



THE CLUB - AUTUMN RUN 2016

Co Wexford, Ireland – 22nd to 25th September

Organisers: David Martin and Frank Finch

RIGHT, LET'S GET THE IRISH JOKES OUT OF THE WAY FIRST...



Paddy's on his death bed and says to his friend Mick, "Mick, when I'm gone I want you to pour a quart of Bushmills over me coffin."

"Of course old friend" says Mick, "but is it OK if I pass it through me kidneys first?"

I'll get me coat...

CURRY AND QUELLS, THE PERFECT COMBINATION

Usually, a mad dash follows the curry rather than precedes it - but not this time. In order to arrive in time for the 14.30 Fishguard to Rosslare sailing on this sunny Thursday *and* fit in the obligatory Ruby Murray (couldn't guarantee there would be a local one over the water presumably), our organisers deemed that an 09.00 group meet up and departure from Gloucester would be needed to reach Fishguard's Taj Mahal emporium by noon.

It nearly worked.

Your scribe had elected, with management approval, to travel to Wales on Wednesday and thus enjoy a leisurely ride and sightseeing tour of Fishguard before meeting up with the group at the restaurant. At 12.15 I was chatting with the Chef and a concerned looking Manager waiting for someone, anyone, to arrive and help me through the 15 starters, 3 large curries and 15 bottles of Cobra that had been pre-ordered! Enter John Wakefield stage left - alone.

John had set off from home at double-oh crack, arrived at the meeting point at the appointed hour and without so much as a wee break, watched the group shoot out of the carpark in the quest for poppadum. The dispatch rider system was to be used for the run into Wales but this fell apart early on when JW arrived at a roundabout covered in road works with no marker apparent. Faced with this, he re-set his satnav to go 'direct' and carried on whilst the organisers, apparently unsure of how many had actually set off from Gloucester, were none the wiser! In the event, John arrived well ahead of the main peloton followed shortly after by Keith Davies who had also made his own way up from the south coast.

So now there were three of us but with the latest ferry check-in at 14.00 and it being already 12.45, the maître-de was starting to get even more uneasy – he had had a text from Dave earlier advising of only a 10 minute delay. We decided to tuck in to our starters and the manager chap brought out the bowls of steaming curry in mild, hot and hell-fire flavours, all in the name of time saving.

It was almost on the dot of one o'clock when the main group arrived, lifted their visors and started shovelling the curry down with the starters to follow. A decision to delay re-fuelling until we arrived in Ireland ensured that we ate the food, paid our £20 a nob and made the ferry with (a little) time to spare.

Right: And damn fine curry it was too!

So if you would like to see what you missed in Fishguard, please turn the page!





L to R: John arrives at the Taj Mahal and waves to your scribe; Fishguard Lower Town; the low-key ferry terminal.

ALL ABOARD THE SKYLARK!

With check in painlessly completed, the motorcycles were waved forward very early in the loading process, result! Oddly, we were loaded via a gantry system and side door as you can see from the cover picture.

Inside the ship we were directed to a special motorcycle lane where the padded tie-downs were neatly laid out and a couple of Stena Shipmates set about securing the bikes for what we hoped would not be a bumpy crossing.

The cross channel boys could learn a thing or two from this approach!

Right: This was the return crossing but no matter, you get the idea!



And so, safely stowed, we set about finding a corner of the boat we could call our own, hopefully with coffee on hand and decent seats to sit/sleep in for the just under 4 hour crossing. As you may gather from the pictures below, the mission was successfully accomplished.



Top Row L to R: Caption please for Andrew and a ghostly Dave, Guest Gary and the back of John Wakefield, Nick snoozes and bottom row; later morphs into a brass rubbing.

IS IT YERSELF?

Now here's a funny thing, whenever you travel to Johnnie Foreigner land, and I include Ireland in that as they are a separate EU entity to Blighty, you have to show a passport or Identity Card and so I disembarked with my passport placed handily in the tank bag. Approaching the solitary Guard (as officers of *An Garda Síochána* are locally known) the conversation went like this:

Guard: Nationality?

Me: British.

Guard: On yer way.

Those Garda chappies are obviously bloody clever, they can tell friend from foe just by looking through the hole in your helmet (fnarr, fnarr!). Funnily enough it was the same on the return journey with no British Passport Control to be seen anywhere and no requests to show Her Majesty's rite of passage document either side of the water: so much for homeland security!

And so with the minimum of fuss and all fuelled up ready for the morn, we arrived at the Danby Lodge Hotel and set about sampling the local culture.

Right: Well, it has to be done doesn't it? Later, one of our number was to question the quality of Ireland's most famous export with the affable barman Michael and, judging by the club quiz, it would seem that our resident beer expert, Nick Hopkins, may well have been right!



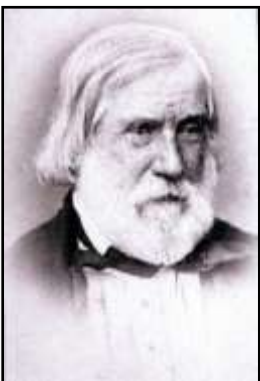
THE DANBY LODGE HOTEL



Now according to the hotel's website, 'the hotel is housed in the former 18th century manor of the famous artist, Francis Danby'. Best Western claim it was built in the 1730s but to my eye, it was much later than that and one could find little or no evidence of a building of that age. Enquiries at reception as to whether Francis did ever live there proved fruitless.

Left: It may be possible that there is a later structure lurking behind the bikes; the bit with the darker roof.

In fact, looking into old Francis himself only deepens the mystery. The only references to this as his potential domicile are in the words 'his father, James Danby, farmed a small property he owned near Wexford'.



Francis (left) was born in 1793 and died, in Exmouth, in 1861. By the time he was 14, his father had died and the family moved to Dublin, it was there that he started drawing and painting landscapes.

In 1813, he and a couple of other young artists left for London never, it would seem, to return to the land of his birth. After their money ran out in London, they set off to walk home and got as far as Bristol where Danby found out he could earn a living sketching and painting water colours. Along with a bunch of other local artists he became a member of the informal 'Bristol School'.

With his works receiving greater recognition and with some of them being shown at the Royal Academy, Francis became an Associate member of the academy and all was rosy until in 1829, his missus legged it with another artist and he vowed never to live in London again. After 10 years in Switzerland and a short time in Paris, Francis moved to Exmouth where he lived for the rest of his life. So it would seem that the claim of the hotel and Best Western that the Danby Lodge was his home are tenuous in the extreme!



To give you a flavour of Francis' varying style, here are left to right: *Disappointed Love, Sunset and Shipwreck.*

TWO FOR ONE OFFER WITH A SURPRISE TWIST

Arriving on a Thursday as we did, gave our organisers the opportunity to lay on not one but two runs. And so after a traditional local supper of Irish bacon and cabbage, Run 1 Leader, Dave Martin, introduced his Friday jaunt with a surprise announcement that his route would be less than 300 miles *and* there would be a point of interest. Whoa, steady down there!

With an early start of 08.30 scheduled, it would allow us to ride the 80 miles or so up towards the Wicklow Mountains National Park and go to the Hilltop Shooting Ranges to try our hand at .22 rifle shooting and pop a few clays as well. Not just a point of interest but an activity too! Had Dave gone raving mad? We would find out in the morning.



Above: *Mmmm, bacon!*

One advantage of this splendid double run strategy is that if the weather is poor on one of the days you can stay in bed on the other. Of course, if it is bad both days, you are rather stuffed. Another advantage is that if you already have a Saturday commitment, you can bugger off home on Friday night having completed a 'normal' run timescale. Both of these possible scenarios were to be tested: one by Nick Hopkins and the other by our (outgoing, in more ways than one) Chairman Graham, who explained that he would be on a ferry on Friday night as he was competing in an off road moped endurance race on Saturday. (*Where he finished a creditable 3rd – Ed*) You will hear more of Nick's reasons later but first, let us find out who those chaps were who tagged along with us to the hotel...

GENTLEMEN, YOUR GUESTS PLEASE

We had three guests on this run, two invited by Frank and one by Dave. But first, after a whole day in his company, Frank had to introduce the Chairman to his guests! It seems that our co-organiser had been less than diligent in briefing his guests about The Club, its traditions, dress code and especially, the dispatch rider system! Guests? More like a pressed gang methinks.



Dave stood first and introduced his guest, Tim Albone (left), an engineering chap and "jolly fine metal mangler". Tim is reasonably well known to us as he joined the Sherborne Run in Spring 07, Ballachulish in Spring 08 and Goodwood in Autumn 09.

Frank then continued by introducing Gary Hartshorne (right) who is the UK and Nordic Product Manager for Bridgestone Tyres. Frank first met Gary at CPK when they imported those Welsh Pirethli tyres.



Last but by no means least, Colin Crewther was introduced. Colin was described as being in the 'leisure industry' and produces fixtures and fittings for caravans and motor homes of all types. Until the day before he had also been the Chairman of the National Caravan Council.



Dave Martin – serial motorcycle seat murderer – was seen in conversation with Colin (right) on many occasions, presumably getting tips!

With guests introduced and all other formalities completed we returned to the bar to properly prepare for the next day's ride.

GO NORTH YOUNG MAN AND RIDE HARD

The 08.30 start gave us a perfect opportunity to sample the Wexford rush hour first hand. Mainly the hold-up was caused by the right turn over the Wexford Bridge; the traffic lights there do not have a filter phase to break the oncoming traffic. It did however give the opportunity to admire this impressive structure over the River Slaney.



The bridge, the third to be built here, is 590 metres long including the approaches and has 7 spans of 63 metres in length which carried us over 380 metres of water. Opened in 1959 it was pretty much rotten to the core by 1997 and a major engineering project broke up the superstructure and the associated piers and stuff were reconstructed and the roadway replaced with composite concrete slabs. All this work was completed in just 10 weeks – it would take that long just to erect the cones, average speed cameras and portaloos over this side of the Irish Sea!

Once north of the river the R742, which largely follows the coastline and is somewhere between a minor A road and a B road by UK standards, took us through some very pleasant countryside before it veers inland at the holiday resort area of Courtown.

By the miracle that is modern technology, you can have an on-board look at some of the roads that we were riding over the course of the run weekend, courtesy of John Wakefield and his helmet mounted camera. I'll knit the clips he has sent me into the photo reel so be sure to check it out!

After Courtown, we passed through Gorey and Craanford (I'm sure I saw a Laark Rise there) before turning right onto the R748 at Carnew – to where we would return for afternoon tea after completing the northern loop of the route.

By now we had crossed over from County Wexford into County Wicklow and we continued on northwards until turning right at Roundwood to cross an arm of the Vartry Reservoir before arriving at the Hilltop Shooting Ranges, on schedule at 11.00am.

Right: We knew we had arrived as there was a sign stating the bleedin' obvious!



Left: the morning ride complete, it was time to light up the gaspers and go for the mobiles.

Sadly, the lovely morning weather was not to last, it clouded over and we saw rain whilst here; must be the proximity to the Wicklow Mountains.

TARGETS, CLAYS AND DODGY BURGERS

There was a certain amount of milling around when we initially arrived at Hilltop whilst the 'ead lad was tracked down. That done, we trooped inside for coffee and biccys and to sign our lives away on the inevitable disclaimer forms. With the coffee dispatched there was a bit of schoolboy larking around undertaken; attaching a target to Dave's back without him realising, you know the sort of thing.



Left to Right: Coffee in the caff, Sign 'ere and, well, Dave had asked for a volunteer target at dinner last night!

Formalities completed we split into two groups, one to bang away at clays first whilst the other tackled the .22 target shooting. As it panned out, there were both crack-shots and those, your scribe included, who couldn't hit a cow's arse with a banjo amongst our number. Luckily it was to be an individual competition rather than team.

Now at this juncture, I should recount how the target shooting was organised. After basic instruction, we were to have 25 shots apiece, 5 at each of 5 small targets on a numbered A4 sheet, that was some 50 metres distant. So far, so good. There were 10 stations on the range but we were only using the middle 8. Matey Boy gave each of us an ammo box with crib board attached to put the bullets in so as we would know what we had fired. These boxes were numbered, and these numbers should have matched the targets we were to shoot at: *TILT!* The blithering idiot had got it all one to the right and confusion reigned supreme as we did not notice straightaway. When we did, he got us all to shoot 1 to the left! He did the same thing for the other group too...

The clay shooting was somewhat simpler to understand but harder to hit, they were moving! We shout 'pull' and the affable chap released 2 clays, the second after you attempted to hit the first. The concept is simple unless, like your scribe, you don't see the second one go and you stand there waving a loaded shotgun around whilst onlookers scurry for cover! (*Didn't see that mentioned on the Sergeant's list, major oversight – Ed*)

The shooty-gunny stuff over, we repaired back indoors for a lunch of burger and chips whilst the scores were fathomed out. It all got a bit confusing from here on in as medals were handed out for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in each class and some were promptly swapped around. With no particular accuracy (of reporting!), the results were:

.22 target shooting

- 1st – Adam Kelley
- 2nd – Gary Hartshorne
- 3rd – Andrew Smith

Clay shoot

- 1st – Colin Crewther
- 2nd – Gary Hartshorne
- 3rd – Tim Albone



I did remark later that day that with all the firing practice Andrew had had over the years, I had expected him to do better. However, as the picture left shows, he finished up with two medals and so perhaps he did!

Pictures of the other chaps with their medals can be found on the photo-reel.

OVER THE MOUNTAINS TO HOLLYWOOD

Leaving the Hilltop Ranges, it was still grey with rain hanging in the air. Back-tracking the morning route a short way, we hung a right onto a minor road that took us over a picturesque reservoir to meet up with the R755 and R759 that leads to the crossroads with the Old Military Road at the quaintly named 'Sally Gap'.

Right: A picture from Google Maps, taken in May 2011, shows how the area is popular with motorcyclists.



Sally Gap is one of two east to west passes across the Wicklow Mountains. The Old Military Road which runs north south was built by the British Army after the Irish Rebellion of 1798. North of the crossroads, the road is a positive motorway as the photograph shows, but that is for wusses. We turned south where for 10 miles or so, we rode a single track tarmac motocross track that gave the suspension a good workout and had dentures rattling like a flamenco dancer's castanets!

Reaching Laragh we turned right onto the somewhat wider and smoother, but no less spectacular, R756. This is the second east west pass over the mountains and led us to Hollywood and the fuel stop some 20 miles distant. If you have access to Google Earth, it is well worth playing around with the 3D settings and exploring this area.

CARNAGE IN CARNEW AND WALLYING AROUND IN WEXFORD

With them as needed it re-fuelled, we set off south in pursuit of tea and edible comestibles which would be taken at Jim Byrne's lounge in Carnew. Heading south from Hollywood, we re-crossed the River Slaney, here little more than a babbling brook, and arrived in Carnew just as the afternoon school run had reached its peak, there were kids, cars and coaches everywhere, it was a challenge to thread our way through it.



Left: Isn't it great how the Irish eschew the British tradition of naming pubs after historical people or events and just use the owner's name?

With tea and biscuits dispensed by the affable staff, none of which owned up to being Jim as I recall, the main topic of conversation turned to the Irish property prices displayed in a local newspaper

and, despite it being only September, the Christmas decorations that were in evidence around the bar. Suitably refreshed, it was time for the last leg back to the Wexford Bridge and whence on to refuel and return to the hotel.

This leg took us through the oddly named Bunclody which, according to Wikipedia, is apparently '*the most economically repressed and poorest town in Ireland*'; however it goes on to say that that is only true if you ignore its burgeoning tourist industry and golf course! The town stands on the River Slaney which we again crossed and was the scene of a battle during the aforementioned Irish Rebellion. The rebels initially caused the British garrison to retreat across said bridge but were later repulsed by a British counter attack as they forgot to secure the gateway before going on the celebratory lash and losing control of their faculties.

Leaving Bunclody in our mirrors, it wasn't long before we rode through Enniscorthy which was where Denys Corbett Wilson made landfall after flying a Bleriot XI from the Pembroke coast and recording the first successful flight from Britain to Ireland in 1912, it took him 1 hour and 40 minutes.

Right: 'Made it!' Denys Corbett Wilson lands in the Emerald Isle on 22nd April 1912. Picture courtesy of the Corbett Wilson archive.





Apart from a bit of tomfoolery involving your scribe and Andrew (who was on point duty at the Wexford Bridge turn) which totally confused a local colleen in her car, it was an uneventful ride back to the hotel.

This bit of larking around was as a result of Mr Smith making exaggerated left turn gestures whilst I pretended to ignore him and signal right thus recreating the scenario earlier in the day where, whilst marking a junction, Andrew had waved his arms about like a hippy at a disco and wrongly sent yours truly, Colin, Martin and (I think) Nick Hopkins up a wrong road. By the time we turned around and got back to the junction, Mr Smith had buggered off! Luckily, in another club first, the day's route had been circulated to attendees ahead of departure so that we could brief our satnavs and work out where the rest had gone.

Left: And so by the marvel of technology and the excellent (read free)'TyreToTravel' software, we were able to programme our Garmin or TomTom devices and avoid getting (too) lost. Is this the end of the dispatch rider system as we know it? #discuss

PRODUCT PLACEMENT, A SHORT MEET, THE CHAIRMAN STANDS DOWN, ABSENT FRIENDS

Following showers and the like, we reconvened in the bar for refreshment ahead of a short pre-prandial members meeting called by Chairman Graham before leaving for his evening ferry back to Blighty. Whilst charging our glasses, I noticed that the hotel serving staff were all wearing lime green livery. A very fuzzy photograph was hastily taken to prove the point.

Right: So go on Martin, spill the beans. How much did you bung them to wear the corporate colour?



Anyway, back to the business in hand, the members went into the dining room and the usual Sunday morning business was dealt with speedily (see the minutes on the club website). With Graham Goodman absent, Nick Jeffery deputised as Secretary and as Chairman elect, Dan Sager, was also absent yours truly was deputised to take the chair for Friday and Saturday night's proceedings. With the business complete, Graham disappeared like the Lone Ranger into the sunset and the guests re-joined us as we tucked into an excellent dinner of soup, salmon followed by strawberries and ice cream.

With our starters despatched, Keith Davies rose to propose a toast 'to absent friends'. Of course, this was primarily a tribute to Keith Blair but also our other chums whom we had lost in recent years together with those who, for whatever reason, had not been able to attend this time...

QUIZ THE RUN LEADER

With the raffle long since confined to history, Friday's usual entertainment (other than heckling the Chairman) has become a quiz, generally a fiendishly difficult quiz. Dave was the quizmeister and distributed the papers after we had picked the bones out of the salmon. I know that some members who cannot attend the run like to try the quiz at home and so I won't spoil your fun by going into too much detail – the quiz and answers will be on the website and at the end of the report – other than to say that Nick Hopkins won with 8 correct answers and Frank didn't win despite knowing two of the answers, both of which he got wrong! This prompted the question "What are your first impressions of Ireland Frank?" The inference being, of course, that Frank hadn't been before to recce the run!

Like the proverbial water off the duck, Frank ignored this and briefed us on the Saturday run.

OLD FRANCIS KNEW A THING OR TWO

The weather forecast for the Saturday was poor to bloody awful; gale force winds lashing the area combining with precipitation that may just about hold off long enough for us to get the first few miles out of the hotel.



Left: Anticipating rain Dave treated his homemade seat cover to a shower cap, he said it was an AJS seat cover but we know the truth!¹

We have had bad weather before of course; I'm thinking Nairn in 2010 in particular and perhaps it was the memory of that run, coupled to the generally poor state of the roads in this part of the world, that convinced Nick Hopkins that the best course of action would be to withdraw himself and his sometimes aquaphobic Norton from Saturday's ride, a fair call.

A word here about those local roads. The most common road sign in this part of Ireland is 'slippery road'; they are so frequent as to become a 'given'. These are followed by loose gravel signs where they have (intermittently) tried to repair the smooth as Silky the Silkworm's silk pyjamas bits of worn out road. They haven't yet devised a suitable warning for a combination of both, covered in cow shit, around this next blind bend! There were few of us who didn't have at least one 'moment' during the day's ride!

With suitable waterproofing donned, we sallied forth with Nick H standing point duty across the road to wave us out of the hotel. We were to take an anti-clockwise ride around the route pictured right. The hotel is at the bottom right corner.

I suppose that the clues as to the type of Run it would be were all there, a wide loop around Waterford and one of Francis' best known works is 'The Deluge'! (Below)



Starting out as Friday, in the direction of Wexford, this time we by-passed the town and followed the N25/N11 that leads up to a second River Slaney crossing just to the west of the Wexford Bridge.

A couple of hundred yards short of this rather unassuming bridge we took a left through the Irish National Heritage Park to follow the river's right bank for a while. I recall it was about here that the rain started...

Although not obvious to us on the road, the park is actually an open air museum which recreates the Irish cultural heritage through buildings, structures and costume dating back to prehistoric times, worth a return visit perhaps!

¹ Later as the rain really took hold, the original 'Friesian' markings started to appear through the dye!

QUAINT NAMES HIDE HARD WOMEN AND BANDIT COUNTRY

Ireland is a country littered with strange town names and the section of the route to the coffee stop threw up some of the oddest. Leaving the Heritage Park behind, we headed north up the R730, never wider than a minor A road

over our side of the Irish Sea and often suffering the aforementioned surfacing issues, the road gives occasional glimpses of the distant Blackstairs Mountains.

Left: Thanks to Google Maps you can see the virtually ever present slippery road signs and dodgy surfaces we had to contend with. And this was taken when the road was dry!

Early on, to the right of a point where the road flirted again with the river, lay a village called 'The Deeps'. A little further on, and to the left, was Cloughbawn and then Killann.

Killann's claim to notoriety is that it was the birthplace of Kate Webster who in March 1879, in Richmond Surrey, murdered her twice widowed employer, Julia Martha Thomas. To conceal

her crime, she dismembered the body, boiled the flesh off the bones and offered the remaining fat to the neighbours as beef dripping and lard! The left overs were chucked in the Thames where her victim's missing skull finally surfaced from the mud in 2010. If you feel up to it, there is a Wikipedia page dedicated to the event, follow [this link](#).

After fleeing back to Killann, she was arrested and sent back to London for trial at the Old Bailey where she was found guilty and subsequently hanged in Wandsworth Prison.

Right: Kate Webster. Sweet young thing wasn't she?



Just beyond Killann, we turned onto the R702 in the village of Kiltalea. Here, Father Kearns, a rebel priest who fought in the 1798 rebellion, was born. We were clearly in bandit country! Reaching the most northerly part of the route we crossed into County Carlow and passed through Ballymurphy and on into County Kilkenny via Graiguenamanagh which translates as 'Village of the Monks' and is home to the largest of 34 Cistercian abbeys in Ireland. Crossing the old stone bridge over the River Barrow we fiddled through the narrow town centre streets and tipped out onto the R705 which leads to the quaintly named village of 'The Rower' and the T junction with the R700 at 'The Stripe' where we doubled back towards Inistioge and a very welcome coffee stop.

Inistioge itself is, in better weather, a lovely spot on the River Nore. Often used as a film location, on this particular day, our only consideration was parking up and getting out of the rain and into the Circle of Friends café for hot coffee and sugary confections. Consequently we will have to rely (again) on Mr Google for photographs...



L to R: The old stone bridge leading into the village, looking back towards the square, the Circle of Friends café.

AROUND THE WESTERN LOOP TO LISMORE

Having puddled the floor of the Circle of Friends to the point of embarrassment, the Hon Treash settled the bill and we re-mounted to do further battle with the deteriorating elements. Leaving the square by the side of the imposing granite structure that is St Mary's Church, we followed the R700 which criss-crosses the River Nore before arriving in Thomastown and switching to the R448 and a plethora of other road numbers to follow a south westerly track down into County Tipperary, it was a long way...

Crossing into County Tipperary by the village of Faugheen, the road was little more than a single track until we met the 'major' N76 for the run down into Clonmel. After Clonmel it was back to the familiar challenging tarmac all the way to the lunch stop, Foley's on The Mall in Lismore. The rain abated just long enough for us to park up and get inside.

Right: Parking was at a premium in Lismore but it was at least convenient!

Directed to the upper floor of Foley's we spread out along one wall and dumped our wet gear wherever we could find a space.



Above: This rather wacky panoramic picture was taken by John Wakefield with some clever gizmo he had on his phone, it bends a straight wall through 90 degrees.

The fayre at Foley's was particularly good and whereas on a dry sunny run the choices tend to be lighter, here we got stuck into the hearty rather than healthy.

Right: Scaling the picture from the cucumber, you can see that this is actually a rather small piece of fish; yeah, right.

Whilst we were tucking into this welcome repast a couple of dodgy looking geezers parked a white van right next to the bikes and proceeded to inspect the parc fermé. These were shortly followed by a couple of serious types in Crombie overcoats and leather gloves who were espied out of the window also checking out the bikes. Fearing a bike snatch or that our haphazard pavement parking had caused offence, we breathed a collective sigh of relief when it turned out to be a funeral party attending the church just up the road.



Donning the wet gear once again, we sallied forth for the southern leg of the route back to Killinick. Pretty soon after setting off, the weather, like the sick German butcher, had taken a turn for the wurst...

A HARD RAIN'S GONNA FALL

So sang Bob Dylan in 1963, and especially for Dylan fan, Nick Jeffery, you can hear it again by clicking on this link: [it's p1ssing down](#).

You're never far from a river in this part of the world. Indeed, we were to cross yet another by ferry later but for now, we left Lismore behind by backtracking to the N72 and heading east, initially alongside the River Blackwater. This section was one of the better roads but I honestly cannot remember an awful lot about it as I was concentrating so hard on staying upright in the worsening rain and strengthening wind, now gusting up to gale force as we approached the coast.

After initially just kissing the coast we turned inland again before having a longer seaside ride between Rathinure and the more built up area at Tramore. On the odd occasions we were out of sight of the Irish Sea we were riding moorland type roads with sheep grazing on the verges, all but one oblivious to the passage of 14 soggy chaps on motorbikes. The one that wasn't waited until your scribe got close then shot across the road testing rider reactions, ABS and sphincter tension simultaneously: luckily all performed within tolerance! One of those was however still twitching as we, quite literally, rocked up onto the ferry!



The Passage East Ferry across the River Barrow estuary. Left a soggy Steve and right, a damp Frank.

The ferry that links the unusually named village of Passage East with Ballyhack was only opened in 1982 and saves a 35 mile detour to cross Waterford harbour. Passage East was the place where the Normans landed in August 1170 to start their invasion of Ireland. Now, with the ferry generating an invasion of traffic in the village, the local NIMBYs are up in arms again.

The crossing takes about 10 minutes and by midstream the ferry was rocking like a good 'un and the Captain must have been offsetting at least 45 degrees of wind drift to stand a chance of hitting the far bank in the right place. Dave Martin's love of all things diesel unerringly led him to a doorway amidships where he and others gathered to benefit from the warm air blasting out from the engine room.

Gingerly riding off the sodden ramp of the ferry which was still swaying about more than was comfortable; we then took off on the last leg back to the hotel, still riding the R class [minor] roads which varied in surface quality from bad to bloody awful and caused many a 'moment' for the group and elicited feelings from relief at having survived (me) to elation at conquering the challenge (Martin, who exclaimed "I haven't stopped laughing for the last half an hour!"). With bikes fuelled ready for the early morning start, we arrived back at the hotel to a welcoming hot toddy thoughtfully arranged and sponsored by Nick Hopkins - thanks mate, you're a star!

It was a shame about the weather being as bad as it was, Frank's route, which in outline resembled a 'slammed' Australia had, like Dave's of Friday, taken in some outstanding scenery and made the long trip to get here well worthwhile. Now it was a race to get the kit dry for the return journey home and to see who was going to get nobbled by the Sergeant At Arms...

NEVER, IN RECENT CLUB HISTORY, HAD SO MUCH BEEN EXTRACTED FROM SO FEW...

For the third time, we assembled for a splendid dinner of local fayre, this time an Irish Lamb Stew which really hit the spot. Nick Jeffery had preceded the meal by saying grace and Rick read out the list of donations (*See the meeting minutes – Ed*) between courses. Before introducing the Sergeant at Arms, the evening's serving staff: Michael the barman (who had obviously forgiven Nick H by then), Lisa and Ashley took the deserved thanks of the group for looking after us so well.

For this run, the usual Sergeant, Steve Callahan, had handed over the charge sheets to Martin Lambert who was to be ably assisted in collecting the dues by Adam Kelley. Now, with only 16 attendees, only 14 of which were at dinner as Frank's guest Gary was also by this time on the ferry home, you would think that this ever popular feature of our runs would be over in a flash. Wrong. The digital recording thingummy that your scribe uses to try to make sense of stuff later at home shows that Martin's systematic lifting of the loose change lasted over 40 minutes! But, entertaining as ever, he made it a pleasure to be fined...



The first question of course was Euro or Sterling. This was to be left to individual consciences to decide as long as whatever went into the bucket was "silver, and of worth!" With the ground rules set The Sergeant set off on his report, the highlights of which are reproduced below...

Dave Martin was the first name on the list who was charged with wearing a prototype, non-approved Club Tie (*You may be able to spot this on the photo reel – Ed*) and in the same vein, Frank's guest, **Colin Crewther** was fined for not wearing a tie at all!

Gary Hartshorne was next for allowing all the paperwork for his bike, on loan from the Sergeant, to get soaking wet and unusable. This had apparently happened by the meeting point in Gloucester, before the run even started! Still in Gloucester, **Nick Jeffery, Tim Albone, Dave Martin, Graham Matcham and Rick Parish** had all hit the Sergeant's raw nerve by parking in disabled car bays. With Graham being absent, the stand in Chairman had to pay! **Frank Finch's** first fine of the night was levied for ignoring club rules and bringing two guests, albeit he had provide 12.5% of the total attendees! It didn't stop there; **Frank** was also fined for something termed 'the great satnav debacle' which referred to a series of emails prior to departure attaching various versions of the route file. Despite having the correct one, we still had to turn around and back track at least twice during the day.

On organisation cock-ups, **Dave** was hit again for sending loads of mails reminding everyone to bring their passports which were never actually needed. In Dave's defence, it was yours truly who had reminded Dave in the first place!

Nick Hopkins was cited for stopping at a roundabout on the way to Fishguard, opening his fuel tank and saying "I've only got 10 miles of fuel left". How did he know? He was however let off this particular fine as whilst it was happening a rather 'well blessed' young lady had walked past and distracted the Sergeant.

Gary was again on the list for ignoring the dispatch rider system at the first roundabout he was instructed to marshal, preferring to press on behind the leader whilst **Nick Jeffery** was also penalised for the smoke trail his K75 left whilst leading through the tricky A40 road works.

Colin again came into the spotlight for his time at the National Caravan Council. It seems that their motto was 'Enjoy the Road Ahead' the Sergeant then added "And ignore the bastard behind you..." (*I think this was more a fine for caravanners in general – Ed.*)

Regarding all things curry, the usually dependable **Rick** was fined for leaving his bag in the restaurant, **Andrew** for doing the same with his back protector and **John Wakefield** who, despite the tables burgeoning with the delights of the East, was spotted eating a sandwich 20 minutes into the ferry crossing! And during those early minutes at sea, **Rick** was spotted calling the AA to upgrade his recovery plan. He was of course fined for lack of forward planning. On the boat, **Gary** had asked Frank how many years he had ridden the TT thus subjecting himself (and anyone else close) to 4 hours of reminiscences. "For that you have to pay" said the Sergeant.

The next 'category' was product placement and **Graham Matcham, Gary Hartshorne, Rick Parish, Adam Kelley and Andrew Smith** were all penalised for wearing corporate gear and worse, both **Graham and John Wakefield** were further fined for corporate logos on their bikes. Your scribe's submission that the Sergeant should fine himself for the staff's lime green livery was waved aside saying "that's Asda!"

Steve Callahan was next in the firing line for daring to suggest that the colour of Dave's homemade Guzzi seat actually matched the colour of the bike "quite well". This was further financially compounded when he asked Sergeant Martin if he was using his phone to update social media when in fact, he was just recording the fine.

Nick Hopkins was fined for ignoring Andrew's animated straight on marshalling signals and turning right into the caravan park as detailed on page 8.

Nick Jeffery was then fined for an acronym – ASO – Automatic Seat Off. Each time he stopped, off came the seat of his K75 as the indicators were mal-functioning. Nick explained to Martin that he didn't want to be fined so he took the fuse out. Sadly, he was telling the wrong man!

The hapless **Gary** then came in for, this time, a double fine; firstly for his persistent phone calls and emails in the vain attempt to convince everyone he was busy and secondly for leaving his indicator on for 2 miles.

We were then regaled with a story of how the Sergeant had spent the previous summer sailing and in some bad weather night watches had lifted from troughs to be confronted with a brilliantly lit super-tanker. It hadn't been a happy time for Martin apparently and seeing **Andrew's** Yamaha in his mirrors bedecked with every conceivable lighting accessory had brought it all back to him.

Steve again, this time with a triple Friday whammy: firstly stopping at the busiest corner to relieve himself in full view, secondly seeing Martin using his mobile (see previous fine) and suggesting he might get fined and finally after enjoying the activities and food at Hilltop Ranges he asked "Is this the point of interest then?"

Still on the subject of the shooting, **Nick J** was fined for over-complicating the word 'Pull!'

Tim Albone had apparently been 'Teflon' up until the point on Friday that he was spotted getting in touch with his feminine side and applying lip balm.

Dave was firstly complimented for always ensuring that his runs had the best food and the widest cross-section of roads, then penalised for Friday's post lunch motocross experience.

Tim was then harangued for some lax and dodgy corner marking where the Sergeant actually had to use his horn to attract attention and find out which way to go!

Chairman Graham then came in for the second triple whammy of the night for: a) not knowing that he was in Wales when perpetrating to be half Welsh, b) asking if he needed a ticket to get a drink at the bar and c) saying to Andrew "I'm trying to work out what it says on that window 'ybnaD raB'" to which it was pointed out that it was the name of the hotel bar, which of course reads backwards from the inside!

Bluetooth offenders were cited for abnormal helmet appendages: **John Wakefield, Graham Matcham, Rick Parish and Geoff Selvidge** (this was costing your scribe a fortune paying Graham's fines too!).

Nick H and Rick were then fined for attention lapses after conversations involving, respectively, the cross eyed target placements at the range and a peloton of cyclists passing the hotel. After both subjects were exhausted, our chums paused for comic effect before chiming up their respective subjects again.

Keith Davies had, unwittingly, mentioned in conversation with the Sergeant that being in the company of chaps his own age made him feel old and these days, he preferred the company of "young men"...

Chaps who revved their engines unnecessarily were next in the spotlight and announced in reverse order these were: 3rd Steve Callahan with his loud piped KTM, 2nd Nick Hopkins with his "asthmatic old Norton" and in first place, Steve Callahan, just cos!

John Wakefield was fined for boring people in the bar with the outputs from his helmet camera. (*Harsh, the report is better for them – Ed*) whilst **Nick H** was fined for that remark of the previous night about the quality of Ireland's best known stout.



Nick Jeffery was singled out for imitating the fixed seating position of the Evel Kneivel stunt bike toy by never changing his riding posture.

Rick Parish had, all trip, been extolling the virtues of a new cleaning product called Vulcanet which prompted a fine from the Sergeant but an enquiry from your scribe as to whether it was a product from the Venhill stable. "Yes" he said, "I've made a multi-trillion Euro investment in a state of the art factory, that given Brexit, will be built in France and so it's not, as many of you thought, a free gift with 'Naked Biker Monthly'".

Graham Matcham then copped out once more for asking your scribe to take the member meeting minutes after Graham Goodman had already asked Nick J to deputise for him.

Nick H was again reprimanded for the 'Bermuda Triangle' effect when after a long and terminated conversation he was part of about past runs in general and Norfolk in particular he asked "Didn't we go to Norfolk once?"

Rick was pulled up over a lack of spatial awareness when he asked if anyone had seen Tim, who was sitting right behind him.



Frank then was fined for having, not once but twice, had to add things he had forgotten to include in his run briefing. One thing was however clear, it was to be an 09.00 start which prompted **Adam** to ask, "So is it an 08.30 departure then?" Ker-ching! Not finished with our much maligned co-organiser though, those two quiz questions he got wrong cost him yet again.

Without missing tax discs to penalise, those missing GB stickers were collared: **Adam** (who had bought one on the boat but not put it on his bike), **Colin, Andrew, Tim and Gary**. And in a further great bit of detailed observation, **Steve** had to pay up for having a cheap plastic Honda dust cap on his KTM.

Now **Tim**, who was sharing a room with Dave, had been in a bit of a rush to get ready on Saturday and grabbing what he thought was his Buff neck-warmer, was spotted wrapping one of Dave's dirty socks around his neck.

Ever the favourite, **Steve Callahan**, was then further fined for seeking counsel at the coffee stop on what tyre pressures he should be running to cope with the cow shit on the wet roads.

If you have been paying attention, you will remember that **Rick** was the co-defendant with Nick H in the first Bermuda Triangle incident, well it became a trilogy after he was again penalised, this time after an on-going conversation about the anatomy of Club Runs and in particular short cuts back to the hotel, by asking after a suitable time-lapse, "Didn't we used to build in a short cut back...?"

Sportingly, **Martin** then bubbled himself for sitting at a junction in 3rd gear and then pulling out in front of a car with a Kamikaze reverse SMIDSY manoeuvre.

Overlong indicator use was then in the spotlight with 'serial offender' **Gary Hartshorne** charged first followed by yours truly, **Geoff** who had managed a winning distance of 2.5 miles and **Tim** who had managed a mile.

Keith had made a profound statement that in all the time he had been riding, he hadn't been let down by a Guzzi. He was therefore fined for not riding enough.

Dave was accused of geriatric presbyopia for running his smart phone on 64 point text thus ensuring that passing aircraft could read his messages.

And so the final few citations were back at the hotel and concerned firstly the lubrication of chains. Martin had a small can of chain lube and after doing his chain passed it to **Steve** who asked Frank to help by spinning his back wheel. Frank's riposte was "Yes, if you take the bugger out of gear!" **Frank** then got himself into the book by asking Martin if he would squirt his chain but Martin couldn't achieve that as Frank's Scottoilier was in the way!

Finally when asked by **Steve** what the difference was between a Garmin 390 and a 340, Rick replied laconically, "About 40..."

And so, after a marathon session resembling the Chancellors Spring Budget speech, Martin sat down to a deserved round of applause, but not before Dave had managed to extract the last fine from him for having a 'man bag' made to match his suit!

Left: Adam who had ably assisted Martin in collecting the fines, fiendishly counted up the takings to declare that €32 and £40 had been paid, a record amount for a record report.



AND SO THE CURTAIN FALLS...

On another splendid adventure which despite the inclement weather on the second day, was enjoyed by all. A special thanks must be made to both Dave and to Frank for their organisation of what must have been, a daunting and frustrating logistical challenge that was eventually to be enjoyed by but a few.

Gentlemen, we salute you!

With a return trip to Norfolk in the spring to look forward to, let's look at a bumper turnout to welcome the new Chairman to the table. Roll on April!

WHO RODE WHAT

David Martin	Moto Guzzi Stelvio 1200cc	Martin Lambert	Kawasaki Versys 1000 GT
Frank Finch	Suzuki V-Strom 1000	Rick Parish	Triumph Trophy 1200cc
Graham Matcham - Chair	BMW R1200GS	Geoff Selvidge	Kawasaki Versys 1000 GT
Steve Callahan	KTM SMT990	Andrew Smith	Yamaha Tracer 900cc
Keith Davies	Triumph Tiger XRt 800cc	John Wakefield	BMW R1200GS
Nick Hopkins	Norton Commando Fastback	Tim Albone - Guest of DM	Honda VFR 800
Nick Jeffery	BMW K75S 750cc	Colin Crewther – Guest of FF	BMW R1150GS
Adam Kelley	Yamaha MT 10 1000cc	Gary Hartshorne – Guest of FF	Kawasaki Z1000SX

Graham Matcham and Nick Hopkins both rode Friday but not Saturday.

WHAT WE ATE



THURSDAY

Menu

*Crispy Spring Roll of Duck Leg Confit
Served with Sweet Chilli & Hoi Sin Glaze (F,E)*

*Traditional Irish Bacon & Buttered Cabbage
Served with a Parsley Cream Sauce (M,Cr)
(Served with Potatoes and Vegetables of the Evening)*

Danby Lodge Dessert Plate (M,F,Cr,E)

Freshly Brewed Tea/Coffee

M=Milk F=Flour E=Egg Cr=Cream C=Celery N=Nuts Mu=Mustard

FRIDAY

Menu

Chefs Soup of The Evening (Cr,C)

*A Pave of Eire Salmon
Served with a Seafood Sauce, Balsamic Glaze (M,Cr,Sh)
(Served with Potatoes and Vegetables of the Evening)*

Irish Strawberries & Paganini Ice Cream (M)

Freshly Brewed Tea/Coffee

M=Milk F=Flour E=Egg Cr=Cream C=Celery N=Nuts Mu=Mustard

SATURDAY

Menu

Chicken & Feta Cheese Salad

*Garden Leaves, Crispy Herb Croutons, Tomato, Cooked
Beetroot & House Dressing (M,F,E)*

Irish Lamb Stew

(Served with Potatoes and Vegetables of the Evening)

Apple Pie

Served Warm with Fresh Cream (M, F,E,Cr)

Freshly Brewed Tea/Coffee

M=Milk F=Flour E=Egg Cr=Cream C=Celery N=Nuts Mu=Mustard



Name; _____

1. We start with a question about where this club run started – Fishguard.

Fishguard is known for which one of the following;

- A; It is named after the Celtic word “fiskgaroor” meaning “River from the Hills”
- B; Fishguard is the busiest Ferry port in Wales
- C; Fishguard was the site of the last invasion of mainland Britain.

2. If all went well, we arrived here at Rosslare on the “Stena Europe”. This ferry was manufactured in Sweden in 1981 but went through several owners and name changes and renamed as Stena Europe in 1998. It is 25,000 tonnes, holds almost 500 cars and 1400 passengers. It is powered by 4 Wartisla Diesels (Made in Finland if you’re interested) – their combined horsepower is (to nearest 1000 horses);

- A; 21,000
- B; 48,000
- C; 8,000

3; The Rosslare area – where we are now – is;

- A; The sunniest area in Ireland
- B; The wettest area in Ireland
- C; The coldest area in Ireland

4; The Moto Guzzi Stelvio engine is classed as “Oil Cooled”. But it needs air to cool the oil.... One famous chap pointed this out many years ago, by saying (paraphrased) “All automotive engines are ultimately cooled by air, just sometimes water and/or oil are included”. Who said this?

- A; Henry Ford
- B; Edward Turner
- C; Soichiro Honda

5; This run has, in “living memory” anyway, the lowest attendance of any Club run, with 16 attendees. Which run – according to the run reports – had the highest number in attendance?

- A; Blois
- B; Ballachulish
- C; Bets-y-Coed

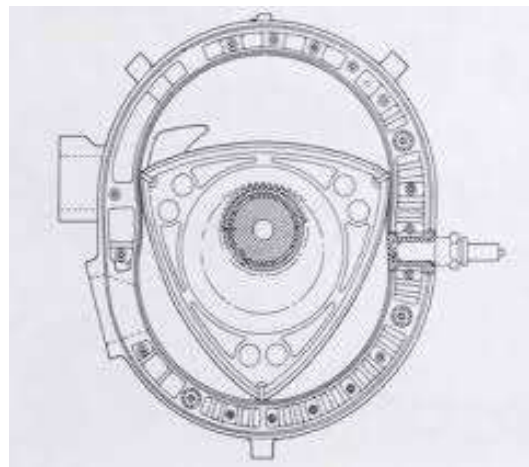
6; The Wankel Rotary engine has never really taken off.

Only Mazda have continued to develop it.

A lot of motorcycle manufacturers have tried a wankel-engined motorcycle – but how many MANUFACTURERS actually showed working prototypes to the public - whether they went onto production or not.

(Some were actually made! Such as Suzuki’s RE5)

- A; 7
- B; 11
- C; 16



7; At the recent British Grand Prix at Silverstone, Spanish racer Maverick Viñales won his first ever Moto GP race on a Suzuki. Who was the last Suzuki rider before him to win a premier class Grand Prix/Moto GP race?

- A; Kenny Roberts Jr,
- B; Kevin Schwantz,
- C; Sete Gibernau
- D; Chris Vermuelen

8; Formed in 1902, the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland (MCUI) is broadly the equivalent of the Auto Cycle Union (ACU) in the UK. Its first President was a very famous inventor in the automotive industry in the late 1900s and some of us still ride using products bearing his name to this day.

Who was he?

- A; John Boyd Dunlop
- B; Sir Oliver Lodge
- C; Albert Champion
- D; Sir Frank Bowden

9; A “slightly” trick – or tricky – question.

Ireland is known for several things – including rain and Guinness. Strictly, Guinness is a stout, not a beer, but just how good is it? According to www.ratebeer.com (no peeking at those fancy phones!) how high is Guinness rated in the two sections below (1 point for each section correct answer)

1; Irish “Beers” (this includes stouts)

- A; 1st
- B; 4th
- C; 6th
- D; 11th

And, 2; Irish “Stouts” (this does not include beers)

- A; 1st
- B; 4th
- C; 7th
- D; 9th

10; Irish dance comes in several forms, not least “Stepdancing” as made famous by Riverdance, initially in the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest as an interval act and of course its fame went worldwide. See the “picture” with more information on the following page.

Now, to the question...

What is the generally accepted reason that the arms are not moved in Irish Step Dance?

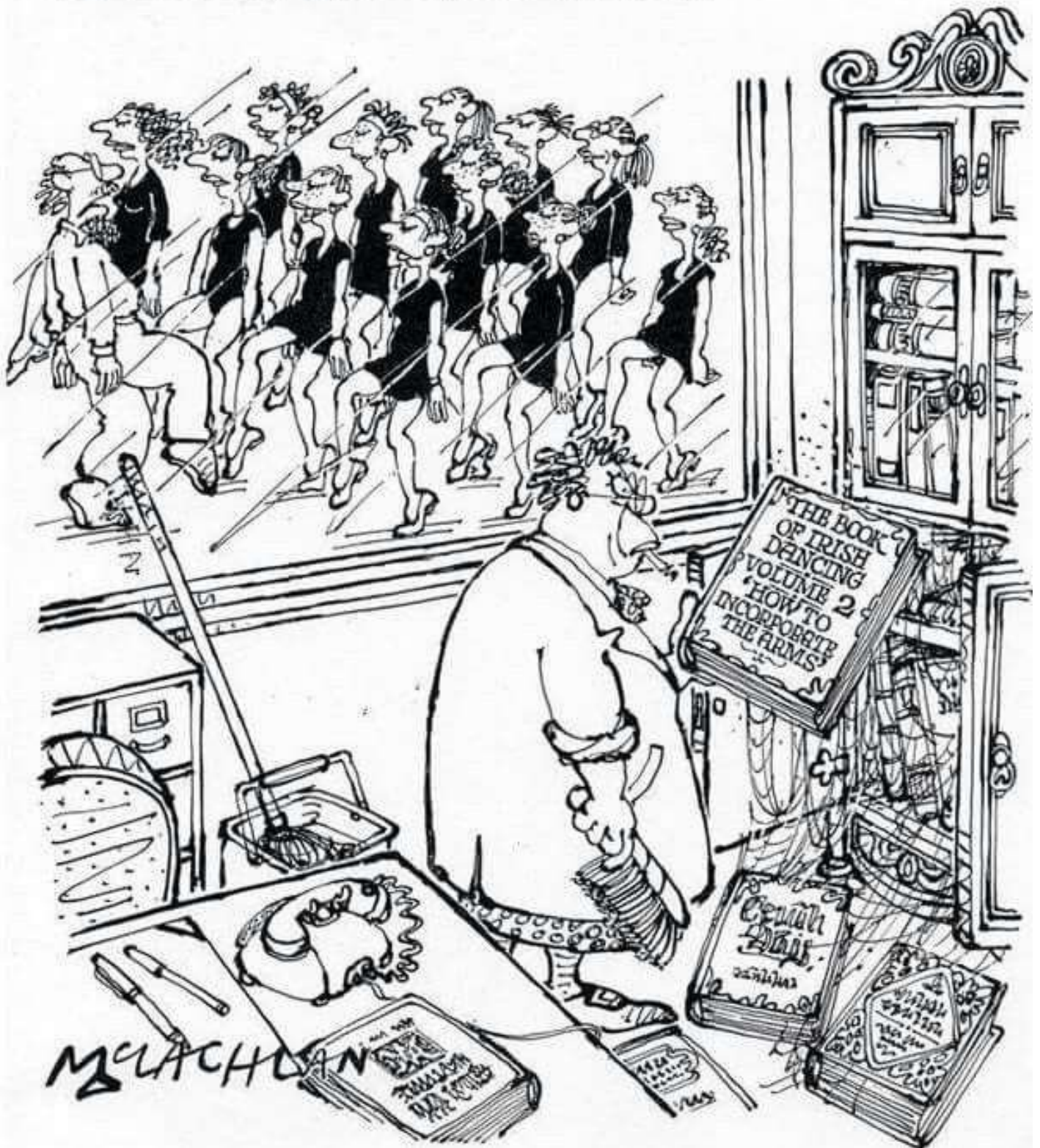
A; It was originally designed as a therapeutic dance to aid recovery of patients with upper body immobility

B; As there was often no “stage” on which to dance, doors were removed and used as a stage, resulting in so little room to dance that the arms remained stationary

C; As the drawing on the next page depicts, no-one had read volume 2 of the dance book...

D; The Irish Immigrants in the USA, especially around the Chicago area, during the St Patrick’s Day displays, found that moving arms and the upper body while on a moving processional “float” caused too much “wobble” with a health and safety consideration.

WHILST DOING A LONG OVERDUE CLEAROUT AT THE OFFICES OF IRELAND'S OLDEST AND MOST RESPECTED SCHOOL OF DANCE, MRS O'HARA MADE A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.....



The answers are on the next page – no peeking until you've finished!

THE QUIZ ANSWERS

1 – Fishguard last place that mainland Britain was invaded - in 1797 when a French force of 1400, led by a 70 year old American named William Tate invaded at the harbour, hoping the Welsh would join them in a revolt against the English. The Welsh took it that they were being invaded and fired guns at the invaders. The French army, being made up mainly of criminals and men who had been pressed into service – and since, let’s be frank, they were French after all – surrendered at once! They were sent back to France and told never do anything like that again; which they never did.

(A is just made up and B, Anglesey, is the busiest Welsh ferry port)

2 – 21,000 – 340Kw per cylinder at 1000rpm

3; - Sunniest. Rosslare has 300 hours more sunshine per year than the average of Ireland

4; - Soichiro Honda. During development of their first “real car” – the H1300 – in 1968, SH would not accept a water-cooled engine saying all engines were air cooled and therefore would eliminate the chance of water leaks. By the end of development of the H1300, SH had removed his objection to water cooling!

5; - Ballachulish with 52.

6; 11 - MZ (these were the first in 1960), Yamaha, Suzuki, Hercules/DKW, BSA, Norton, Van Veen, Honda, Kawasaki, Motoprom (Russia), IZH (Russia)

7; Chris Vermuelen

8; The answer is John Boyd Dunlop, inventor of the pneumatic tyre who was born and educated in Scotland but spend most of his career in Ireland.

Out of interest, 171 years ago this month, according to historians, the first known spark plug was invented by Edmond Berger. Unfortunately, Berger failed to patent his spark plug invention, so documented history points to Sir Oliver Lodge of England, whose sons turned the “Lodge Igniter” into a profitable company founded in 1903. The next year, Albert Champion, a world renowned bicycle and motorcycle racer who made extra cash by handcrafting spark plugs and selling them to friends, moved from France to Flint, Michigan and founded the Champion Ignition Company. Investor drama left Champion jobless, but he soon found himself appointed president of the AC Spark Plug Company formed with backing from Buick Motor Co. AC spark plugs fired the second and third stage rocket engines that took Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Mike Collins to the moon.

The invention of the Bowden cable has been popularly attributed to Sir Frank Bowden, founder and owner of the Raleigh Bicycle Company who, circa 1902, was reputed to have started replacing the rigid rods used for brakes with a flexible wound cable. BUT The *Bowden mechanism* was invented by Irishman Ernest Monnington Bowden The first patent re Bowden cable was granted in 1896 (English Patent 25,325 and U.S. Pat. No. 609,570), and the invention was reported in the Automotor Journal of 1897 where Bowden's address was given as 9 Fopstone Rd, Earls Court.

9 – 1

Beer 6th. The 1st Guinness on the list came in 6th place, and was “Guinness Special Export” (Belgian Export)

9 – 2

Stout – 4th. As above

The Guinness mentioned about was given a “beer” score of 3.66 out of 5. The winner, in both categories with a score of 4.03, was Galway Bay 200 Fathoms (Stout). The “normal” off-the-shelf-Guinness doesn’t appear in the top 50...

10; B