



Spring Run 2024

**19 – 21 April
Ironbridge**

Organisers:

Tom Waterer

Alan Halford



As retirements go, mine as scribe was pretty damn short; in fact it didn't happen at all. To quote Damien Hirst: "What have I done, I've created a monster!" And in my case, St George is not forthcoming to tame the beast...

I blame our late friend Alan Baker, for twas his reporting of club shenanigans that 'changed the game' from just a short formal record: later built upon by Martin Lambert who started to include more detail and interesting facts in his reporting. I fear I let myself get carried away, but then talking bollocks has always been my stock-in-trade!

Anyway, you're stuck with me for now. My thanks go to outgoing Chairman Ben for rallying the troops to lighten the editorial load and to those whose contributions have helped make the reporting of our excellent Spring Run easier.

Let's get on with the show!

Let's face it, it was a poor start to the year, it felt like it had barely stopped raining from Christmas on. 'They' blame climate change, warmer air holds more water apparently, but it was bloody cold too, which means when it does rain the drops are bigger! For me it meant I had ridden less miles this year up to the run; getting caught in the rain is one thing, setting off in it is another.

This makes it all the more surprising then that the weekend turned out mild and sunny. It is said that God rides a Harley: perhaps he does and smiled down on Ironbridge – but not before he gave us a good soaking on the way there!

Leaving Maidenhead with Roy Pinto, the plan was to take the old A40 up to Burford and meet up with Ian Kerr and Dan Sager, then to Chairman Ben's emporium of Enfields, Sidecars and Barefoot cazyvans - but most importantly, his daughter Robyn's excellent double decker café to partake of fried egg and black pudding baps (as they are called in the Cotswolds).



Of course, it chucked it down on the way to Burford, spoiling the hill on the A40 just past Stokenchurch but after that, happy days!

With Ben leading the way it was a very pleasant ride up via Kidderminster and Bridgnorth, arriving in Ironbridge just afor 5 o'clock. With the obligatory photo-call at the bridge and a wave to Arthur Macdonald who was hiding in the shade of a pint outside the Tontine Hotel it was on to the digs.



Right: Beside the Bridge - you can just see your scribe's helmet bottom left!

Ironbridge claims to be the birthplace of the Industrial

Revolution, but Wikipedia disputes this on the grounds that there was no single location that kicked it all off. It is true that Abraham Darby perfected a cheaper way to smelt iron in nearby Coalbrookdale in the early 18th Century but the claim of it being the birthplace of a revolution has been put about by the Tourist Industry's PR Men (*Ed: Snake Oil salesmen to you!*) to attract visitors after manufacturing ceased locally.

The bridge itself was built by Abraham Darby's grandson, Abraham Darby 3rd and opened on New Year's Day 1781. It was designed by Thomas Farnolis Pritchard and was indisputably the first cast iron bridge in the world.

Now, if like me, you wondered what the settlement hereabouts was called before the Ironbridge was built, wonder no more. The bits of land either side of the River Severn were known as Madeley Wood and now joined by the bridge, Ironbridge came into being as the administrative centre of the Coalbrookdale coalfield.

There is an annual coracle regatta held here in August and the first footballer to win 100 caps for England, Billy Wright, was born here. The Guinness World Record crossword compiler Roger Squires, who passed away last year, lived in Ironbridge too; in a house 2 streets down and 3 across from the bridge...

The Valley Hotel previously known as Severn House, seems to have been one of the best latties hereabouts until its conversion to an hotel by the Wrekin Brewery in 1939 (*Ed: excellent timing!*). It pre-dates the bridge having been built on the commission of Master Collier George Goodwin in 1757. There is an extensive history on the hotel's website, click [here](#) if you are interested in the whole nine yards. For the important bits, read on!

Sometime after George Goodwin popped his clogs in 1773 Severn House came into the Darby family, bought by Abraham 2nd's daughter, Sarah. She was a spinster and left the house to her niece Ann who was Abraham 3rd's eldest daughter and was married to a gadge called Dickinson. Living up to his name (work it out for yourself!) he

gave Ann eleven sprogs, the sixth of which, Henry, sold the house on to Arthur Maw sometime before the 1871 census.

Arthur Maw (pictured bottom left) was an expert in encaustic tiles and had a very successful global business, at its height selling 20 million tiles over 9,000 different designs! His dad John invented the baby's feeding bottle and his brother George was a crocus expert. The tiles you may have admired in the hall and up the stairs were installed by Arthur and are unique, the moulds having been destroyed straight afterwards.

But it is Thomas 'Honest Tom' Parker that is of most interest to us; he bought the house in 1907. Son of Thomas Wheatley Parker, Honest Tom had a son whose name was, you guessed it, Thomas. Victorians were very creative engineers but when it came to naming their sons, I ask you...

Honest Tom and his son were both champion engineers with an impressive string of electricrickerly inventions to their name, it's not clear who did what but one of them is credited with the invention of the sparking plug in 1889 without which, none of us would have made it to the run!

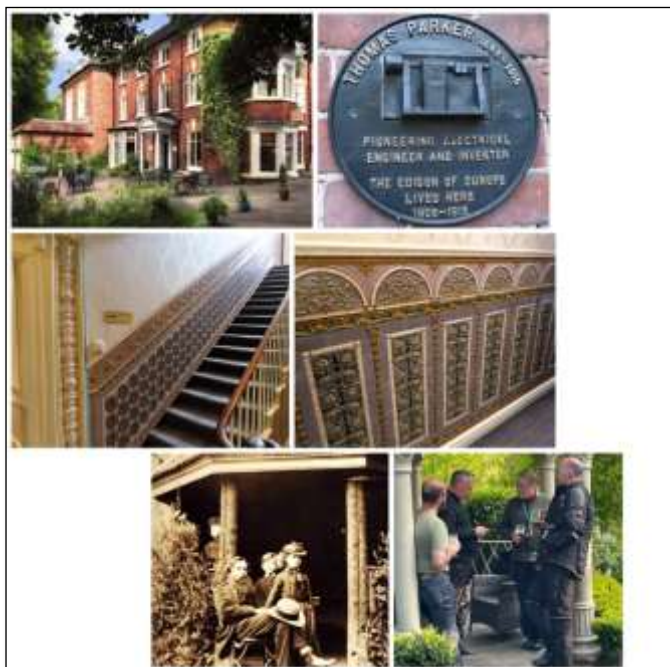
Freed from the responsibility of poking my camera lens into everyone's face in the bar, your scribe could spend time relaxing with our erstwhile organisers shooting the breeze and trying to ascertain just how narrow the roads on the run would be and how much grass there would be up the middle.

"Oh you don't need to worry about grass" said Tom cheerily, "It's the 400 metre unprotected drop off the Long Mynd that's the real botty clencher!" Alan opined that it was nearer to 500 metres and a discussion then ensued as to just how many times one may bounce before hitting the bottom!

With that cheery thought rattling around my brain, I left them to their musings to grab a couple of quick shots (ok, ok, another ale) in the bar, and here they are along with Craig's garden group's smiling selfie.

With the call to fighting irons coming shortly after 7pm we trooped into the dining area which had been laid out in a sort of Hogwarts refectory style.

So began the feasting, at least it did once everyone had remembered or looked up what they had ordered! My choice of Prawn Cocktail, Chicken Breast and Panna Cotta was mighty fine, thank you very glad.



In the spirit of the Chairman's instruction [re the report] to 'tone it down a bit' I'll just tell you that Friday's notices covered the formal welcome, the introduction of guests, an update on the Autumn 24 run and of course, the run briefing. Somewhere in all of this, Andrew dispensed the raffle prizes, ably assisted by Adam.

The guest list was shorter than our 2 previous runs and consisted of:

Chris Ratcliffe: an Engineer who was riding his own creation on the run; a 250cc Langen 2 stroke. Chris was the guest of Nick Campolucci.

Richard and Anthony Waterer: the former an ex Redcat Marketing employee and the latter an Accountant in the retail sector. Both were the guests of Tom Waterer (obviously!)

Mark Fenwick: Head Lad of Hoco Parts UK, on his 3rd run as the guest of David O'Neill.

Ben Hall: alias 'Little Ben', the General Manager of Watsonian Squire, the guest of Ben Matthews (Big Ben!)

Colin Mayo: a motorcycle industry Legend with 70 years in the trade and the guest of son Andy Mayo.



*Top: Chairman Ben, Chris Ratcliffe, Mark Fenwick
Middle: Richard & Anthony Waterer, Rafflemeister Andrew & Assistant Adam
Bottom: raffle plunder, Ben Hall, Colin Mayo*



***Under the spreading chestnut tree,
Birds will shit on you and me,
Oh how happy they will be,
To see the bikes cleaned fur-iously-ly!***



My usual pre-breakfast stroll around the parc fermé found the ever genial Tim Albone busy washing his bike. A bird had ‘done a ton’ on it. And no, this was not some glamorous lady rider exceeding the national speed limit but a feathered friend roosting in the massive conker tree that shaded the car park! A similar message from on high had been deposited on David O’Neill’s bike too...

Whilst Operation Decontamination was in full swing, a nithered Graham Matcham arrived having ridden up from Southampton after a double-o crack start: it was apparently a tad parky first thing! Paul Haskins also arrived early doors but he was only joining the run and going home straight after. I wonder who did the most miles on the day?

With breakfast despatched, Tom led the line out of the car park at 9.15. There is always a bit of ‘after you, no after you’ at the start as no one wants to be the first corner marker: this time the left turn at the exit from the car park – in full view of everyone still in the car park!

Right: Let the fun commence, Tom leads off...

The first section of the ride roughly followed the River Severn before turning south to the western environs of Much Wenlock and thence topside of Wenlock Edge to Church Stretton.

Just before Much Wenlock, there was a sign for the village of Harley, there’s no connection to bikes but the village is one of the ‘Thankful Villages’; so called because all of the menfolk who left for the Great War returned. In fact they only lost one resident in the 2nd World War, a chap who died in a POW camp.



From Church Stretton it was up, up and away onto the road that was the object of our organisers’ delight of the night before. There are a plethora of signs at the bottom proclaiming the dangers to come and then it’s across a cattle grid and hang on to your ha’penny! And wouldn’t you just know it, the first thing your scribe (and those in front) encountered was a mini-bus coming the other way!



This is a spectacular road across the Long Mynd, as you can see courtesy of Mr Google and an obligatory stop had to be made to admire the views...

Ben’s picture (right) is just called ‘aerial’. You can see him, hands in pockets, front

and centre and so I mused on how he took it.

So for anyone else who, like me, wasn’t looking at the time I can tell you (after later discreet enquiries) that he has a ‘follow me’ drone. This modern world eh, whatever next?



Pressing on to the coffee stop the road meandered through Ratlinghope (*Ed: that's a term that could apply to some bikes on the run!*), past the Stiperstones ridge and the old lead mine at The Bog; which reminded me that a wee would be required before too long!



A short detour off the A488 trunk road took us to the morning watering hole at Bishops Castle. Parking was a bit of a free-for-all at the Castle hotel but once sorted we enjoyed our coffee and biscuits in the warm sunshine.

Suitably relieved and refreshed it was on into the land of Dragons and leeks at Knighton.

As I write these words, I am remembering a management meeting at Kawasaki HQ back in the 90s. They were always first thing on Monday morning and on this particular day Alec 'Aceboss' Wright told us how Andy Robertson (of Knighton), Arthur Browning and Dave Jeremiah had won the 'oldest combined age prize' at the Welsh 2 Day enduro at the weekend. 'Blimey!' says I 'Arthur Browning, he's ancient!' 'Yes' says Alec, 'He trained hard for it though; he had a couple of games of darts!'

From Knighton the route initially ran through the River Teme valley. It was a delightful B-road ride which ran north-westwards before meeting the A483 and doubling back on itself in the hamlet of Dolfor.

The run down the A483 to Llandrindod was as exhilarating as the route had been spectacular thus far. It's a fast flowing road with plenty of shell grip corners in evidence. However, not everyone made it safely to the lunchtime nosebag...

With the first rider cohort following Tom into the reserved area of the picturesque Lakeside Café in Llandod he was handed a phone by one of the staff. The subsequent conversation went along the lines of: 'Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no, ok.' Fearing the worst, we tentatively enquired of our Leader what had happened. 'Oh it's OK' he replied cheerily, 'Steve's come off but he's OK.'

It turned out that our chum had had a coming together with a not 'all there' Freelander driver travelling in the opposite direction. The driver had wandered over the white line on a bend and hit Steve in the right footpeg area of his Triumph Tiger. The miracle was Steve managed to stay on his mount before collapsing on the verge with [it turned out later] a broken lower tibia and medial malleolus (top of the ankle) and a written off bike due to a cracked frame – it could have been a whole lot worse...

With Adam taking charge of the casualty and Ian Kerr reverting to type and managing the scene, the emergency services were quickly on the scene. The scenario was obvious to Plod, despite the driver not admitting liability, in as much as the Land Rover was on the wrong side of the road with a punctured front tyre and knackered wheel courtesy of Steve's offside footrest.

Engaging the Traffic Sergeant in conversation, IK was soon producing his Yamaha Police Liaison Manager business card as the local force were discussing traffic motorcycles the following week! They do say that every cloud has a silver lining...

Lunch was thus a drawn out affair whilst the second cohort behind the accident caught up. Steve's bike also appeared courtesy RAC man Steven Jones' trailer.

Right: At first glance it doesn't look too bad, but looks can deceive...



Eventually, with bodies and bikes fuelled up for the afternoon, we departed Llandrindod Wells for the most southerly point of the run, Llanelwedd: where it seems nowt much happens outside of the Royal Welsh Show every July. Understandably, the first few miles were approached more cautiously than may have otherwise been the case on a 'normal' run...

Right: Waiting for the off by the lake in Llandod



Between Llanelwedd and Knighton (again) there was only New Radnor to interrupt the flow of the glorious roads and scenery. It seems that historically this area had been pretty much a battleground with old Motte and Bailey castles in profusion. With the marauding Owain Glyndwr freeing the area from English rule in the late Middle Ages it was clearly a land where men were men and sheep were frightened...

Not quite meeting up with the morning's route, a turn eastwards was made in Knighton to follow the Teme valley towards Ludlow. The road flirts with the Welsh border and the river as it heads towards Leintwardine, which is at the confluence of the rivers Teme and Clun.

Leintwardine boasts the Roman name of Branogenium on OS maps but, according to Wiki, this is incorrect as that refers to a fort south of the village. Its correct name (according to the history buff who compiled the page) is Bravonium. What isn't in dispute however is that the High Street, up which we rode, is on the line of the roman road known as Watling Street. It also boasts a bookshop called Aardvark Books, surely a throwback to when the telephone directory predated Google as the point of reference for all shopping knowledge!

The A4113 ends at Bromfield which is situated by the point where our old friend the river Teme has yet another confluence, this time with the river Onny. Turning right, a short section of the A49 took us across the topside of Ludlow and thence on to tea at Wheathill via the A4117 and B4364.

A magnificent array of sweet treats awaited us at the Three Horseshoes tea stop. I know I had more than I should but did you dear reader?

Flapjacks and strange but delicious cakes were on offer as well as the more traditional cream tea. Never one to shirk his responsibility as chief food tester Frank did not hesitate in attacking a spare plate of scone, jam and cream...



Not for Frank the dilemma of cream or jam first: eschewing the late Queen's preference he dived in Devonian style!

Full of tea and buns, it was onwards through more twisty roads to the environs of Bridgenorth and thence back to Ironbridge, via a second look at Much Wenlock, for a well-earned post run beer.

Coming into the hotel car park, there were two welcome sights. Firstly, Hon Sec Graham Goodman was there, camera poised, to take shots of the returning posse. See the photoreel to see if he caught you. Secondly and quite remarkably, Steve Callahan was also back at the hotel, patched up courtesy of the (generally) wonderful NHS.

Nowadays, the news is rife with horror stories of long delays of many hours at hospital A & E departments. At the tea stop, anticipating just such a fate for our chum, the talk had turned to what to do in the absence of the Sergeant at Arms report after dinner. (*Ed: You had assumed then that Steve was the SAA?*)

Our hero though had received exemplary service. The Paramedics and Traffic Police at the scene were top notch and the Ambulance Crew had taken him all the way to Shrewsbury Hospital so that he was just 30 minutes away from base after assessment and treatment. A taxi brought him back to the fold.

Right: Minus 1 boot and plus 2 crutches Steve was a welcome sight in the car park!



In mileage terms, this had been a shorter run than others recently at 169 miles, but it was nonetheless an excellent one with stunning scenery and a good mix of relatively quiet roads; something which Chairman Ben referred to in the evening whilst thanking Tom and Alan for their faultless organisation.

Despite the relaxed start of 09.15 and the delays following Steve's accident, we were back at the hotel before 17.30 and enjoying a beer in the late afternoon sun. Run Leader Tom looked justifiably happy, as well he might, at the end of the day.

Later on in the evening, after another excellent dinner, Chairman Ben apologised to Steve for hiring 'a hit man for the Sergeant' on his last run as Chairman!

With thanks to the organisers, hotel staff (as usual, looking embarrassed!), Adam Kelley (for organising the excellent RAC cover) and Graham Goodman for making the effort to be with us (much applause!); Chairman Ben handed over to the battered, but thankfully with us Sergeant at Arms Steve, to deliver his report... With Adam recruited to collect the forfeits, the Sergeant was straight in, fining someone, it's not clear who, for not knowing that the standard fixed penalty is £1!



Steve has usually found a way of hitting everyone with a 'class action' and this time, everyone except the Waterer family was asked to stand and then cough up a quid for gate-crashing a family reunion. Tom was then fined for confusing his sons' names on Friday night and, another for referring to his 'number 1 son'!

Nick Hopkins was then in the spotlight for not riding his usual Norton Commando, which had apparently refused to start after an oil change. His reserve bike had a leaking fuel tank and so he came on his 3rd choice a Norton 19S. This he said was a 600 with a short kickstart¹ and he was not sure he could start it consistently. So Nick was fined, as too was Nick Jeffery for helping out and starting it for him. This said the Sergeant 'Encourages him to bring it again, which is not something we want!'

¹ Ed: For younger readers who have only used an electric foot, this is a lever on the right side used for starting your machine...

Staying on the topic of crusty old British tackle; Norman was hit with a double for a gravelly slide in the morning and overshooting the afternoon pub stop.



Turning on his Deputy, Steve told us that Adam had turned up on an immaculate Yamaha MT-01 that, according to our legislator, had pre-scrubbed tyres. And, in an effort to emulate Dave Martin's (not quite so) immaculate MT of past runs, also sported a front fork oil leak too!



*Left: Adam's immaculate MT-01
Right: Dave's oil seal repair, Spring Run 2015*

Now, Ian Kerr is a challenge for all who serve as Sergeant At Arms; his background as a Met Police Traffic Officer makes him generally squeaky clean. So after a very long wait, Steve finally had him bang to rights for 'tapping up' the Traffic Sergeant who attended his accident...

Tim Maccabee, ex 'Grand Fromage' of Ducati and co-organiser of the upcoming Autumn Run with our Sergeant, admitted that without a bike of his own, his loan goodwill with the old firm may be close to expiry and he may not have a bike to ride come September. That cost him £1: for each!

Arthur was, I think, fined for his recent barnet work. Steve said 'It does look beautiful and it cost £3,000, but it's only going to cost £1 this time!'

Graham Matcham had met the Sergeant in the car park when he arrived early doors and had asked him to 'Do us a favour and push us up the car park'. (*Ed: In mitigation, it was quite a slope if you overshoot a parking space.*)

Chairman Ben was nobbled for the drone incident on the Long Mynd. 'Guy Ritchie you are not' opined Steve 'and, you didn't get our permission to film us!'

Andy Mayo had called his father Colin the 'Old Man' without realising that compared to him, everyone was an old man. Compounding this, he was accused of using Colin as the excuse to arrive in a van with his bike on a trailer.



David O'Neill paid the price for parking his bike under the tree thus allowing an enormous amount of avian ordnance to hit the Hi-Viz tank. He had also been spotted later in the day trying to exact revenge by attempting to head-butt a Red Kite.



Treasurer Rick had arrived 'fashionably late' on Friday evening and enquired as to where his welcoming committee was and who was carrying his bags. Consider that fine more of a tip Rick. But it wasn't over for him; he had removed the 'diving platform' from the rear of his Triumph Trophy in an attempt to convince everyone it was a Sports Tourer - and that cost him again...

Roy Pinto had recently changed jobs (again) and left BSA to take up a contract with MotoMondo, importers of Morini and Rieju amongst others. This had confused the Sergeant who was struggling to keep up! Roy also copped for his (not so) discreet vaping.

Martyn Roberts, a very talented Engineer as we all know, was unable to negotiate the hotel staircase without his bungees getting caught, clearly a technical problem too far!

Staying with Martyn he had been bubbled by Norman for apparently wearing girly knickers on his head at lunch. Both paid the price, although your scribe has to say that Norman must know some very strange girls!



Next, the Sergeant asked. 'Can you hear me Geoff?' 'Only all of Ironbridge heard you exclaim "What an erection!" last night.' I was, of course, referring to the Bridge!



Continuing with yours truly he claimed that not only did I wire him for sound during his report to save me taking notes, but in the last report I had doxed him in for 'titting about' with his bungees and doing the dance of the overtrousers. The claim was that he made up half of the report and for that, I should pay dearly.

As I said at the time, Steve is the gift that keeps on giving; so if you missed it then...

The Friday raffle came into the spotlight; well, more specifically, Rafflemeister Andrew, who had forgotten that it was £1 for a ticket and had to borrow a quid!

The next charge was aimed at the Run Leader: 'Tom, when leading a run it is customary to use your indicators when making a turn and, when you do use them, not to leave them on for the next 7 miles!' Tom also copped it for some (allegedly) ugly footrest comfort mods on his bike. *(Ed: Steve did though wish he still had 2 pegs on his bike!)*

There was a reference to Triggers Broom in the context of Chris Ratcliffe's Langen (right), although I'm unsure why. He did pay double though because the Sergeant couldn't understand how it got through single vehicle approval without a chain guard!



Anthony Waterer paid a pound for having the biggest security chain in the car park to keep his ex-Steve Kenward Suzuki RF900 safe. 'Who's going to nick that?' said Steve.

Staying with the family, Richard Waterer paid £1 for the privilege of carrying Dad Tom's bags into the hotel and another one for the convex 'see all-around' mirror affixed to his bike's screen. 'An idea that never took off did it?' claimed the Sergeant. Although there were some in the room who disputed this!

Stephen Burgess, it was claimed, had too much luggage: 'Three lovely BMW boxes and you still had a roll bag on the back!' *(Ed: Perhaps Stephen was worried about the size of the raffle prize he may have won this time?)*

Nick Campolucci fell foul of that old chestnut, standing on the footpegs. *(Ed: He's lucky he still can!)*

Craig Carey-Clinch was brought to book over his helmet, specifically the souvenirs of many past rides in the form of dead flies encrusted on it. The stickers on his boxes also came under fire: 'That's the Caravan Club!' claimed Steve.

They say size isn't everything but Alan Halford had claimed differently saying [of Steve's Tiger] 'Yours is only an 800 but mine is a 900!' 100 pennies is the difference...



Simon Hill's sartorial headwear (left) was the final charge on the Sergeant's sheet, which although making him look like a rock star, still cost him £1.

Steve closed his book thanking everyone and hoping that his accident hadn't taken the shine off an otherwise excellent run. To this Chairman Ben re-iterated everyone's thoughts that we were just glad that he was back with us and moreover was fit enough and still good humoured enough to deliver another quality report.

And so another run came to an end, other than the customary nightcaps in the bar. For my part, thanks are due to everyone for the kind words about my scribing on Friday night and for your help in compiling this report.

By way of a footnote, Steve tells me that the driver of the Land Rover is being prosecuted and his licence is being revoked as he is deemed unfit to drive. See, there is justice in this world...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Hill', written on a light-colored background.

Who came on what...

With thanks to Rick Parish for the list.

MEMBERS:		
Adam	Kelley	Yamaha MT01
Alan	Halford	Triumph Tiger 900 GT
Andrew	Smith	Yamaha Tracer 9 GT
Andy	Mayo	Yamaha Tracer 9
Arthur	Macdonald	KTM 1290GT Superduke
Ben	Matthews	BMW S1000XR
Craig	Carey-Clinch	Triumph Scrambler 1200XC
Daniel	Sager	Royal Enfield Interceptor 650
David	O'Neill	BMW R1250HP
Frank	Finch	Yamaha Tracer 9 GT
Geoff	Selvidge	Triumph Tiger 900 GT Pro
Graham	Matcham	KTM 1090 Adventure R
Ian	Kerr MBE	Yamaha Tracer GT+
Martyn	Roberts	Honda NC750
Nick	Jeffery	BMW K75S 740cc
Nick	Hopkins	Norton 19S 600cc
Nick	Campolucci	Honda Africa Twin
Nigel	Bosworth	Ducati V4 Streetfighter
Norman	Hyde	Triumph Trident 660
Paul	Haskins	Ducati Multistrada V4s
Rick	Parish	Triumph Trophy 1200
Roy	Pinto	Yamaha Tracer 9 GT
Simon	Hill	BMW R1250RS
Stephen	Burgess	BMW R1250RS
Steve	Callahan	Tiger XCX 800 (with crash bars and anti-impact detection technology pack)
Tom	Waterer	BMW GS650
Tim	Albone	Yamaha FJR1300
Tim	Maccabee	Ducati DesertX 950
GUESTS:		
Anthony	Waterer	Suzuki RF900R (ex Steve Kenward)
Ben	Hall	Royal Enfield Himalayan 450cc
Chris	Ratcliffe	Langen 2 stroke 250cc
Colin	Mayo	RAC spec Isuzu D-Max
Mark	Fenwick	BMW R1250GS Exclusive
Richard	Waterer	Triumph 955 Sprint

The route and more images will be found on the separate photoreel on the Club website...