



November 2005
Number 476



Cheyenne - a magnificent American Bald Eagle!

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Your Editor Speaking...

Blimy - yet another busy month!

Clubnight was a truly fascinating glimpse into the life and times of our very own Allan Goddard - accompanied by some excellent pictures of his motorsport career (as well as some other things!)

The Three Shires Run was yet again a superb day out - see the article later in this issue...

The Quadruplex (although I didn't manage to attend) was apparently a great evening, with WMx close to taking the honours - a description of this event on page 10!

A super article about the Retro Run is also inside - a proper bumper month for articles!

And finally there was the October 12-car for which I was secretary of the meeting - a good evening and a very valuable learning experience for me!

And in and amongst all this lot I still found time to make a proper start on Bernard (our ¼ scale traction engine)! At last!

Dropping off the end of the list again though is the Westfield engine change... Really must get around to that before it's too late for next summer. Too late already you say!?

Have fun!

Jez Boakes (Editor)

Chairman's Scriblings...

Hi All

Not much to report as the copy deadline is particularly early this month. (*Same as every other month - the Wednesday before Noggin! - Ed*)

I expect the editor has a lot of real work on his plate right now.

Be sure to book up for the Christmas skittles evening as tickets go fast and space is limited.

Still off the bike for at least another few weeks I reckon, my wrist is healing nicely but I still can't put a lot of pressure on it.

Anyway it'll soon be Christmas...

Cheers

John Wright (Chairman)

Mack's Mutterings

Another good month for me, not only did we get out on the 3 Shires Run (more on that later) but Gail has at last given up on me doing all the DIY and started booking contractors to do it for me. This last bit is especially good as I can't be blamed for the state of our bank balance but I can still

feel happy that I will not be up to my eyes in DIY for the foreseeable future. And of course Gail is happy in that she can at last see an end to the building work at our house!

But what about the 3 Shires Run? Well, we almost didn't sign up for this because a) I was supposed to be doing DIY and b) we didn't have any babysitters to look after the

csma West Middlesex Group

kids while we had fun. However, DIY got left and we decided to risk taking the kids with us. To cut a long story short it was a great day! Neither of our kids was ill due to the wonders of Stugeron and Hannah (8), who had never read a road book before, navigated the whole route almost perfectly. In fact she did so well it has been decided that she will navigate the New Year Run (with Gail driving) on her own! The run itself was also excellent. AG had found some excellent roads and also some excellent stops, finishing with plenty of time to explore the final attraction - The Hawk Conservancy near Andover. For those that haven't been this has one of the best bird of prey displays around, with eagles and vultures flying as well as Kites and owls etc. There was also the chance to see up to 15 wild herons feeding close to the bird hide. Not surprising that the whole family found it a great day out and a great introduction to touring assemblies for the children!

The Sump November 2005

The other event for me this month was our Clubnight. This was billed as "entertainment" from AG and was in fact a fascinating talk by him on his life in motor-sport (in fact his life in general). Hearing about all the cars he has owned, the hundreds (600 plus?) events he has entered and the high jinx he got up to makes you wonder how he found time eat and sleep, let alone all his other work and organising of things!

By the time you read this we will have had our October 12 car, good luck to AG, Jez and all who turn out for that! Then there is the Kent Russett and the Karting day. All of which I will have to miss as I will be away on business again. Oh well, at least I will be back in time for the November Club-night. This will again be hosted by AG but this time we can look forward to one of his excellent quizzes!

Have fun!

Toby Mack (Secretary)

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The deadline for articles for the *December Sump* is November 21st!

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.

Well, this is our fourth Retro Run and I have to say I think it was the best so far!

This year the start and finish venues were quite close together which allowed us to take the Westfield on a trailer. This made the event much more civilised for us as we did not have to drive the Westfield all the way there.

This year's run was in the southern Cotswolds so we decided to start early and drive over during Friday to meet Jez and Nikki at The Five Mile House near Cirencester for lunch. This is a favorite pub of theirs and for good reason as it serves excellent steak and good beer! After a very pleasant lunch we went on to the hotel, Tortworth Court near Wotton under Edge. This is a lovely old country house set in an arboretum of 2000 trees (no we didn't count them!) and we found the food and service excellent all weekend.

Nikki's parents, Cherrie and Duncan came along for the first time this year and also brought George (their dog). George caused some concern as he was not used to being away from home and didn't like being left alone in their camper-van. However, I heard that Duncan found the camper just as comfortable as the hotel bed!



On Saturday morning the cars gathered outside the hotel. Some, like the big old Daimler, looked right in keeping with the hotel and it's grounds but I suspect that our noisily little Westfield didn't give quite the same impression to the other hotel guests! It was good to see Noddy, the lovely old Ford pickup, that has been there every year that we have. Although we would have been very disappointed if he had not been there as he only lives just up the road.

From the hotel, we moved out, winding our way through the Cotswold countryside to Berkley Cas-

tle, which is a medieval castle with dungeons, murder holes, a portcullis and gardens. We then travelled on to Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetland Trust which is a must for all the birdwatchers! However, we decided not to visit either of these attractions as we had been to both before, but instead continue on to Frampton on Severn, where the Annual Frampton Country Fair which was in full swing. This was one of the best country shows I have been to as it had much more



rural stalls/crafts than I have seen in either the Midlands or the South East. There was also more green wellies, waxed jackets and flat caps that I have ever seen. I have to say it was an excellent show with lots of rural crafts including dry stone walling, fly fishing,



ing, clay pigeon shooting, hedge laying and my favourite of them all the pigeon plucking competition. We didn't have a go! The only downside of the show was the long queue to get in, however it did give us a chance to watch George navigating from the back seat of Duncan's Vitesse!

We returned to the hotel for the evening where this year there was no fancy dress so it was decided to have a silly hat com-

petition and I have to say that I think Derrick's was the best, apparently it was a Russian Pilots Hat with ear covers and a heater! AG did his usual entertainment which included fining Toby and I for standing next to each other by our car with our intercom attached, saying can you hear me, everyone found this rather funny! The intercom may have only cost £11 on ebay, but it cost us some more that night. However, it was well worth it as I didn't have to shout directions to Toby above the sound of the engine and so I could still speak at the end of the weekend (though I'm not so sure Toby agrees this was an advantage!).

Sunday began with a visit to Prinknash Abbey. We didn't go in here as I was keen to spend more time at the next attraction, Painswick's Rococco Garden. This 6 Acre garden with its Italianate features fragrant borders, winding paths, ponds, vegetable garden and maze were just beautiful. If you like gardens this one is definitely worth a visit. We finished at Owlpen Manor where we had our afternoon tea and said goodbye to everyone.

Unfortunately, the return journey was a little delayed as we then had to go back to the Hotel to collect our other car and trailer. Then visit Toby's parents house about 5 miles away to collect lots of bits of metal. I'm sure he will use them over the next 50 years! So an hour and a half later we were on our way home at last.

Well done to Terry and Pete for organising a lovely weekend and organising the start and finish so that we could trailer the Westfield, it's so much nicer not to have to use a modern car!



Gail Mack

November Clubnight

Our Clubnight this month will be a Team Quiz – now don't all groan 'cos I want YOU to help me plan it!

Read On!

It'll be on Thursday 10th November at our usual venue, the Windsor Liberal Club and will start promptly at 8.30pm, although the Team Selection process will begin from 8pm...

I shall be Quizmaster and will set and present the questions but, if you're coming along, I'd like YOU to bring two questions with you (and the answers please!) written down so that I can read them - the accumulated list from those attending will form one of the rounds during the evening. It also ensures that you should get at least two questions right!

Stick with General Knowledge as the subject, and nothing too obscure please.

Oh, by the way... this quiz will not be just questions but may also involve some other skills you probably never knew you had.

Intrigued? Well come along on the 10th and all will be revealed!

See you there ... **AG**

WMx October 12-car

It turned out to be quite a pleasant evening for a 12-car, in stark contrast to the preceding few days. This was my first attempt at being an official for a competitive motorsports event, so the nerves were going a bit. I had rashly volunteered at a committee meeting a few months before and was actually quite relieved that it was to be postponed until next year...

Until a phone call from AG... who had found the navigation from an old event and thought it would be quite simple to re-do it as a beginners 12-car. "Erm, OK" said I, not quite realising that with the event a mere few weeks away things would be quite a rush...

The ante was upped slightly when, as AG was recce-ing the route he came across someone else doing exactly the same thing. After some negotiation it was decided to combine the two events - and naturally (!) ours was the one chosen to run. No let-off for me there... In fact it got worse, as the other club was running a fiercely fought competition of which this would be a round... So I sort of had to get the results etc right!

To cut a long story short, all the organising did get done (phew!) with a little help from Mike Biss (who sorted out the on-event insurance - thanks Mike!) and Terri Jacobs (who rushed through the MSA permit - thanks Terri!) and the event ran as planned.

Unfortunately entries were somewhat down on the night, and we were even some marshals short - but nothing which couldn't be overcome!

The start was from the New Inn at Heckfield, the route around North Hampshire, finishing at the Leather Bottle at Mattingly, a mere few miles south of the start.

People appeared to enjoy the evening - there was even a clear winner (the regulations stated that since the event was aimed at beginners, the experts would not qualify for the overall awards) but AG managed to award everyone present, including the marshals, with some kind of reward for their hard work!

Many thanks to all the marshals who turned out!

Hopefully we can repeat the success of the event in terms of the enjoyment of the participants but increase our success at attracting entries at the next one!

See you there?

Pos ⁿ	Car	Crew	Group	Class	Fails	Mins
1 st	6	D Newbould / J Newbold	NEL	Nov	0	0
2 nd	7	C Foxley / C Hiscock	WMx	Nov	1	1
3 rd	8	J Rampton / D Rampton	WMx	Beg	5	22
	1	D Goodspeed / T Brooks	-	Exp	0	0
	2	V Chadwick / I Young	-	Exp	0	0
	3	J Ludlow / A Ongley	WMx	Exp		Ret'd

Jez

csma : 'West Middlesex Group' shirts

May I remind you that our WMx logo'd shirts can be ordered through the Group at bargain prices!

A polo shirt, a rugby shirt and a sweatshirt are all available and in sizes S to XXL (larger sizes available to special order) plus a cap in dark blue with a red line insert around the peak. All garments are in dark blue with the WMx logo embroidered on the left breast but the rugby shirt has a white collar and placket. The cap is 'one-size-fits-all' and has the logo on the front.

Prices currently are :	Polo	£ 16.00
	Rugby shirt	£ 24.00
	Sweatshirts	£ 18.00
	Kid's polo	£ 12.00
	Cap	£ 6.50

Postage and packing will vary according to the size of the order, it's usually about a pound per garment, less for caps.

If you'd like a new shirt, or a cap, please order via me please :

Home : 0118 934 5726

Mobile: 07785 903 000

e-mail : agoddard@csma-netlink.co.uk

...or you could talk to me at a Clubnight or a Noggin'!

Go on, be proud of our Group!

AG



Dates	Event (Status)	Club	Type of Event	Champ
Nov Fri 11	* 12 Car Rally (C)	csma NWL	Navigational Rally	Centre
	24-27 * Lombard Revival ()	ERA	Enduro Rally	
Dec 3/4	* Civil Service (Nat B/C)	csma North West	Road Rally	
	Fri 9 12 Car Rally (C)	csma NEL	Navigational Rally	Centre
Jan Fri 13	12 Car Rally (C)	csma NEL	Navigational Rally	Centre
Feb Fri 10	12 Car Rally (C)	csma NEL	Navigational Rally	Centre
Mar Fri 10	12 Car Rally (C)	csma NEL	Navigational Rally	Centre
Apr Sun 9	Concorde PCT (Nat B/C)	csma NL Centre	Production Car Trial	Centre

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

Well it is a short and sweet one this month as I've got to quickly produce this before I go on holiday. I'll be back by the time you read this though. Normal service will hopefully return for the December issue.

Past Events

Autumn Autotest There were ten entries for the final grass autotest of the season. Although a bit slippery to start with, the weather was absolutely brilliant and everyone enjoyed themselves.

WMx October 12 Car The notification that this event was actually going to run on its planned date, but with a different organising team came too late for inclusion last month. Hopefully the e-mails and other announcements managed to let you know about the event. This will have been aimed at novices and beginners, using marked maps only, so hope it all went well.

Quadruplex Well it was a close run thing, but NWL came from behind to snatch the team award victory on the penultimate round of the Inter-Group Quiz evening. There were 13 teams taking part on the event hosted by Southend Group, 3 NWL, 3 NEL, 1 WM and 6 Southend, and there ended up with a tie for first individual team when the WM team clawed back some points on the very last round. For next year, Milton Keynes & Bedford Group have volunteered to organise the event

Future Events

November 12 Car Rally Details not available at time of writing this, but I believe it will be starting at Bovingdon and using map 166?. Organisers will be Pete Gregory and Ian Buxton. Please consult your secretary for more details or see the entry form which should be included.

December 12 Car Rally I've got a route on the map, but that's it at present. This year the event will be on map 166 only and should start in the Luton/Hitchin area. More details next month when I know what they are.

Mike Biss: NLC Motor Sports Coordinator **Tel:** 01525 720299

E-mail: mike.biss@bt.com

QuadrupleEssex

It was a cold dark stormy night when Cap'n Goddard and two stout hearted members of the Holden gang sallied forward into the murky Essex marshes.

Their mission.

To bring back the Quadruplex trophy for the honour of West Middlesex Group.

Their arms :

Only their wits- and a sharp pencil

(Actually it was a warm sunny evening, but that wouldn't have grabbed your attention, would it? But on with our story)

After a brief sortie into Southend on Sea to reconnoitre the damage to the pier, admire the illuminations, and consider tactics over a toasted sandwich and nice cup of tea, our intrepid band returned to the theatre of war, an innocuous community centre on the outskirts of Rayleigh. There they were to face their foes, against desperate odds, for they were outnumbered by 12 teams, yes 12 teams to one.

“(3) North East London teams to the right of them.

(3) North West London to the left of them ,

And in front, Southend - 6 of them

Into the valley of Death rode our one of 'em!”

(With apologies to Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

The opening sorties consisted of much greeting of old friends and friendly joshing

“You've no hope mate “ “What are you doing here?” We began to wonder ourselves, but Cap'n Goddard was not having that and rallied his troops with stirring words.

“Half that team's in MENSA, you know” He pronounced. “They always win.”

Thanks Cap'n.

And indeed it seemed initially that our worst fears were to be realised, for at the end of the first round (Famous streets) we were 2nd from bottom. And this, despite our resolutely but unsuccessfully disputing one of the answers. I still say Nevsky Prospect is in St Petersburg not Moscow but our appeal fell on stony ground.

The next round, we pulled back a couple of points but the outlook was still grim. Luckily supper then arrived, giving us the opportunity to refresh ourselves if not our tactics. And indulge in a fish supper – Good for the brain you know.

More rounds followed . We learnt whether it was more important not to move a person with a broken back or check he was breathing first. In the potato, apple or strawberry round, 2 of the answers proved to be tomatos. Well at least no-one got those right!

By the end of the penultimate round, to our amazement, we were lying 4th, within 2 points of a win.

“We could do this, you know” Gaspd Cap'n Goddard in awe.

The subject of the final set of questions? Motor Sport! We were on the home strait. Of course our heroes knew that Paddy Hopkirk raced mini coopers and Damon won his championship in 1996.

Tense nail biting waiting for the final scores.

Well, we WON. Well joint first! With NWL though not the previous winning team. Hurrah for our heroes.

But alas there is a downside. The coveted trophy is awarded to the region whose TWO teams have the highest score. It was therefore retained by NWL despite our valiant efforts. Nevertheless Cap'n Goddard's band went home reasonably happy. Honours even and the spoils of war, (4 bottles of wine) amicably shared.

So, dear reader, where were you? You missed an excellent quiz, super supper, and a really good evening, all thanks to Southend on Sea group's kind hospitality.

So let's see you at next year's event in Milton Keynes in October, geared up for the challenge of recapturing the Quadruplex team trophy and bringing it home to West Middlesex Group!

Ann Holden

West Middlesex Group's Motorcycling Annual Report, 2005

The following report chronicles some of the Group's motorcycling activities that we organised, or were involved with, in 2005. It's not a full list but should be enough to give a flavour of the West Middlesex Group's involvement with motorcycling over the past year. I've added a few peripheral events that I had a hand in too, just to let you know why I'm never at home!

The 2005-year began for us in mid-January when the **csma's** Motorcycle Committee arranged a '**Motorcycle Tour Members Tour**' at the Pear Tree Hotel in Worcester. Several WMx members went along for an evening of entertainment, noggin' and natterin' with fellow Tour members from the previous 12 months. And despite the cold weather and 'iffy' conditions, quite a few turned up on 'bikes too!

Our annual visit to the **London International Motorcycle Show** at Alexandra Palace in late January was supported by just five of us this year – most snapping up an early season bargain of some sort from the plethora of stands present (I bought a nice pair of kangaroo skin gloves with a small mark on them; £25 instead of £80, now that can't be bad!). This is a good show just spoilt a bit by the extortionate parking charges and, despite that, the distinct lack of spaces!

February the 6th and another regular event we support, the **Red Tape Trial**. This is a well-known and popular **csma** organised event held in the Bagshot area and West Middlesex were represented by a number of 'Observers' marshalling the sections. The weather and the temperature varied a bit throughout the day but overall it was deemed another success and enjoyed by all concerned.

In the middle of February I made the first foray north to Bishop Auckland to begin planning my Ride-Out day for the **csma's Motorcycle Tour of County Durham**. The weather proved to be appalling for all three days of the trip – little did I know that this was to be the 'norm' for me for this entire event! My idea was to arrange a route around the very north of England with a couple of stops at places of interest en-route. Oh, and find a nice place for lunch of course! The route I ended up with took in a few miles of Scottish highway too and the lunchtime pub in Haydon Bridge was superb, and cheap - sorted! The weekend 'happened' over the Bank Holiday at the end of April and, in general, it was an excellent 'do'. But, as I hinted, it poured with rain all the way North, all throughout the weekend, and all the way back south again.....amazing! And I had a puncture in the rear tyre with just 400 miles on it! Arrrgh!

Back down south and I had to visit Brands Hatch with Frank Saw to decide on the detail of our Motorcycle display we were planning alongside the Classic cars for the **Classic Festival** in May.

April brought the **Services Trial**, always supported by a few Group members. This was a very special year for the Services, the sixtieth time the event had run and a large number of riders, observers and VIP's past & present, turned out to acknowledge the fact. On behalf of **csmawm**, and courtesy of the Motorcycle Committee, I was very pleased to be asked to present a limited edition mug to all participants and organisers to mark the occasion. The weather stayed dry and bright all day, which helped make it all the more memorable and long may the event prosper.

My Pan European successfully achieved another MOT certificate without a problem and in good time to enjoy our trip to the **British Superbikes** meeting at Thruxton. Five of us marveled all afternoon watching the usual heroics....and took special care leaving the circuit as the boys-in-blue were on the lookout for budding Valentino Rossi's apparently! A highlight of our motorcycling year happens over the second weekend of May. A small group of us usually go across to Welshpool to contest the **Welsh National Rally**. This year we went in force and eight West Middlesex motorcyclists made the trip, all of us successfully completed the event to each earn a Silver medal. Very satisfying actually as this was a particularly tough event this year for all sorts of reasons, but at least it was predominantly dry, something worthy of note for this event! The sunshine more or less followed us around Wales for the entire trip and if it looked like fading Dave Rillie just re-jigged the route so the sun stayed with us!!! DR once again demonstrated his amazing ability to remember a hundred miles or so of quite complex routeing without ever referring to the map – how does he do that? Once again at the end of it all the Pan's mileometer had recorded 840 miles over the two days – but at least it didn't rain until we were on the way home! And of course, we'll be going back for more in 2006 when hopefully a few more WMx 'bikers will be able to join us – I promise you really won't be sorry you did.

The **July BBQ Ride Out** began with an early Sunday morning start in Henley-on-Thames for a run around Berkshire, Oxfordshire and a bit of Bucks, taking in breakfast on route before descending on the home of Nikki & Jez in Hampshire for a BBQ in their garden. As usual whenever free food's on offer, we had a great turnout with some 14 people enjoying a beautiful sunny afternoon, seven doing the Ride-Out first, and the rest joining in to devour the X-sell-Ent BBQ X-pert-Lee prepared by Jez & Nikki. Superb cuisine, delightful company, and the Boules Championship of Hook and the World was nearly won by me, but, as protocol dictates, I came second and got an extra sausage!!

On the last Tuesday of each month from April to October we ran the **Mid-Week Ride Outs**. Various café's hosted our Starts and our routes took us to Salisbury Plain rural Dorset; Portland Bill; Hayling Island; Warwick, Barton on Sea and, of course, **Bike night on Poole Quay** (a really enjoyable few hours among an estimated three thousand bikes and riders). On each occasion we finished the Ride-Outs at the good ol' Jolly Woodman timed to coincide with the Group's Noggin 'n' Natter when invariably we were joined by the other Group members just in time for a glass of lemonade. Notable among the many Rides was the one that 'first time organisers' Nick P & Peter G-J who, in a tour of Bucks and Oxfordshire, even managed to find a few miles I'd not ridden before, and some excellent eating places – most important!!! Well done guys!

The **National Rally** takes place over the first weekend of July and, as usual, West Middlesex had an involvement in 2005. Rhys Edwards co-ordinated our regular Control site but this time it was just south of the M4 junction 11 at Reading rather than the Aylesbury site. The Volunteer Marshals had an impressive number of 'bikes visit over the Saturday the Control was open and plenty of happy motorcyclists too as M's Diner

agreed to stay open later than usual for the event. Well done to all that support Rhys and the WMx Group, especially those that did the 'late-night' stint.

Come the Finish at Rugby I'd earned a Silver but this year I'd done it 'on my own' just to prove I could manage without DR's skills, although (don't tell 'im) I'd rather not to be honest – it's SOOOOO much easier when we have Dave's mentally-built-in GPS to run with!!!

The hottest week-day on record for 2005 was the Thursday in June that our Motorcycle Committee had arranged the csma's **Motorcycle Track Day** (40 degrees C!). I drank fourteen litres of water in about nine hours, and I wasn't even riding!!! Held at the Mallory Park circuit in Leicestershire, three group members took part among the 50 or so in total. I assisted on the management of the event and very successful it was too – try it for yourself, but **not** on a very hot day if you can avoid it!

At the time of writing there's one more Ride-Out to come, I've invited the 'tiddlers' out for the day – motorcycles below 125cc – to give some encouragement to our younger (future) WMx motorcyclists. I hope it works!

So, despite me missing out on the **Scottish National Rally** (next year for certain!) and still with our 'cunning plan' to visit Sweden & Finland (if DR's free it'll be next year!) it's been another varied



Rhys's car hiding behind a bike...

and successful year for the Group's motorcyclists. But already my thoughts are tuned-in to 2006 . There will be more Mid-Week Runs, undoubtedly we'll do the 'Nationals' again, but I'd like to follow up those other ideas mooted earlier in this paragraph. We really should finally do a 'Run to the Sun' & pop down to Catalunya or Northern Spain for a long weekend; or I'd love to rustle up enough Group enthusiasm to do that trip to Scandinavia that I've been pondering over for a few years now.... big ideas maybe, I'm getting on a bit now (!) and these things need to get sorted! But whatever we end up doing, I really look forward to the support, the company and everything else that comes from being a West Middlesex Group motorcyclist.

As ever, thanks to **all** of you for the support over the last twelve months, very much appreciated.

Ride safe

***Allan Goddard
West Middlesex Group
Motorcycling Co-ordinator***

Three Shires Run

Our event this year began on the evening before. AG, who was the event organiser and Terri Jacobs (secretary of the meeting) were staying at the New Inn, Heckfield (less than 10 minutes from our house), the night before the run and along with Ted and a few participants who were also staying, Jez and I were invited to join them for dinner. A very pleasant evening ensued and I eventually prised Jez away from the beer to head for home knowing that we had an early start. We had entered the event months earlier but AG had a little job for us too...

When we returned to the pub on the Sunday morning, it was a hive of activity. Terri was signing on participants (in our case signing on as both entries and marshals!), the hotel staff were providing cooked breakfasts and proud owners were showing off some beautiful cars in the car park. We ate early and collected our event paperwork to set off ahead of the field to the first passage check (PC) which was about 18 miles into the route at the George and Dragon. Our task was to direct the entrants into the car park in front of the pub to have a photograph taken and while Jez did his David Bailey bit, I signed the road books to confirm that they'd visited the control.



When we returned to the pub on the Sunday morning, it was a hive of activity. Terri was signing on participants (in our case signing on as both entries and marshals!), the hotel staff were providing cooked breakfasts and proud owners were showing off some beautiful cars in the car park. We ate early and collected our event paperwork to set off ahead of the field to the first passage check (PC) which was about 18 miles into the route at the George and Dragon. Our task was to direct the entrants into the car park in front of the pub to have a photograph taken and while Jez did his David Bailey bit, I signed the road books to confirm that they'd visited the control.

I was navigating Jez in his Omega and the event was directed by a road book of simple navigation. However, some crews had been thrown by a tulip diagram which was drawn on it's side. The correct route still followed the rule of "enter at the ball and leave at the arrow" but at the time I'd commented "that might confuse a few". Sure enough, when Toby and Gail pulled into the control, Gail announced that they had been part of a convoy whilst being ably navigated by their elder daughter, Hannah, and kept company by her sister Zoe but that at the offending junction the others had turned left instead of the instructed right.

After a short time, the remainder of the convoy appeared and we ticked off the cars on the entry list as they all visited us. Finally, the entrants on motorbikes arrived, with Classic Committee Chairman, Brian Adams, following as course closing car. They pulled into the car park for a group photo and to dig out their road books for me to sign. It was here that they were joined by Alan Mayger. It was great to finally put a face to the name. Alan is one of the WMX contingent who regularly head out on the bike runs but who don't actually make it back to the finish at the Noggin and Natter venue. We were beginning to think AG was making his companions up to sound popular! But now we know that at least Alan does exist!



Our duties as control and photo point finished, we joined in with the rest of the event. The next section of the route headed into Hampshire and passed Watership Down. We continued through some lovely scenery before stopping at Bill and Angie Canning's PC in a car park with stunning views.

The third PC and coffee stop was sited at the Wilton Windmill, near Marlborough which opened especially early to accommodate us. Terri and I enjoyed a very welcome cup of

tea and delicious homemade cake while Ted and Jez joined the tour around the windmill and its workings.

The final leg of the route took us another 18 miles back into Hampshire to finish at the Hawk Conservancy Centre near Andover. This was the highlight of my day because I have a slight passion for birds of prey (I get it from my mum and her love of owls). The event was planned so that we arrived in time for the "Valley of the Eagles" display. I have been to a great many flying displays around the country but I've never been to one where so many birds of prey were flown at the same time. Several Black Kites were flying, demonstrating their agility and ability to catch and eat their prey in flight. In the same display, a Griffon Vulture by the name of Micawber delighted in flying low over the assembled crowd causing many to duck and a young Brahminy Kite called Percival, who is just learning his flying skills, was introduced to the challenge of flying in a cross wind. It was all very impressive. For the finale, we were pointed in the direction of a pair of Bald Eagles soaring down the valley in the distance. The pair, Danebury and Cheyenne gradually approached and circled behind some trees. Cheyenne arrived in the meadow and we waited for Danebury to appear. Apparently he has a habit of getting distracted in the woodland and frequently doesn't come back. With Cheyenne calling for him, the falconers were dispatched with the radio tracking device to go to look for him and a while later we heard that he'd been located, as expected, in the woods and brought safely home.

From the meadow where the display was held, we headed to an area where Oz, a Harris Hawk, was flying to and fro and we were each given the opportunity to have him fly to us. In reality I think all that Oz cared about was flying to the piece of raw chicken held in the gauntlet we wore but it was a wonderful experience.

The final display of the day was in another flying arena and included a lovely Great Grey Owl, called Molly who appeared to relish flying for an audience. She has a striking, round facial disk which enables her superb hearing to pick up movements of prey below a foot of snow and her piercing yellow eyes are good enough in daylight to spot a vole or lemming in snow more than 200 yards away. After the display ended, our day finished with the excitement of the ferret race and I was delighted that my chosen ferret won.

One thing that stood out from the visit was that they don't just put on choreographed displays of trained birds who fly through a set routine. They fly young and new birds, partly allow them to become familiar with crowds and partly to allow us to see the progress in training and they fly birds who are unpredictable and headstrong. It is a working establishment, with the birds' welfare very much at heart, not somewhere which is just there to entertain and that was very gratifying.

The 3 Shires Run had yet again combined a very enjoyable route with some interesting stops and a fascinating finish venue. We were perhaps a little fortunate with the weather (our visited venues may not have suited rain) but, then again, AG has friends in very high places. Thanks to all those who organised, marshalled and took part in the event for another memorable day.



Nikki Wild

December Clubnight

Skittles!



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Eton Wick, 7:30pm for an 8pm start!**

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