



June 2007
Number 495



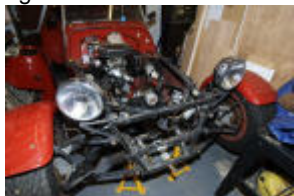
Duncan Wild having way too much fun at the Spring Solo!

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Your Editor Speaking...

Now that you're fully hardened to shocking news, I have more. Rather than have to wait a whole two years for the next installment of the Westfield saga - it's here right now!



The old engine is virtually ready to take out of the Westfield! All fluids drained,

ancillaries removed, cables and wiring detached. And a sorry sight she looks too...

Other than that it's been a bit of a slack month for me - not much supporting group / centre events such as the CB or Quadruplex I'm afraid. Shame on me... But it appears that I wasn't the only one - WMx attendance was very poor at both. Why? If you have any comments please let the committee know - then we can try to do something about it!

Have fun!

Jez Boakes (Editor)

A Note from your Chairman

I hope everyone is enjoying the wonderful weather we've been having recently – Just the job for cruising roof down, windows open – or taking in one of AG's motorcycle ride outs – or even a nice relaxing walk around Windsor, though the weather gods didn't seem to agree on that one and everyone got wet! Still good fun though!

There has been much comment in the newspapers recently about speed sorry safety cameras and their usefulness! Making them digital so that they miss NO-ONE. If that isn't enough, road pricing is once more raising its' ugly head. Where will it all end?

I read recently that one of the earliest

speeding fines was in 1899 to a New York cabbie who was caught doing 12 mph along Lexington Avenue thereby exceeding the mandatory limit of 8 mph, further restricted to 4mph on corners! It begs the question how on earth they would know what speed he was doing?

True to form, we Brits can claim what I believe is the first speeding fine. Step forward Arnold Walker who in 1896, was fined the princely sum of one shilling for going at 8 mph in a 2 mph zone. What a tearaway! The bloke with the red flag must have been a bit sprightly as well!

As ever keep your foot in it.....

(Even if it means exceeding 2 mph)

Derrick Holden (Chairman)

West Middlesex GOLF Day 2007!

The Group's Annual Golf Day this year will be on

Thursday 14th June

... and, as I'm abroad from 5th to 13th June, the Closing Date for entries is Monday 4th June, so you'll have to be quick to book in!

Place: The Blue Mountain Golf Complex at Bracknell.
Time: We'll all meet at 12 noon at the ProShop.
Cost: An 'all-in' cost of just £30 per player will include :

- * Tea / coffee and a sandwich on arrival,
- * 18 holes of golf in a 3 / 4 ball format,
- * A late lunch / early supper including a beer.

This will be followed at approx. 8pm by the Groups' monthly Clubnight which will be held at the same venue and will include a Golf-related 'entertainment'(!).

Those expected to play include:- Richard, Nick B, Peter, Jez, Len, Steve W, Bob, Tim, Joe, Alan W, Allan N, Carol, Mark, Ray, AG,

....and definitely YOU!

* *Please contact AG or Jez RIGHT NOW if you can come.* *

West Middlesex Group motorcyclists:

It's mid Summer!

*How about getting on yer 'bike and joining us for our monthly
MOTORCYCLE RIDE-OUT!*

Our next mid-week Ride Out will be on **Tuesday 26th June.**

We'll meet at Jack's Café on the A30 at Bagshot at 10am and we'll leave at 10.30am. We'll then ride Southwest for a day with an Aeronautical flavour. It includes an excellent pub stop for lunch, a totally unique Aircraft Museum, and finally a visit to Poole Bike-night before returning to the Jolly Woodman at Littleworth Common in Burnham Beeches to complete our day out.

I anticipate getting to our Noggin' 'n' Natter venue a little later than usual, perhaps around 9.30pm.

Once again, as far as possible this will be a relaxing 'bimble' using B and C class roads wherever practical – however it's almost certain that we will have to use a bit of 'A' road and even Motorway at some point on this trip just to make the day fit the time allowed! But, as usual, we'll go, come rain, hail or shine – just give me a call on the day if you can't see the ground from your bedroom window when you wake up!

If YOU are planning to join us on this Ride Out a quick call before the day would be appreciated please.....

AG ~ May 2007

H) 0118 934 5726 M) 07785 903 000 agoddard@csma-netlink.co.uk

Mercedes Benz World - Brooklands



***We are running a group visit
to the superb Mercedes
Benz World facility at Brook-
lands, Surrey on July 25th***



During the visit you will be able to see all the Mercedes Benz classics in the museum as well as all the current Mercedes Benz, AMG and Maybach models. So bring your chequebooks and you could be driving home in a new car!

Also onsite is a 4x4 test course, a skid pan and handling course. If you want to experience any or all of these (a professional MB instructor will take you round) they have to be pre-booked, and paid for well in advance. If enough members express an interest in being taken around the test facilities in a new Mercedes then please let me know as soon as possible so that I can try and negotiate a group deal.

The planned itinerary is for us to meet at the museum restaurant for lunch at 1pm. During the afternoon you are free to look at all the exhibits and leave whenever you like.

Also onsite, and only a few hundred metres away is the Brooklands Racing Circuit museum so you could visit both places if you wish.

Please e-mail malcolm@csmawmx.com to register your intent to come along and also indicate whether or not you would like to take part in the test track experience.



The 2007 Haymaker Autotest is on!

Where is it?

We have a new venue for 2007, it is a large, smooth grass field near Ritchings Park, Buckinghamshire.

When is it?

September 2nd 2007

What else do I need to know?

The venue will have onsite catering, toilets and a 20 acre maze! The maze will be open all day so bring along the whole family, and lose them. We can help you find them again when the haymaker finishes.

Regulations will be available on our website in July, but put the date in your diary now.

Malcolm Grubb - Clerk of the Course

Jez Boakes - Secretary of the Meeting

<http://www.csmawmx.com>

West Middlesex Group Committee Member Contact Details		
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The Summer Run!

Sunday July 29th

This year it's for:

Bikes

AND

Cars!

Starting from Jenners' Cafe alongside the River Thames at Maidenhead, just 300 metres from Boulders Lock.

Signing on will start at 9:15am, starting at 10:30am.

The ride-out will finish at the Summer BBQ at Jez & Nikki's house at about 3:30 for burgers, sausages and Boules! (See below!)

Please contact AG to 'book' your place on the run, as well as Nikki or Jez to reserve your BBQ place!

Also starting from Jenners' Cafe alongside the River Thames at Maidenhead, signing on is at 9:15am with the first car away at 10:30am.

The run will be approximately 65 miles and will finish at the Summer BBQ at Jez & Nikki's house at about 3:30. The entry fee is £10, which covers the roadbook and rally plate!

Please contact Jez (SoM) or Derrick (CoC) to book your place on the run and Nikki or Jez to reserve your BBQ place!

West Middlesex Group presents:

The Summer Barbecue

Sunday July 29th 2007

At Jez & Nikki's House in Hook

3:30pm

Please contact Nikki or Jez - we need to know how many burgers & buns to buy!

Plus the added attraction of the WMx Boules Championship!

Bookings are first come first served and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible!

The Curtis Bennett Motorsport Weekend, 18th – 20th May 2007

Three days, three events and one glorious 'Golden Gargoyle', aka, the Noel Curtis-Bennett Trophy.

A battle of the csma's motorsporting Groups to find the best.

The CB Rally on Friday night.....

The Windrush Run on Saturday.....

The Dulop AutoTests on Sunday

~ plus a Walking Treasure Hunt, a Quiz and
the Prize-giving late on Sunday afternoon.....

Not too long ago WMx regularly fielded more than 50% of the competitors, and
25% of the Marshalls.

Not too long ago WMx won the CB trophy... on six consecutive occasions.

It's a real Social highlight of the csma year... for families, for everyone.

The 2007 event and weekend was really excellent but grossly under-supported.

Our Group facts:

Two WMx entries on the Rally, (AG/Tony Brooks & Jerry Ludlow/Peter Blakemore) ;

One marshalling crew, (Sarah & Chris Foxley) ;

Two crews participated on the Windrush, (AG + Chris & Sarah) ;
and two on the Dunlop, (Jerry & AG).

That's a total of just six West Middlesex members representing this once very
proud Group.

North West London Group won the CB Trophy for the 12th consecutive year – sincere
Congratulations to them but, as Cath, Mike, Ian and Co. said, where was
their competition?

And it was asked with genuine concern too, but I didn't know.

So, my questions.

Are we no longer interested in our club's Motorsport activities?

Are we no longer a Motoring Group?

If not, just what are we?

We have real talent in our Group... was this just a bad weekend for
everyone to have off?

Many, many thanks to those that did make the effort to get to Cheltenham, but it
was a real pity we didn't even have enough WMx members to form a Quiz team
..... let alone win that damn Gargoyle!

Comments to the committee please...

Motor Sport Coordinators' Bulletin

June 2007

Dates	Event (Status)	Club	Type of Event	Champ
Jun Sun 3	* Juniper A/T (Nat B)	csma NEL	Tarmac autotest	BTRDA
	* Midsummer Enduro (Nat B)	Chelmsford MC	Enduro road event	
Sun 24	* Greenacres A/T (C)	csma NWL	Grass autotest	Centre
Jul Sun 1	* Summer Solo (C)	Farnborough &DMC	AutoSolo on tarmac	
	* Grasshopper A/T (C)	csma NEL	Grass autotest	Centre
Aug Sat 4	Autosolo (C)	Loughborough CC	AutoSolo on tarmac	
	Sun 5	Photo Phrolic (C)	Harrow CC	Photo Treasure Hunt
	18/19	Welsh Enduro (Nat B)	Amman &DMC	Enduro road event
Sept Sun 2	Haymaker A/T (C)	csma WMx	Grass autotest	Centre

Licence required: (I/Nat A/Nat B/Cm) = MSA Licence, (C) = Club Card, () = Nothing, * = Regs available

Previous Events

AutoSolo This West Middlesex event was superb fun and 45 other competitors thought so as well (nine of which were **csma** members). The format was of one test laid out at a time and the entry split into three groups, one competing, one marshalling and the other getting ready to compete. You had three runs at each test, with the best two runs to count. After everyone had done one test, the course was reversed and we all started again. During the day we had four courses to try. With glorious sunshine



throughout the day (the threatened thunder storms didn't appear thankfully), it was very pleasant doing the marshalling (you were in groups of three or four). If your first stint is marshalling or preparing, you get to see all the tricky parts of the course. My car seemed to have both understeer and oversteer at times and I even managed



a couple of spins. At one point I was revving it at full chat round a quarter of the course, but this meant the oil got pumped up into the rocker cover and came out all over the exhaust, which did cause a large cloud of smoke. Using second gear was a much better option on later runs. The **csma** members got a good haul of the awards with Michael Grubb and myself getting first in class awards, Chris Foxley best **csma** and Caroline Grubb best Lady.

Curtis Bennett Motor Sport Weekend For this year, the event base moved from Whitemead Park to Cleeve Hill, just north east of Cheltenham, with the rally starting in the same place. This year there were less entries in the 12 Car, which meant only one needed to be run. The Windrush got very good support with 30 crews out and had a break at the **csma** motoring museum at Boughton-on-the Water for a free look around plus some tea and biscuits. A surprise sight at the museum was to see Steph Hankinson wondering about (who used to do the job that Terri Jacobs did, a few years ago now) and was visiting Boughton without realising the mass of old faces that were about to descend on the place. It was nice to have a chat before getting underway again. The results of the Windrush showed that all the crews had completed the event and all got clean sheets. After this, some of us went off to do the walking treasure hunt at the village up the road, which was quite challenging





on some questions. The crew from Scotland and Cath and Lee took it very seriously, even getting up early on Sunday to try and get the few remaining answers before doing the autotest. This was a good decision as they managed to find all but one answer and were declared the winners. The Dunlop was also at a new site and what a site it was. Plenty of room, steam trains going past and a smooth field to play in. The first lot of tests were in actual fact a bit tight, especially considering how much room there was available, but fortunately for the second lot, the cones were more spread out and a better time was had by all. The event was over by 2pm, so we all got back early, ready for the awards presentation. This was held in the reception area of the hotel and as can be seen from the picture of the trophies, had a spectacular view across the valley. Although North Cotswolds had crews out on the 12 car and Windrush, they only had one person out on the autotest which meant they didn't have a team for the CB trophy itself. Mind you, with NWL winning just about all the events going, it would have been difficult but it would have been nice if they had tried. Now as to West Middlesex, where were you all? One expert and one beginner on the 12 Car meant no WMx team on the CB! As to the future of the event, see the bit under Other Items.

Quadruplex Inter Group Competition This will have been held by the time you read this but hopefully we all had a good time. Results next month.

Future Events

Juniper Autotest There could just be time for you to go along and marshal on this tarmac autotest. Contact me if you need any details, otherwise a report next month.

Midsummer Enduro This will be held in north Norfolk this year with the base at Fakenham racecourse and the majority of tests held at RAF Sculthorpe, before a 200 mile night section. The navigation will be all straight forward and the organisers will provide a road book and colour map copies so that maps do not need to be bought. Entries cost £150 and regs, plus the ability to enter on-line, are available from the club website at <http://chelmsfordmc.co.uk/Midsummer>.



Greenacres Autotest The first of the grass autotests will be held at the usual Studd Farm site over near Leighton Buzzard. The event is run on a smooth grass field and the tests are usually all forwards. This is suitable for any car, even autos, and is totally non damaging and very good fun. All you have to do is drive a set route around some cones against the clock and you even have a chance to drop scores. The entry fee is £18 and regs are available from either myself or Pete Gregory on 01525 861673 (work).



Summer AutoSolo This is being run by Farnborough & DMC and will be held along similar lines to the West Middlesex event in April. It takes place at the Martinique parade ground near Bordon, in Hampshire, on Sunday 1st July and entries are again restricted to 45 at a cost of £30 each. Scrutineering starts at 8am, with the tests beginning at 10am. Regs are available from either myself or downloadable from the club website at www.fdmc.org.uk/SummerSolo2007regs.pdf.



Grasshopper Autotest The second of the grass autotests will be held at the usual Studd Farm site over near Leighton Buzzard. Bernard Ward will be organising again and

more details will appear next month.

Photo Phrolic This is an invite to a Harrow Car Club event which is similar in format to the Farnborough Topographia, in that you have to work out locations from photos and then visit the location and answer a question. The whole event takes place on map 166 and starts at 10:30am from the Northbound services at Toddington, on the M1 (about 3 miles from my home). The event finishes at 5pm in a pub in Peters Green.

Other Items

Future of the Curtis Bennett Weekend In effect, there was a very poor turn out from groups to support this event and all the work that had gone into it. The organisers would like to know what reasons prevented people coming along, so if you have any comments, please let me know and I can pass them on. Was it the Friday night for the 12 Car, the location of the event or even the weekend held on. All comments would be appreciated as the organisers need to know how to present the weekend, so that people want to come along and enjoy themselves.

Hollstar Table Top Well, considering the total lack of response from last months article, it seems as if everyone likes the current format of the table top rally evening! Shame it doesn't show when it comes to turning out for the event. If you don't currently come along, why not let me know the reasons, day of the week, time, location or format etc and we can possibly try and come up with ways of making it interesting to you. These events are organised so that you the member can join in. If you don't tell us what's wrong, we can't change it to fix it.

Mike Biss: NLC Motor Sports Coordinator

Tel: 01525 720299

E-mail: mike.biss@btinternet.com

Quadruplex 2007

Surrey Group were hosting this years North London Centre inter-Group event and the Saturday evening slot proved pretty popular too with each Local Group well represented, except for West Middlesex - just four Group members made the trip in pouring rain over to Banstead, four miles north of J8 of the M25 in Surrey, to a very pleasant hall on the edge of town. Our Group's contingent was just a small percentage of the 70+ members that attended.

The evening was presented as a Quiz with as many teams of four from each Group as you were able to muster WMx mustered just four people but we divided ourselves into two teams of two so we had a vain hope of a result as the best two teams from one Group were to be the winners of the Quadruplex Trophy.

A simple but very effective format followed with 12 rounds of questions on a myriad of subjects ably presented by Roger Clark & his team. Questions included the tattoo on Winston Churchill's arm (an anchor), the location of the island of South Orkney (the Antarctic), and dating the UK's first electronic traffic lights (1928).

A break mid-evening for a superb cold-buffet supper gave us all the chance to see how our rivals were doing and, considering the distinct lack of numbers, we were doing very well, both the WMx pairings sitting mid-field at half-time.

But at the end of Round 12 we'd not been able to improve our position and the mighty North West London Teams had deservedly won again, finishing first & second overall.

Congratulations to them, many thanks to Roger Clark & our hosts at Surrey Group, and well done Derrick, Ann, Simon & Allan for supporting our Group.

WMx Group's Roving Reporter

www.csmawmx.com

**Support YOUR local Haymaker -
motorsport on grass
please marshal or take part**



We would welcome your support for this and other events and look forward to seeing you, please confirm as soon as possible.

Sunday 24 June - csma NW London Greenacres Autotest, Leighton Buzzard.

Sunday 1 July - Wickford Auto Club Essex Charity Stages, Bradwell on Sea.

supporting the Essex Air Ambulance so it is there to support you,

the only multi-venue stage rally in Essex

We are running the main Airfield Stage which runs the most times between 8am and 5 pm, please come and help us, you will be close to the action and adjacent to the main service area, we need all the support we can get for what is an exciting day of club rallying on the Essex peninsular.

Sunday 22 July - csma NE London Grasshopper Autotest, Leighton Buzzard.

Sunday 2 September - csma West Middlesex Haymaker Autotest, Ritchings Park, Buckinghamshire

The aim of autotesting is to get around a set course in the fastest time, without getting a penalty for hitting a pylon or stopping on a line incorrectly. The Haymaker is held on smooth grass - the ability to do handbrake turns is useful!

Friday 14 September - csma NWL Greenhorn 12 Car Navigational Rally.

Sunday 7 October - csma NW London Autumn Autotest, Leighton Buzzard.

Friday 12 October - csma West Middlesex 12 Car Navigational Rally.

Friday 9 November - csma NW London 12 Car Navigational Rally.

Friday 14 December - csma NE London 12 Car Navigational Rally.

If you are available to marshal then please call Graham McLean, North London Chief Marshal, on (020) 8553 4700 (evenings 7.00-9.30 pm please) or e-mail: graham.mclean@bt.com If you wish to enter then I will put you in touch with the relevant organiser. Come and join the fun!

The deadline for articles for the *July Sump* is June 20th!

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors, and not necessarily those of the csma, csma West Middlesex Group Committee or the editor.

July Clubnight - the Annual Walk !

*D'yer know AG's planning a walk?
He says it's gonna be great
Just be ready to go
At half-seven y'know
And NOT the usual eight!*

*The Flower Pot Hotel 'tis in Aston
And that's where we'll all need to meet
In the garden round t'back
Just off t'beaten track
So you'll need proper boots for your feet!*

*Dogs, kids, & thee friends are all welcome,
And, a promise, - no cows booked this year(!)
Just the River and grass
Non-strenuous paths
Then it's reet back t'pub for a beer.*

*So put t'date now in thee diary
Come o'er to Henley on't twelfth
If you want they directions
You've got me connections
Call us an' I'll tell 'e me-self!*

Translation : Clubnight – Thursday 12th July 2007.

An evening walk starting at 7.30pm – meet from 7pm at the Flower Pot Hotel at Aston, MR 175 / 784 842 – best approached from Remenham Hill on the A4130 Henley to Maidenhead road.

Details from AG on 07785 903 000 - see you there !

99% Dry - The Scottish National Motorcycle Rally 2006

Final part - continued from last month...

SATURDAY

Saturday was the easy day; no ferries and just 163 miles to Kinlochleven, well within striking distance of the event finish at Crianlarich on Sunday morning. Accordingly, we decided that a late start was the order of the day, and spent a leisurely breakfast chatting with a couple of cyclists who were the only other occupants of the B&B.

The first part of our day involved re-tracing our steps to Portree, then spending half an hour taking photos of each other riding across an old stone bridge over a stream. Once back at Broadford we stopped for petrol at Sutherlands, an emporium that AG rightly described as a modern day Arkwright's store; they sell just about everything you could think of. This was the last receipt point for the rally – now all AG had to do to qualify for his Three Nations Award was to get to the finish by midday the following day. We crossed the Skye Bridge to Kyle of Lochalsh then headed east on the A87 towards the Great Glen. The weather was absolutely perfect for biking, bright sunshine and 23 degrees as we passed the spectacular Five Sisters of Kintail. The only downside was that being a weekend, traffic was noticeably heavier than it had been over the last three days and unsurprisingly in view of the weather there were a lot of other bikes about.

At the junction of the A87 and A887 we elected to put in a loop north via Invermoriston and Fort Augustus rather than take the more direct route to Invergarry. This took us to a café at Dundreggan for our late-morning coffee stop where a variety of treats were on offer. AG was unable to resist an ice-cream called the Loch Ness Monster – out it came, a masterpiece of sugar and saturated fat, and it did bear more than a passing resemblance to Nessie.

At Invermoriston we turned right onto the A82, heading south down the Great Glen. We stopped for an hour at Fort Augustus to watch the boats going through the staircase of locks on the Caledonian Canal and natter to other bikers who were doing the same thing before heading south towards Fort William. This turned out to be the busiest and least enjoyable road of the entire trip, clogged with coaches, caravans, people carriers and motorhomes, many of them foreign-registered. The traffic was so dense that overtaking was virtually impossible, even on a bike and we took a short diversion on the B8004 through Gairloch just to break up the tedium.

54 miles later, we finally left the melee of the A82 at North Ballachulish, turning left onto the quiet and highly curvaceous B863 for the last ten miles to our destination, Kinlochleven. This used to be the main road before the bridge was built over the neck of Loch Leven and it must have been nightmare for traffic, but it's now virtually deserted and a joy to ride. We arrived at our destination, the Tailrace Inn at a very civilised half past four and elected to have a quick drink in the sunshine before checking in and changing. This turned into several not quite-so-quick drinks after AG managed to get chatting to Fred, a Yorkshireman who latched onto us as soon as we sat down. He looked to be the best part of 80, but assured us that he still spent most of his time still travelling all over the UK with his mates on his Honda 250, leaving his wife at home (he told us very cheerfully).

We finally tore ourselves away from Fred two hours later and checked in to our rooms. Amazingly, my mobile was working and I rang Jez to appraise him of the day's events and to suggest a 'Sunday Sump' style headline – "AG Eats Loch Ness Monster Shocker!!!"

SUNDAY

For the fourth morning running, sunlight streamed through the window as I woke. The

forecast was finally for some rain to move down from the north as the day progressed, but no matter, we were heading south from here on and the weather had been so good that we could hardly complain if we got wet anyway. We had our fourth fried breakfast of the trip, packed the bikes and set off, getting a wave from Fred on his 250 as we left the hotel – fortunately he was heading in the other direction!

The last forty miles of the rally were easy; we continued on the B863 to South Ballachulish, re-joining A82 on the south side of the new bridge and turning left to head up Glencoe and out over Rannoch Moor. AG had suggested that we had a coffee at the Green Welly Stop at Tyndrum, but when we got there it was absolutely packed out with bikes – obviously a very popular ride out destination from Glasgow – so we continued on to Crianlarich and the finish of the rally. Control Cards and receipts (to prove where you've been and when) were duly handed in, and AG and I exchanged handshakes as he became one of the latest members of the Three Nations club. However, we saw no reason to linger at the finish; the venue was uninviting and the coffee was so awful I only drank half of it. The next step was to choose a route to our final night's lodgings in the Lake District that avoided the worst of the Glasgow/Edinburgh belt. I settled on the A84 to Callander, then through the Trossachs on the B822 to join the M73. This was a pleasant enough route, although the scenery was more akin to the north of England and not nearly as dramatic as that we had enjoyed over the last few days.

We stopped for a sandwich at the only pub in the quiet village of Fintry, where the barman advised us of a short cut that would get us out onto the M73 over the wonderful and improbably named 'Takmadoon Road.' Well it did tak us doon, all the way to Kilsyth where we threaded our way through a few miles of typical Scottish suburban landscape before joining the A80 to head towards home. I had plumped for the M73 and M74 as the best option of getting us through the east side of Glasgow with minimal delay and without getting mugged or bike-jacked. However, Junction 8 of the M74 is where the old A74 used to end in the days before the motorway was extended to the English border. This has been reclassified as the B7078 and B7076; a virtually traffic-free 70 miles of silky-smooth tarmac running all the way to Gretna Green. It's an ideal road if you've actually need to get somewhere on a bike – quick enough to make good time and interesting enough to be enjoyable, and AG and I made the most of it. Our last coffee stop in Scotland was at Abington services, as we couldn't find anywhere else open on a Sunday, and once at Gretna I elected to use the A74 and a little bit of the M6 to get around Carlisle before joining the A6 to Penrith. Finally, we turned right onto the A592 for the final few miles of the day to our digs at Pooley Bridge on Ullswater

If you're ever looking for somewhere to stay in the Lake District, the Sun Inn comes highly recommended. The rooms were very comfortable, the food and beer were excellent and it made a perfect final port of call on what had been a very enjoyable event. We had covered another 232 miles and felt fully justified in relaxing in the garden with a couple of pints before yet another filling pub dinner.

MONDAY

I just couldn't face another cooked breakfast. Having stuffed myself stupid every morning for the last four days, my metabolism and liver function made it quite clear to me on waking that further abuse would not be tolerated. Which was a shame because AG, who clearly harboured no such inhibitions, said it was the second-best breakfast of the tour. Having paid up, dealing with the delightfully eccentric mother-in-law of the landlord, we packed our bags for the final time to head south towards home. The first leg of today's trip involved the A6 to Kendal, an excellent piece of biking road which we were fortunate enough to have nearly to ourselves. Kendal was busy as ever, but we found our way

through and out towards the M6. Extensive research (by me) has proved beyond reasonable doubt that there's no good alternative to the M6 for getting through the Preston/Wigan/Manchester area, so that's the way we went. However, once over the Thelwall Viaduct the A49 provides an excellent alternative to the M6/M5 to Bristol and over the years I've ridden it many times on the way to Eaves Hall and other points north. AG and I stopped for our final lunch at the Raven Café at Whitchurch before splitting up to go our separate ways.

I continued on the A49, wound my way down the Wye Valley from Monmouth then crossed the old Severn Bridge and headed for home. Just as I got to Clevedon on the M5, two junctions from home the heavens finally opened big-style. I elected to keep going rather than stop and put on waterproofs so arrived at home twenty minutes later decidedly damp and with a filthy bike. I had ridden 1,609 miles since leaving home, 290 of them being today's final leg from Ullswater, and only got wet for the last 17, hence the title of this article.

AG (who got a lot wetter than me getting home) later agreed with me that it was the weather that made this trip one of the best biking adventures that either of us have been on. This was the first, and very probably the last time I've ever taken the bike to Scotland and not got VERY wet at least once, and I'm seriously thinking of never going back there as it's never likely to happen again!! To have five days of virtually unbroken sunshine and temperatures in the mid twenties – perfect biking weather – would be incredibly lucky at any time of the year, but especially so in mid September. If you could guarantee the weather being like it was for this trip, you wouldn't bother taking your bike overseas. The scenery, roads and traffic levels are just as good if not better than anything you'll find on the continent, and we were made welcome at every place we stopped. Unfortunately, experience tells me that I could go to Scotland every year for the rest of my life and not have weather like that again – so the next article is likely to be about our trip to Montpellier and the Costa Brava via the Tarn viaduct. Watch this space for the advert!

Dave Rillie



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