exec Director of the RAC and Chairman of the RAC Motorcycle Committee, Hugh arranged for an RAC patrol to follow Club Runs both home and abroad, a legacy that lives on thanks to the good auspices of Adam Kelley.



Norman related a past Members meeting when a run needed to be hastily arranged due to an organiser's illness. Peter Sheen suggested Beaulieu as a potential base at which Hugh had said "Oh, I know Montagu, I'll call him" he stood smartly and left the room. Naturally the meeting thought that he had gone to phone his Lordship to make the arrangements. When Hugh returned the expectant members were non-plussed when Hugh said "I only went for a piss!"

This picture of Hugh from the Club Website shows him with Matt Black, an RAC Patrolman who supported many runs.

During the war, Hugh was one of Monty's bright young lads: rising through the ranks of the Royal Tank Regiment to become a Captain and, temporarily, a Major in February 1945. A veteran of the North African Campaign (he drove Monty's Humber back around the Med) and Operation Market Garden, Hugh was awarded the MBE (Military Division) for his desert exploits and post war, a Territorial Decoration (TD) for services to the TA.

In closing, Norman recalled Rollo (Earl of) Denbigh's run of autumn 1991. Rollo was the incumbent President of the MCA at the time. In the bar, Hugh was often to be found in earnest conversation with other 'serving' members: 'old vets in blazers' said Norman and proposed a toast to 'The Armed Forces'.

Messages from absent friends and the Tat Shop opens…

Following hot on the heels of the President's piece, Rafflemeister Andrew Smith and his runner, Adam Kelley, took to the floor. Before dispensing the raffle prizes with his usual good-natured piss-taking, Andrew gave us an update on our good friends Maurice Knight and Bob Mac, pictured left the last time they were both on a run together, appropriately enough here in Tavistock for the post-Covid Spring run in 2022.

Andrew meets Maurice for lunch from time to time and reports that Maurice, now 93 don't you know, has some health issues but is in good spirits and sends his best wishes to one and all. When asked if he would like to donate a raffle prize, the reply was a characteristic 'Eff off'! What a treasure Maurice surely is!

Bob Mac as we know has been going through the mill health wise but Andrew was able to relay Bob's best wishes to members too and the good news that he hopes to be able to join the spring 26 run. We all look forward to that Bob!

And so, the redistribution of thoughtful, often creative raffle prizes commenced with no hint that some may have been anything less than a random draw…

Now dear reader, you may have noticed a recurring theme in recent run reports: that of Neil Tuxworth and his Honda Forza 750.

Neil is adamant that his chosen mount is a motorcycle whilst the general consensus is that it is a scooter. Indeed, such is the argument that this time, Neil's raffle donation carried a label that sought to lay this bogey to rest and put a stop to all the mickey taking – it was won by an excited Dan Sager.

Oh dear!

It would be remiss of your scribe not to seek a definitive answer to this question now wouldn't it? Quite so. I reproduce here the relevant page from Honda's website…

For those of us with less than 20/20 vision, Honda's Marketing Gurus describe the machine as 'our ultimate GT ***SCOOTER***'!

Elegantly evolved the new Forza 750 is a sophisticated benchmark, our ultimate GT scooter. Driven with dynamic power from its twin-cylinder engine and wearing sharp new styling – carved out by twin LED headlights and DRL indicators with a wider, more protective electric screen – it cuts an elegant swathe through city, back road or highway. Cruise control is now standard, and the Forza 750 also employs durable and sustainable, Durabio™ in various non-painted black parts around the bodywork. Making it built for the long haul, in every sense.

Any further protests on this topic Neil should be written on a £20 note and mailed to:

What's My Ride?
Honda UK
Scooterlooville
Cloud Cuckooland

What a glorious morning for a ride!

Breakfast, always a sociable time on runs, was served from 7am and the coffee, tea and toast were already on the tables at the appointed hour, all very efficient.

Right: The two Steve's being sociable…

A good array of continental style tucker was available along with warm tureens brimming with cooked stuff. A couple of personal gripes here though; hash browns have no place in an English brekkie, bubble and squeak maybe but not grated spud and onion. And snorkers should be cooked to a golden brown, not just walked through a warm kitchen! Rant over…

With breakfast duly dispatched it was down to the bikes to prepare for the off, promptly, as instructed by Mr Mayo.

Now the last time we were here, the run start was delayed a little by Norman's recalcitrant Triumph Tiger 100 (of 1969 vintage) refusing to start; well, at least, until her ignition was switched on! No such problems this time and we turned left out of the car park on the dot of 08.30 with the sun already warming our backs.

Rounding Drake's Statue, we followed the same route out of town as the two previous runs. It struck me as I said good morning to him that, in Tavistock run terms, he may be our equivalent of the Fairy Bridge on the Island. Better then to be safe and not sorry and wish him a good day…

With Bodmin Moor not on the itinerary this time a very good B-road turned us north in the hamlet of Gulworthy. With glorious weather and extensive views to be had it was a magnificent ride up to the outskirts of Launceston.

Passing through Launceston, my mind wandered back to the late 80s when, along with some chums, I did a couple of Launceston Trials. The event is a similar format to the MCC's Classics: The Land's End, Exeter and Edinburgh: bikes, outfits and cars all mixed up!

I had done the Edinburgh once and the Launceston events were just a 'jolly boys outing' to be fair, great fun though. It is a bit weird mind lining up at a section behind a side-valve Ford Popular with a 'robust lady' bouncing up and down on the back seat for extra traction up the hill!

A rare sight even in the 80s, 3 Kawasaki KT250s. Left to right: Andy 'Wazzer' Stowe, Mike Coombes (ex of Kawasaki UK and Crowmarsh Classics) and your scribe. Launceston Trial circa 1987.

Leaving my reminiscences of Launceston in the mirrors the route continued heading north up a quick A-road towards Holsworthy. The stupendous views continued as we left Cornwall behind to re-enter the far western edge of Devon. There was still not a cloud in the sky, in fact it would be noon before a small one bobbed briefly across the sun.

Holsworthy is a market town that was constantly 'changing hands' between 1066 and 1932 when Holsworthy Urban District Council bought the manorial rights from Lord Stanhope. During the Second World War it was home to #42 Exhibition Field Camp, a POW camp housing German and Italian prisoners.

If you detected a slight 'whiff' as we turned sharply east on the outskirts of town, it may have been down to UK's only centralised anaerobic digester which turns dairy farm slurry into biogas; in much the same way as milky porridge can. Oh, what? Sorry, that must be just me then, begging your pardon!

Stop the run I need a wee-wee…

Highampton, the home of Gotland gin, came and went as we carried on towards Hatherleigh where another turn north would bring us on to the 'long finals' approach to our coffee, and more pressingly, comfort stop. Starting out at double-oh-crack is OK for the young-uns but once one gets past the 'motorway speed limit age' one needs a more leisurely (and frequent) process of ballast tank emptying!

Hatherleigh by the way, is the smallest town in Devon and forms part of the 'Ruby Country'; 45 parishes around Holsworthy and Hatherleigh. It was set up after the 2001 Foot and Mouth outbreak, which had its epicentre here, to bring a more sustainable economy to the area. According to the female of the species, men can also suffer from this disease – every time they open their mouth, they put their foot in it…

The coffee stop was slated at 56 miles, in Great Torrington. The venue was listed as Puffing Billy, a café in the old station building on the Tarka Valley Heritage Railway. In fact, refreshments were actually taken the other side of the track at Torrington Cycle Hire; it mattered not a jot or tittle to everyone who followed the leader in, except perhaps one. For Dan, the sight of a diesel traction unit was a moment of trouser-bulging excitement!

So, whilst the group formed two orderly queues, one for the comestibles and the other for the single-seater 'how's-yer-father' Dan was off, cos as previously mentioned, he likes trains y'know!

Your scribe would like to make a pretty please request to future run organisers at this juncture. If the first stop of the day only has a single unit for much needed relief, could you please ensure that there is a canary on hand to ensure it's safe for those at the back of the queue to enter, many thanks!

The venue was doing good business hiring treaders to the tourists, it being on the Tarka Trail and all, and as we munched our way through a mountain of cake and biscuits, the cyclists pushed their way through the pack to wobble off down the track. Meanwhile the chocolate biscuits were melting as the day got a little 'otter…

Considering the early start and the distance we would be travelling, 224 miles, the coffee break was quite a leisurely affair. If my memory serves, well over half an hour was spent chatting in the sun before everyone lined up for a group photograph ahead of setting off again.

Backtracking through the town, described by the University of Liverpool in 2019 as the 'healthiest place to live in Britain' thanks to its low pollution, good access to green space and health services (*Ed: I wonder how it fared during Covid?*) we were now heading just east of south, back towards the northern edge of Dartmoor.

Not so secret hideaways and rebellious congregations…

The first village the A3124 passes through is Beaford. Here the road narrows between the pretty whitewashed cottages, many of them thatched. But Beaford has history, well not so much the village exactly as the Beaford Country House holiday home and wedding venue just a little way to the west of the road.

Apparently, some of the Great Train Robbers used to visit quite frequently pre and post heist as they had buried a couple of hundred thousand pounds in nearby woods and liked to make regular withdrawals. In fact, the Beaford House website boasts the fact: "*Some were even arrested at the house with notes being stashed up some of the bedroom fireplaces."* As an aside, according to Andrew Cook, the author of the book The Great Train Robbery, some top-ranking Post Office officials, were on the gang's payroll, tipping them the wink as to which train to knock off. Senior Post Office people being involved in a major crime? Surely not, maybe they just wanted to broaden their horizons…

Just west of this lovely riding road, where we turned left onto the A3072, is the village of Sampford Courtenay where local Catholic parishioners joined forces with some from Cornwall in 1549 to protest against the first Book of Common Prayer, forced on them by the government of Edward VI. Read more here: Prayer Book Rebellion

Shortly after crossing the River Tew (unremarkable other than it's on the Tarka Trail) the route turned right onto the A3124 towards Whiddon Down where we would briefly flirt with the A30 before heading back north up a single-track road that surely brought the broadest of broad smiles to Tom Waterer's face!

Next would be Crediton and the fuel stop at the 100-mile mark.

Familiar roads, familiar hazards…

It is often said that *some bring joy wherever they go whilst others bring joy whenever they go*. The latter could certainly be said of 30 motorcycles refuelling at a Tesco's on a busy Saturday morning! After blocking the pumps, we blocked the exits too, much to the chagrin of the locals.

For the next section, the route backtracked Craig's 2022 route; up through the grandly named Stockley Pomeroy and then Bickleigh, where the Fisherman's Cot served our afternoon tea back then. Tiverton barely registered on my radar this time; in 2022 it was a right snotravvle of a place to navigate, if you remember.

Just north of Tiverton you may have noticed a sign for the National Trust property, Knightshayes Court; Norman did. Our President tells me that it has one of only 2 functional Stické Tennis courts remaining in the country. Similar to Norman's beloved Real Tennis but played with normal tennis bats on a slightly smaller pitch, it is a game invented in the late 19th Century by the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

Strangely (or perhaps not these 'woke' days) the National Trust website for Knightshayes makes no mention of it whatsoever; it probably considers it to be far too elitist and therefore non-inclusive…

Beyond Knightshayes the A396 is reasonably straight until Cove, whereafter it twists and turns like a python having a fit. Gloomy, even on a sunny day, it runs mostly between hedges: there is barely a straight bit for some 15 miles.

Normally, such a road would be considered biking heaven but the loose gravel and deep trenches that mostly replace the white lines made it a bit of a botty-clencher. Tipping into a left hander my front wheel slid away and then a couple of corners later, off went the rear. Frank Finch's advice on a previous run of 'don't worry, it'll grip again' flooded back as I tried to regain composure!

We pulled into the Rest and Be Thankful [for staying on] lunch stop with a collective sigh of relief methinks…

Highs and Lows of Wheddon Cross…

After milling around the car park for a while, comparing opinions on the ride up from Tivvy no doubt, we gradually made our way into the pub for lunch.

A backroom area had been reserved for us and a substantial plate of nosh was shortly plonked in on the table. I'll confess, I was probably four forkfuls in before realising it was lasagne and not cottage pie! (*Ed: It's probably the Italian equivalent*) Tasty it was, and filling enough that no dessert was required!

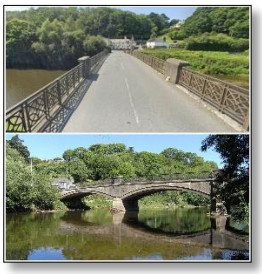
Wheddon Cross is the second highest point on Exmoor and we were now deep in the heart of the National Park. The highest point is Simonsbath which we would pass through before too long.

On a tragic note, the media recently reported a coach crash on the A396 just beyond Wheddon Cross; on Cutcombe Hill. A coach full of school children returning to Minehead from a day trip left the road, injuring many of the passengers with, sadly, one fatality. The Rest and be Thankful stepped up as a temporary haven for the survivors.

Glorious Exmoor!

Leaving Wheddon Cross our route headed west along main route across Exmoor the B3224, which pretty soon becomes the B3223 from Lynmouth down to the southern gateway town of Dulverton. We were again backtracking a short section of Craig's route, at least as far as Simonsbath where a left fork took us across the River Barle and on down a narrow in parts, unclassified road with expansive views of Exmoor, it was wonderful.

The riding straight after lunch seemed to be a little more subdued, was it because we were taking in the magnificence of the National Park or, more likely, trying to shake off the soporific effect of the lasagne? Eventually this lovely road tipped out onto the A399 by North Molton, the southern edge of Exmoor.



The first significant conurbation post lunch was South Molton where we picked our way through the unremarkable town centre via some quite narrow streets (*Ed: Was anyone tempted to pull that old journo stunt with the kill switch induced backfire I wonder?*) before leaving west through a housing estate.

Although a B-classification road, it was quite a quick, flowing affair down to the pretty Umberleigh Bridge over the River Taw, pictured left.

Turning right at the far end of the bridge and then left shortly afterwards, it was more B-road fun, with just the village of Atherington to slightly slow the inevitable progress towards Great Torrington. Passing the morning coffee stop, the route flirts with the River Torridge before turning sharply south onto the A388 and tea.

Wars have been fought for less…

I heard that they once had to cancel a major Devon music festival where Eric Clapton and Paul Weller's bands were billed – they couldn't decide whether to put The Jam or Cream on first…

Lizzy's Larder was a pleasant stopping off point with attractions for all. Arthur tried out a potential new car, Dan headed straight for the Holsworthy Model Railway Club hut where three crusty old blokes couldn't remember when they started the project or, indeed, how long it might take to finish!

Others, wisely, went straight to the garden for the cream tea which was served in a multitude of different floral pots. In the field beyond were Alpacas who of course, added to the relaxed atmosphere.

Then you turn left at the red post…

Tea and scones (*Ed: Is that scones as in stones, or scones as in 's'gone?*) consumed, it was onward for the last leg and the race for the hotel's hot water.

Our route continued down the A388 back to Holsworthy before turning right, topside of the town centre and taking the Bude road out west. After 5 miles in the direction of buckets and spades, candy floss and ice creams there is a fairly innocuous looking crossroads where we were directed onto a B-road towards Launceston. You may not have noticed on the day, I certainly didn't, but there is a red direction post on this crossroads…

Back in the 9th Century the Abbot of Hartland decreed that an Inn should be built on the crossroads to 'feed and water the weary travellers passing this way'. This was duly done and it was an operational inn until closed in 1906 by a Private Members Bill enacted in Parliament by those well-known spoilsports, John Wesley's Methodists. Religion eh, always Tommy Opposite.

Anyway, an Inn on a crossroads in smuggling country was a magnet for local villains and the Excise men, who regularly raided it and subsequently hung the smugglers they caught on the spot where the red post now stands. It was quite grisly by all accounts as they left them there until they fell: ooh, narsty!

Such is the modern world that in April 2021 some scroats nicked the bloody thing but thanks to the generosity of the local community a new one was installed by Launcells Parish Council who still had a template of one of the arms.

Old Club traditions continue…

With nothing but hamlets along this good riding route, other than negotiating Launceston again of course, the run leader was soon pulling back into the car park of the Bedford Hotel where our Hon Sec, Graham Goodman, who had arrived during the day, was on hand with his camera to record the returning riders.

It had been a wonderful ride, good roads – potholes notwithstanding – great views and excellent weather to boot. Our organisers Andy and Roy were rightly glad-handed by everyone as the pinging and tinging of hot engines and exhausts died away and happy riders slowly trooped off into the hotel.

In days of yore, first stop would have been the bar, particularly when most attendees shared rooms. A beer would be consumed whilst the 'toss' would take place to see who had first dibs at the hot water.

Nowadays we are mostly in single accommodation and so less of us sojourn in the bar before abluting but, it's good to note, we still do have some sticklers for tradition who can be found, still in riding boots and breeks, as the first suited and booted members come down for pre-prandial scoops. Gentlemen (no names, no pack drill!) we salute you!

With the bar gradually filling and the hum of conversation gradually rising, we could look forward to dinner where tonight, there would indeed be a proper seating plan.

When the music stops etc…

First off of course, one needs to be aware there is a plan, then find your table and finally your place upon it. As you can imagine a fair amount of musical chairs ensues. With everyone stood behind the correct seat, there was a pause for reasons that the Sergeant at Arms will report on later! Finally, with a 'full house', Chairman Alan asked Dan to say grace before he formally welcomed our Hon Secretary, Graham Goodman to the run and the congregation sat for dinner.

There was a guest amongst us too for dinner on Saturday, Andy's father Colin Mayo, next to whom your scribe was delighted to sit.

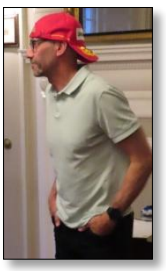
My notes report that the food was good if ever so slightly over seasoned with a choice of 3 starters, 3 main courses and 3 desserts. Following all of this there was cheese and port in celebration of our President Norman's 80th birthday. Norman also proposed the loyal toast. With the clock showing half-past nine, Chairman Alan handed over to our Sergeant at Arms, Steve Callahan and his rather over enthusiastic bucket man, Andy Mayo…

Who will be tonight's star victim?

The Sergeant opened his report by apologising for the subterfuge by the organisers in not revealing the ID of the SAA earlier in the proceedings (*Ed: Isn't it supposed to be a secret?*). He claimed that this was because last spring, someone had paid a hit-man to try to him take out! Apparently, our organisers couldn't afford the risk this time as they needed a healthy fine income to balance the books…

One feature of Steve's tenure as Sergeant is the 'group fine'; he somehow always manages to find a misdemeanour committed by everyone. The recording of the proceedings this time is very confused initially. I *think* that the group fine this time concerned swapping bikes, or not, I can't be sure! What is clear is that Andy was not fast enough with the bucket and a second vessel and collector was quickly pressed into service.

Self-proclaimed fashionistas have always been fair game to successive Sergeants and Steve kicked off by citing bucket man **Andy and his guest Richard Slugget**t for wearing shorts on Friday night. They had both been fined for this before of course, t'were in Louth, Autumn 23. Andy's protestations that 'you're in Devon now' were waved away as Steve ploughed on, fining **Adam Kelley** for his 'Skater Boy' reverse peak baseball cap whilst assisting with the raffle on Friday night.



Sprinkled throughout his report were the perennial 'standing on the pegs' charges, **Tom Waterer** was first.

It's rare for the name **Ian Kerr** to come up in a Sergeant's report, he is, as you know, a retired Met Police traffic officer. Clearly not keeping up with the latest changes to the Highway Code he had apparently passed a cyclist way too closely. It even appeared that someone had taken a statement from the cyclist!

Two quick-fire fines: Hon Treash **Rick Parish** apparently didn't know how to use his credit card at the lunch stop. And **Roy Pinto** had been spotted vaping at the top table.

Steve Miller, not wishing to be fined [for something naff] checked the suitability of his raffle prize ahead of the run. Apparently the cable repair kit he brought *was* deemed naff.

Old habits die hard and **Andrew Smith** was fined for speaking in the slow Jinglish usually reserved for communicating with Japanese factory staff: despite retiring from Yamaha some 5 years ago!

Martin Marshall, eager to get on the road, came for breakfast an hour before the off wearing all his gear bar helmet. He was also reprimanded for riding past a corner marshal. (*Ed: You can just see* The Sun *screaming, Marshall Twerp!*)

Your Scribe had gone to great lengths (at a superior store) to buy a stylish Hawaiian shirt for Friday supper only for the Sergeant to (cheekily) claim it was from Asda!! He was then fined again for leaving his satnav on his bike over Friday night. The claimed mitigation that he was helping **David O'Neill** unload his bike only resulted in the fine being doubled for dissent and David copping it too; for bringing his bike in a van!

Nigel Bosworth was spotted using his phone whilst on point duty; presumably to call his bankers ahead of his [numerous] forthcoming fines.

Neil Tuxworth, despite that note on his raffle prize, paid the price for – and I quote – "Inappropriately using a motorcycle disc lock on his scooter".

Nick Hopkins had claimed that his Norton had only broken down once on a run but as members could remember at least 2 or 3 other times, he copped for a quid for each.

Martin Marshall, again, his accent has become more Scottish apparently.

Norman Hyde had tried to look younger by not wearing his specs on Friday night. And secondly, for his 'dangling bungees' on Saturday morning – Steve recalled a previous run when they had to be cut free from his back wheel…

Dan Sager it was alleged – had employed a mate to make him look a bit quick [on his Enfield] it turned out to be "The Scotsman"!

Martin Lambert was fined for wearing Crocs on Friday! (*Ed: Surely that's worth a custodial sentence?*) He also paid a reduced fine for not riding a green Kawasaki Versys, having replaced it with a Liquorice Allsort.

Stephen Burgess apparently had 2 extra wing mirrors and some rather flash wheels.

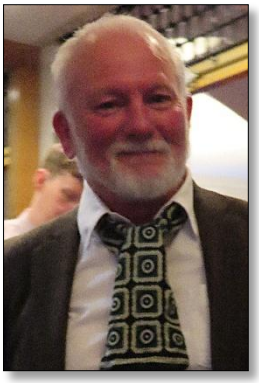
Ben Hall came on a sporty Italian bike but was accused of looking like a hipster [who should be on a Harley].

Arthur MacDonald admitted to falling asleep after that lasagne lunch, claiming it was the food that made him do it. It was not exactly clear though where he had nodded. (*Ed: hope it wasn't on the bike!*)

Nick Hopkins had asked for numerous indicator indiscretions to be taken into consideration in an attempt to only pay once for the 8 or 10 times he confessed to leaving them on! Andy Mayo tried to bill him for each one however!

Steve Lomas' shirt also copped for a 'sartorial' fine. As did his bike that had so many electrickery aids it made the National Grid flicker! He was however applauded (by everyone!) for the expert way that be rode the behemoth BMW!

Barbara Alam was congratulated for having more bottle than Craig, that's the bottle attached to her bike which was actually twice the size of Craig's apparently. The plethora of stickers on her bike also attracted the Sergeant's attention.



Andrew Pirt was the night's star benefactor.

He paid firstly for his 'foppish' tie. He was then asked to stand in profile as his 'outline' betrayed his claim that he 'doesn't do puddings'. As if that wasn't enough, he paid again for being a retired garage owner who needed the RAC man to tighten a loose mirror. And again, for parking in a disabled bay at the lunch stop. And again, for marking a corner out of sight around said corner (this was doubled for dissent!).

I bet he was glad he came!

Colin Mayo a Saturday night only guest, was fined for holding up dinner whilst he smoked a cheroot outside and again for not booking a room - thinking he would bunk up with 'the boy' who then tried to lift a fiver off him for the 2 fines!

Martin Marshall was quizzed on why, when he left Yamaha in 2003, he was still appearing to be Andrew's 'batman' by carrying his bag. **Andrew** responded with, "Free accommodation at Chez Smith with half a bottle of gin thrown in." They both, predictably, paid the price.

Another sartorial charge was levelled at **Tim Albone** for his safari jacket followed closely by someone – could have been Tim again - the recording was unclear – for hanging like an ape at the tea stop to ease their back.

Mark Fenwick was another footpeg stander. He then said he done it on the way down on Friday too; so paid the price for not knowing when to stop digging…

Hon Sec **Graham Goodman** paid for not arriving until Saturday night.

Roy Pinto had fawned over Steve's past performances as SAA before asking him to do the job this time. Steve claimed that he was only asked because no one else would do it.

Ben Matthews was another indicator transgressor and **Nigel Bosworth** had 'caused havoc' by booking late.

Environmental charges for wasting fuel were next: **Ben Hall** and his leaking fuel tank and **Tom Waterer** for not securing his fuel cap properly at the re-fuelling point.

Gary Hartshorne was cited for something (unclear) to do with his BMW suspension and also for a dodgy shirt on Friday night.

And the usually genial **Tim Albone** had said "I wouldn't mind a ride on one of those Triumphs" but when a swap with Boz was suggested he said "Eff off, I'm not letting Boz ride my bike!"

Still on the topic of Boz, **Ian Kerr** had suggested he (Boz) was a 'bit of a blagger' which was deemed a tad rich when he (Ian) had never ridden a run on a bike he actually owns!

To round off another entertaining (*Ed: And one suspects a very profitable!*) report **Sergeant Steve**, who notably hadn't fined himself this time, requested that all his debtors whom he had 'sponsored' for the raffle on Friday, chuck their dues in the pot which they duly did.

Now normally chums, I would say at this point, with the formalities complete we would drift off to the bar or bed as the fancy took us. But one person had other ideas…

Colin Mayo it seems wanted to party the night away and made sure he dragged a few others along with him. Luckily, Ben went along, merely to be his bodyguard I'm sure, and recorded the proceedings.

To protect the innocents I'll just leave these two images with you: Colin 'Disco Diva' Mayo, what a legend!

Ride safe all!

Geoff

Who Rode What (with thanks to Rick Parish!)

Guests in blue…

Barbara	*Alam*	*BMW F650GS Twin*
Tim	Albone	Yamaha FJR 1300
Simon	*Belton*	*Yamah Tracer 900 GT+*
Simon	*Bulmer*	*Ducati Multistrada V4 Rally*
Stephen	Burgess	BMW R1250RS
Steve	Callahan	Yamaha Tenere 700 T7
Nick	Campolucci	Honda Africa Twin
Craig	Carey-Clinch	Triumph scrambler 1200XC
Mark	Fenwick	BMW R1250GS Exclusive
Alan	Halford	Triumph Tiger 900 GT
Ben	*Hall*	*MV Augusta Brutale*
Lester	Harris	BMW F800
Gary	Hartshorne	R1200GS Adventure
Paul	Haskins	Ducati Multistrada GT
Simon	Hill	BMW F900XR
Nick	Hopkins	Norton 750 Commando LR
Gareth	*Hughes*	*Ducati Multistrada 950*
Norman	Hyde	Triumph 400 Speed
Adam	Kelley	Yamaha MT01
Ian	Kerr	Yamaha Tracer 900 GT+
Martin	Lambert	Kawasaki Versys 1100 SE
Steve	Lomas	BMW K1200LT
Arthur	Macdonald	KTM 1290GT Superduke
Martin	*Marshall*	*Royal Enfield Bear 650*
Ben	Matthews	BMW S1000XR
Andy	Mayo	Yamaha Tracer 9
Steve	*Miller*	*BMW S1000XR*
David	O'Neill	BMW R1250HP
Rick	Parish	Triumph Trophy 1215
Roy	Pinto	Yamaha Tracer MT-09
Andrew	*Pirt*	*Triumph Tiger 900GT Pro*
Dan	Sager	Royal Enfield Interceptor 650
Geoff	Selvidge	Tiger 900 GT Pro
Richard	*Sluggett*	*Kawasaki Z1000SX*
Andrew	Smith	Yamaha Tracer 9 GT
Neil	Tuxworth	Honda Forza 750
Tom	Waterer	BMW GS650
Nigel	Bosworth	Triumph Speed Twin 1200RS