

**THE
MANCHESTER '17'
MOTOR CYCLE
CLUB**



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1989

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NEWSLETTER

March 1989

Produced by
Geoff & Jennifer Winstanley

EDITORIAL

I was well pleased with the contributions to the January issue, it got the year off to a good start with a full and well balanced issue. Thankyou to those members who made encouraging remarks. If material continues to come in at this rate I will have no problem filling another edition by mid May.

As if to prove the point of one of the resolutions; the E.G.M. began nearly an hour and a half late, after waiting for a quorum to turn up. By that time no-one was in the mood for a drawn out discussion and all resolutions were passed with a minimum of fuss or opposition. The revised constitution will be published in a later newsletter.

The decision to make our very own Dave Rowland guest of honour at the dinner dance proved very popular. Gordon Ruffley gave an excellent speech, recounting Dave's exploits during his motorcycling career. The whole evening went down well, I will leave the final comment to Dave in his letter below.

Rick's article on chains last issue stirred up an old hobby horse of mine; why don't motorbike manufacturers design better rear chain systems? I'm sure power thirsty shaft-drives would be less popular if chains were made as reliable and maintenance free as they deserve. Front sprockets are frequently much too small with an excessive gear up ratio to the rear one, but most importantly, chains should be enclosed - when did you last see an exposed shaft? - even Cossacks enclose the bevel box. The chain on my M.Z. (once I ditched the original and fitted a British chain) lasted over 40,000 miles, was never removed and was still going strong. I would check it every 1000 miles but usually it didn't need attention (adjusting and a blob of grease) until the bike's service at 3000. Norton claim similar performance on the new 'Commander'. On the Morini, on the other hand, the exposed chain needs adjusting and spraying every 200 miles or so, and lasts only a few thousand.



Geoff Winstanley.

LETTER FROM DAVE ROWLAND

Dear friends,

Just a few lines of appreciation for inviting Doreen and myself to your Annual dinner/dance, we both enjoyed the event tremendously and felt very honoured to be with you all.

Being involved with many dinners in the past we both know how difficult it is to get the right blend to make a successful "do", you managed to do just that and to you all- well done.

Yours in sport,

for Dave

Doreen and Dave Rowland.

FORTH COMING EVENTS

VIDEO NIGHTS

21st. March
4th. April *Trials Special *
11th. April
18th. April
2nd. May
16th. May
6th. June
20th. June

TRIALS

9th. April	John Hartle	Starts at the Cat and Fiddle Inn
1st. May	Dead Easy Trial	Fernilee near Whaley Bridge
29th. May	Dead Easy Trial	Haslin Farm near High Edge
25th. June	Dead Easy Trial	Booth Farm near High Edge

ROAD EVENTS

19th. March	3 Pistons MCC Easter Egg Run	Leaves New Brighton Baths 10am.
20th. May	BMF Memba Rally	
21st. May	BMF Rally, Peterborough	
1st/2nd July	National Rally - regs now available	

NEXT NEWSLETTER

16th. May (provisionally all material to the editor by 25th. April please)

ENDURO DIARY

Date	Event	Org club	Championships		
19th. Feb	Snowrun				M17
26th. Feb					
5th. Mar	Brass Monkey	S.D.			
11/12 Mar	Breckland	Diss	Brit		
18/19 Mar	Yorkshire Two Day	Yorks	Brit		
26th. Mar	Mad March Enduro	S&DMCC	S/C		
2nd. Apr	White Horse	Thirsk		N/E	M17
9th. Apr					
16th. Apr					
23rd. Apr	Cwm Owen	Builth			M17
30th. Apr					
7th. May					
14th. May					
21st. May					
28th. May	Aberystwyth	Aberyst	S/C		
4th. Jun	Powys	MWTRA.	S/C		M17
	Stang			N/E	M17
11th. Jun					
18th. Jun					
22/23 Jun	Welsh Two Day	M.W.C.	S/C		
25th. Jun	Kielder			N/E	M17
2nd. Jul	W.T.R.A. Maestag	W.T.R.A.	S/C		
9th. Jul					
16th. Jul	Inter Centre Team Enduro	Cheshire			
23rd. Jul	Brinks	Man 17		N/E	
30th. Jul					
5/6th Aug	Dyfi	MWTRA.	Brit		
13th. Aug					
19/20 Aug	Rhayader	Rhayader	Brit		
20th. Aug	S.E.T.R.A. Andover	SETRA.	S/C		
27th. Aug					
3rd. Sep	Tour of Wales	Llangol.	S/C		M17
9/10. Sep	Natterjack	Army	Brit	S/C	
17th. Sep					
24th. Sep					
25-30 Sep	I.S.D.E Walldurn Germany	F.I.M.			
1st. Oct					
8th. Oct	Hamsterley		S/C	N/E	M17
14/15 Oct	Beacons	W.R.T.A.	Brit		
22nd. Oct					
26th. Oct					
5th. Nov	Yorkshire One Day	York		N/E	M17
12th. Nov					
19th. Nov					
26th. Nov	Tim Ward		S/C		
3rd. Dec					

Brit = British Championship
 S/C = ACU Sidecar sidecar championship
 M17 = Manchester '17' club championship
 N/E = North of England championship

MANCHESTER '17' CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 1989

Classes

1. Expert
2. Intermediate
3. Clubman
4. Clubman b (novice/sportsman)
5. Fourstroke

Events

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Snowrun | 19th. Feb |
| 2. White Horse | 2nd. Apr |
| 3. Cwm Owen | 23rd. Apr |
| 4. Powys | 4th. Jun or |
| 5. Stang | 4th. Jun |
| 6. Kielder | 25th. Jun |
| 7. Tour of Wales | 3rd. Sep |
| 8. Hamsterley | 8th. Oct |
| 9. Yorkshire One Day | 5th. Nov |
| 10. Ceri | date to be announced |

Qualification

1. Must be fully paid up member of the club.
2. Must fill in an entry form and return it to the enduro sec.

Rules

1. Riders will start each event with 10,000 points
2. The number of penalty points lost at each event will be deducted to give the rider's score.
3. The rider with the highest total from the best 6 of the 10 events wins the championship.

NORTH OF ENGLAND ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Events

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| 1. White Horse | 2nd. Apr |
| 2. Powys | 4th. Jun |
| 3. Kielder | 25th. Jun |
| 4. Brinks | 23rd. Jul |
| 5. Hamsterley | 8th. Oct |
| 6. Yorkshire One Day | 5th. Nov |

Would riders entering these events please inform Jack Chatwood as the club has to enter a team of one expert and two clubmen or we will receive 15000 penalty points in the team championship.

BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY

To be awarded to the best performance of a Manchester 17 rider regardless of class or capacity. The winner will be the person with the best 4 results from the 6 two-day rounds.

Events

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| 1. Breckland | 11/12 Mar |
| 2. Yorkshire Two Day | 18/19 Mar |
| 3. Dyfi | 5/6th Aug |
| 4. Rhayader | 19/20 Aug |
| 5. Natterjack | 9/10. Sep |
| 6. Beacons | 14/15 Oct |

If two or more people finish four or more events, the person with the lowest number of penalty points from his best four results wins

Calculation of penalty points.

1. Penalty points for event not started - 15000
2. Penalty points for incomplete day - 6000
3. Penalty points for event finishers will be as per organising club's official results but with the following amendment: Expert number of laps and special test will act as a base;

ie. if experts do two laps and two special tests and clubmen do one lap and one special test then the clubmens' penalty points will be doubled.

If a championship rider does three laps and three special tests only the first two will count for penalty points but he must complete his allocated number of laps and tests.

CHESHIRE CENTRE CHAMPIONSHIP

Events

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Cwm Owen | 23rd. Apr |
| 2. Aberystwyth 1 | 28th. May |
| 3. Powys | 4th. Jun |
| 4. Brinks | 23rd. Jul |
| 5. Tour of Wales | 3rd. Sep |
| 6. Aberystwyth 2 | date to be announced |
| 7. Yorkshire One Day | 5th. Nov |
| 8. Haffren | date to be announced |
| 9. Ceri | date to be announced |

The best 6 results from the 9 events. People who wish to be considered for the Cheshire Championship should inform Jack Chatwood or Tony Cummins on Wrexham 752444.

MANCHESTER 17 M.C.C. AWARDS, 1988

The following riders have won awards in Club events during the last year but the trophies were not picked up at the Dinner Dance. Could the riders concerned please contact me to arrange collection. Similarly, if you will be seeing someone in the near future whose name is below, please let us both know if you will be able to pass the award on to them.

Rick Stewart.
1989 Trials Secretary.

Home: (Poynton) 0625 874421
Work: (Whaley Bridge) 06633 4527

<u>NAME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>AWARD</u>
Richard Allen	Dave Rowland Trial	2nd Class
Bob Baker	Hawks Nest Trial	Winner: Pre-65
Brian Ball	Dave Rowland Trial	2nd Class
Marcus Bennet	Duron Series	3rd Novice
Mick Boam	Dave Rowland Trial	Manchester 17 Rose Bowl
Paul Boam	Hawks Nest Trial	Winner/Youth A
Kevin Boddy	Dave Rowland Trial	1st Class
James Boggis	Dave Rowland Trial	1st Class
R. Boulton	Duron Series	5th Intermediate
John Brookes	Duron Series	5th Over-40
Bill Chell	Duron Series	2nd Over-40
Adrian Clarke	Dave Rowland Trial	1st Class
S. Cockayne	Duron Series	5th Novice
M. Crompton	Duron Series	3rd Intermediate
Nigel Crowther	Dave Rowland Trial	2nd Class
Andy Dale	Duron Series	5th Expert
Andy Dale	Dave Rowland Trial	2nd Class
Dave Danks	Duron Series	Winner: Pre-65
Mike Edwards	Duron Series	4th Expert
E. Farrer	Duron Series	3rd Pre-65
Marcus Handford	Duron Series	Winner: Youth B
K. Hankin	Duron Series	4th Intermediate
Mark Heaman	Dave Rowland Trial	2nd Class
Mark Hicken	Dave Rowland Trial	1st Class
Simon Hirst	Dave Rowland Trial	Mick Wilkinson Trophy
Simon Hirst	Dave Rowland Trial	2nd Class
John Hulme	Dave Rowland Trial	Hepworth Trophy
John Hulme	Duron Series	Duron Trophy
John Hulme	Club Championship	Len Eyre Trophy
John Hulme	Best M/c 17:Ches C'ship	Stanbury Trophy
Ron Hulme	Duron Series	Strugglers Sprocket
Kevin Long	Hawks Nest Trial	Runner Up
Dave Murray	Duron Series	4th Over-40
Alan Nicklin	Dave Rowland Trial	Norman Eyre Trophy
Mike Reeves	Duron Series	2nd Intermediate
Andy Shaw	Duron Series	2nd Expert
Dave Thorpe	Dave Rowland Trial	2nd Class
Paul Turner	Duron Series	3rd Expert
Roger Williams	Dave Rowland Trial	2nd Class
Tony Wyatt	Duron Series	3rd Over-40

JANUARY DEAD EASY TRIAL

by Ken Roberts

Five riders managed to finish the day with a clean sheet at the Dead Easy Trial on Sunday 22nd January. Murky conditions at Long Lee Farm Rowarth, high above Birch Vale, greeted 53 riders to the first of four "dead easy" events before the summer holidays.

With easy and even easier routes in all but one of the ten sections, the name of the game for experienced trialers was keeping up the concentration for four laps. For most riders the pressure to finish clean was a totally new experience and the few who managed it now probably appreciate the demands put on the stars in easy events where a loose rock or a jump out of gear can spell embarrassing disaster.

The climb out of the quarry which formed the natural section 5 took many marks as the rocks intimidated the inexperienced into footing where plenty of grip was available even with enthusiastic amounts of throttle. Section 8 caused most heartbreak on the third and fourth visits; a couple of turns up and down a grassy bank got unexpectedly slippery.

There were too many good riders to name but the results below give most class winners.

RESULTS

Harder Route - every section.

Phil Gramby	over 40	Yamaha	250
Kev Hipwell	expert	Yamaha	250
Ron Hulme	over 40	Fantic	201
Steve Perry	youth B	Yamaha	250
John Plant	over 40	Honda	250
Brian Cottrell	pre 65	BSA	350
Chris Challenger	inter	Fantic	243
Greg Fletcher	novice	Yamaha	250
Ben Kirkman	youth C	Whitehawk	80
Ken Lomas	beginner	Yamaha	250
James Lovell	trail-bike	Honda	XR200

Dead Easy Route - on some sections

Chay Granby	youth B	Yamaha	250
James Lancaster	youth B	Fantic	156
Russell Hanford	youth C	Honda	80
Richard Plant	small-wheel	Yamaha	80
Bill Bristow	enduro	Husqvana	430
Phil Munday	motocross	Honda	125
Chris Dean	trail-bike	Suzuki	175

CLUB VIDEOS

Videos owned by the club are available for hire to members at a charge of £1 per week.

REFLECTIONS ON NUMBER PLATES

Some years ago, at a South Liverpool Club trial "somewhere in North Wales", I had just signed on and was walking back to the car, when the local bobby pulled up, got out of his car, had a quick look at a few of the bikes and then went to have a chat with the Club Officials. As far as I could tell he was well known to them and was just "showing his face" and hadn't been sent there specifically, but he was clearly concerned about the blatantly obvious lack of compliance of most of the bikes with the necessary regulations for road-going vehicles. As it happened, there was only about 200 yards of tarmac, then the route was entirely off public roads and he didn't take things any further. The conversation took place by the side of one of the then new 350 Montesa's which had an illegally small - although admittedly reflective - rear number plate mounted flat on the rear mudguard, thus making it only a few degrees short of the horizontal. As the bobby said, "What do think we're in? B****y helicopters'?"

Most trials riders will have seen the recent comments in T & MX about events at the Vic Brittain Trial in the Midlands. For those that didn't, police came to the start of the Trial, checking tax discs & number plates. Apparently, out of an entry of 120 (which isn't bad), 116 had illegally small number plates (which isn't good). Most tax discs were in order and the riders were allowed to proceed after official warnings. 22% of the machines failed the ACU noise test. According to T & MX, if both the police and the ACU had enforced the respective rules, only three competitors would have been allowed to start. The Secretary of the club running the Colmore Trial has said that, although ensuring the bike is road legal is the responsibility of the rider, they as a Club will not be allowing riders to start the Colmore if they do not pass scrutineering. (Note: Most of this was written before the exclusion from the Colmore of Steve Saunders and several others.)

Having previously been Machine Examiner at various trials, specifically the Dave Rowland, I can testify to the number of bikes that are presented with no apparent connection between the speedo and the hub (obviously laser driven!) and tax discs (usually covered in mud to hide the fact that they're really for a Transit van) hidden in dark recesses. Horns merit a separate section to themselves, with variations including:

- *the long distance horn.* (Sorry-mate-I-left-it-on-the-workbench-when I-was-fixing-the-bike-last-night-and-forgot-to-pick-it-up-and-I-live 200-miles-away-and-it's-Sunday-so-I-can't-go-and-buy-one-sorry-about that-mate-I'll-have-one-for-next-time-mate!)
- *the tachometer or wind-assisted horn.* (It-always-works-when-the bikes'-running-honest-mate!)
- *the communal horn.* Usually pulled out of a pocket for scrutineering, (I'll-put-it-on-before-the-start-mate-OK-mate) and then passed along the line out of sight of the Scrutineer.
(Sometimes you get:
"we-all-ride-together-and-pass-it-to-whomever-needs-it-at-the-time!")

- *the hidden horn*. This is the one located under the tank/seat, quarter of an inch from the (moving) chain or (extremely hot) exhaust pipe or situated so the rider would need to get his gloved hand through a hole half an inch wide.

The small number plates I can get along with, primarily on the same safety grounds that led to the demise of front number plates (remember them?), so long as they are a genuine attempt and not just a last minute bodge-up.

Although we can assume that no-one in his right mind is going to try to compete on a machine that is obviously downright unsafe (or can we?), I wonder just how liable the Club - and therefore all its Members - would be, if just one rider had a major smash involving other members of the public after he had been allowed to start an event (trial OR enduro) on a machine that didn't fully meet the requirements of the Road Traffic Acts.

As far as I am concerned, it is a case of the Clubs having to both do and be seen to be doing the right thing. As I am also down for Secretary for both the Dave Rowland (July 2nd) and Northern Experts (December 10th) Trials this year -observers wanted, please! - I am considering including with the Regulations for these events, a note expressing the Clubs concern and likely course of action if a machine is turned down. Fortunately for us, there are several other major trials before our two, so we'll be able to see which way the wind driven horn is blowing.

Rick Stewart
Trials Secretary

9th. APRIL	
JOHN HARTLE MEMORIAL TRIAL	
STARTS AT 10.30 AT	
CAT & FIDDLE INN	
nr BUXTON	
Regs. from JOE HAYES	13 Marleyer Rise, Bredbury Green Romiley, Stockport. Tel. 061 494 7308
entry fee £4.50	Closing date Friday 7th. April

SNOWRUN 1989

Report by Jack Chatwood OBE ('ome before everyone else)

You could tell where Vernon, Mark and Rick and the rest of the boys were because of the noise. The lounge at the Swan in Builth was no place for the locals when the Man 17 MCC "trail racers" hit town.

We left the Swan at 11 O'clock; stories were floating around next day that Mark and his mates were still up at 4 O'clock in the morning. John Willott and Mathew Holmes slept in the car. I think that they should change their names to Richard Cranium (1) and (2) .

Anyway, less of the frivolities and more about the event. Torrential rain had turned the forest into a ~~quag quag~~ mudbath, the start area was in the same place as last year but with the fuel area a little further away from the last corner of the course, probably due to the near misses there was last year, although there was one Kamikaze Kawasaki pilot this year who shot through, steel tips a-scraping; NO BRAKES !!
Parking was again a toil with a long uphill walk to the start area.

The cast

Ian Ruffley	K.D.X.200	Expert
Phil Chatwood	K.D.X.200	Clubman
Bill Bristow	Husky 430	Clubman
Andy Turner	Arm 250	Clubman
Mark Leigh	Yam 260	Clubman
Tony Cummins	Kaw 250	Over 40
Paul Leigh	Cag 125	Novice

Times seemed pretty reasonable with the last lap tightened up to split the awards. All classes, except Novice, run the first 3 laps on the same schedule so as to avoid bunching due to the large amount of competitors.

Everybody had 8 or 9 minutes to spare at the end of the first lap all except Paul Leigh who was seen facing the wrong way, up to his seat in mud with a burnt out clutch. The event was hard for a novice on his first time out. There were stories of bottomless mud holes 50ft. deep rivers and vertical climbs when the riders come in after their second lap. Time in hand was now down to 4-6 minutes, Andy clocked in 13 minutes late due to a chain derailment in one of the mudholes but was still in good spirits.

The last check was tight and with 5 cleans possible, things were getting exciting. Phil was the first in and I had him down for 2 minutes late but I had made an error with the last two checks on his time card, the results had him as clean on time.

Mark, Bill, Ian and Tony all came in clean. It was frustrating for Mark Leigh who had cleaned the course but was down for a bronze after a fall on the special test.

Results

Ian Ruffley	Expert	Silver
Phil Chatwood	Clubman	Silver
Bill Bristow	Clubman	Silver
Andy Turner	Clubman	Bronze
Mark Leigh	Clubman	Bronze
Tony Cummins	Best Over 40	
Paul Leigh	D.N.F.	

A very good club effort.

Things look good for the team competition in the N.E.E. Championship.

Only 30 points separate Bill, Phil and Tony in the Club clubman Championship.

DATA PROTECTION ACT

Notification that Membership Records will be on Computer Disc

The Club intends to keep its membership records on a computer disc as this saves time. Any member is entitled to object to his or her own record being kept in this way; in that case that member's record would be kept on a hand-written list. Would any member who wants to object, or requires more information, please contact me.

Edgar Rosenthal

Hon. Secretary

FOREWORD TO HIGHLAND HOLIDAY

(and other articles by Rick Stewart and his father to be published in subsequent newsletters)

Although many Members of the Club will have known my father as a regular observer at trials, few will have known that he had been an active rider, competing and winning trophies in several "17" trials, on a 350 AJS amongst other machines. Although it is now some 3 years since he died we still have many of his "pots" including the engraved pewter tankards and ashtrays that were typical of trials awards of his era.

During the War, he was with the Royal Signals as a despatch rider in the Western Desert but was captured in one of the Axis pushes and spent a considerable period as a POW in several Italian Camps, eventually "escaping" - the Italian guards just disappeared after the Armistice and thousands of POWs simply walked out of the Camps before the Germans arrived to take over - and walking South down the Appenines to the Allied lines. He managed to fill 5 exercise books whilst in these Camps, trying to pass the time by making notes on his experiences and was lucky enough to be able to keep hold of these books when he escaped. Some of the notes were about his riding in the Desert, Scotland and the green lanes of Derbyshire and I propose to pass extracts of these on to Geoff for printing in the Magazine from time to time.

If you find the style of writing a little strange or wishful occasionally, bear in mind the circumstances and place the original was written in - from pencil notes added later (such as "Ye Gods! Did I write this?", I know that Dad was conscious of this and had intended to write them up properly sometime but never got round to it.

Hope you enjoy them.

Rick Stewart
Trials Secretary.

HIGHLAND HOLIDAY

PG 75

1st March, 1943.

Turning over the pages of the 'National Geographic Magazine' one evening during the winter of 1935/6 my attention was caught by a striking photograph of sunset over the Isle of Skye, looking from the Kyle of Lochalsh. Outside it was raining and dull, one of those evenings when you draw close to the fire and think longingly of summer outings, past and future. Tossing the magazine over to brother Sinclair, I said "What do you think, and when?" He took one glimpse. "Could we manage it Easter?" was his reply.

And so it was planned, but things didn't work out that way. A crowd of us were skating when Sinclair sat down with one leg under him, insisting that he'd broken his leg, which was true enough, but it was some time before he convinced us and was duly carried off. Thus the Easter and Whitsuntide Bank Holidays slipped by and it was only towards the end of June when our Summer Holidays were arranged that the plaster was removed from his leg.

In the meantime, the 'Beam, a 1927 350 SV Model II had been thoroughly overhauled and with ignorance amounting to bliss we had decided to follow that years' Scottish Six Days course as far as possible. Being chronically short of cash we also intended living on oatmeal and "what we could catch" and camping out, as usual. The kit was carried in two army packs for which a metal framework had been rigged up over the rear wheel, and a large kitbag which the pillion passenger took, slung over one shoulder and resting on the carrier, with the fishing rod and tackle over the other, and a two gallon petrol tin on an extension of the framework behind the carrier (the tank proper only held one gallon - insufficient for the Highlands). We hoped to save time in pitching camp with this arrangement and it proved successful except that the framework was weak.

When finally we set out we looked like Father Christmas working overtime but what matter - we were off at last. Apart from minor hold-ups in Preston due to processions and further North due to two punctures and a broken ignition control cable, the first days' run went well, and we covered 250 miles, pitching camp by the shores of Loch Lomond on a perfect evening and eating a hearty meal of "buckshee" food scrounged from home.

Thanks to winter rehearsals, breaking camp only took ten minutes so that we would have been away bright and early, had we not noticed a break in the pack-carrying frame, which necessitated a visit to the nearest smithy. However, midday saw us well on our way over Rannochmoor to the Pass of Glencoe where we halted to repair another puncture and eat. Here we were treated to the spectacle of a Le Mans 3 Litre Bentley roaring down the Pass with the hills majestic in the background, the booming exhaust note rising and falling as it twisted its way down - most impressive. The afternoon was marred by further punctures, all the result of a frayed outer tube which had received too much bashing at low pressure over the local rough stuff at home. Consequently, creeping into Kinlochleven on a flat rear tyre, we were in no mood to appreciate the setting of this town, which nestles between the head of the loch and precipitous mountains. What we did appreciate was that it contained an agent who was able to supply a

new Fort Dunlop, so, in a happier frame of mind, we slung the old tyre somewhere on the load (for repair at home) and continued along the lonely Northern shore looking for a suitable camp site.

Now this always takes us some time, for a camp site, to meet our approval, must first command a good view, so that one can then sit around the camp fire in the evening to the best advantage, then it must be fairly sheltered, close to fresh water and if possible, a farm (for milk and eggs). However, a suitable spot was found, and after the meal we lay back enjoying the final pipe of the day and an even more beautiful view than Loch Lomond had provided. In such surroundings I am content merely to lie back, relaxed, letting my thoughts drift lazily and watching the smoke from the camp fire. On such occasions I am apt to think that man was intended for better things than pen-pushing and the drab, crowded life of the city, and fantastic plans cross my mind.

We were now approaching Fort William, the centre for the Scottish Six Days Trial and once through the town we branched left, doubling back on the track round Loch Eil and Loch Linnhe and heading towards Ardnamurchan Point via Glen Tarbert. This road leads to the now famous Loch Moidart - Loch Allort section of the Trial, included for the first time that year and at that time, the titbit of this section, the Devils' Staircase, had not been climbed "feet up". All that day the rain poured down so that we made slow progress over the second rate roads and early in the evening having overshot our turning at Salen and being thoroughly soaked, we pitched camp in a sheltered spot by the roadside. Before long we were snugly ensconced in our tent, the rain beating down on the walls and the atmosphere thick with steam from our clothes which we'd hung up to dry. The Primus, behaving itself for once, soon boiled our meal of thick porridge and with this inside us our spirits revived considerably. Nevertheless, our conversation that night was unusual. Sinclair, if I remember rightly, treated me to a discourse on the sewage systems adopted in Britain, which he considered wasteful sleep soon came.

The Highlands, I think, are seen at their best in stormy weather, when the peaks are lost in cloud and between showers the air is clear and everything stands out sharply. Next morning was of this type, so that we had an excellent run through wild desolate country. Lunch we ate under the shelter of a typical old hump backed bridge, perched on rocks with the swollen burn rushing and swirling round our feet. On a nearby telegraph pole sat an eagle, the first I had seen. City life seemed remote, part of a separate existence, almost.....

That afternoon, the rain cleared and the weather was swelteringly hot. So were we by the time the Devils' Staircase was reached for we were in trouble. First, the framework had broken again and one of the Army packs had to be carried on the petrol tank where it rather interfered with the navigation for the "B" road was now no better than a goat track and we were pursuing an erratic course avoiding obstacles; second, the pillion rider was going through hard times, the kit he was carrying shifting over the bumps and tending to unseat him - over several more-than-usually-bumpy sections he had been obliged to get off and walk; third, the 'Beam had apparently lost a few horses and wasn't pulling as was her wont. Thus at the foot of the "terror" we held a conference: as a result of which some of the surplus kit was carried up the hill on foot and an inspection made. It was easy to see

why even the stars of the trials world had been beaten by this hill, for the surface is atrocious, the gradient fierce, near the top the track scrapes between two rocks (too narrow to allow passage for a sidecar outfit) and there is more than one really tricky bend. However, I tackled it and after three ignominious failures we found we had an interested spectator - the Laird of a nearby village in Glenuig Bay, it transpired. With strenuous assistance from him and Sinclair I eventually breasted the summit, footing like a centipede and completely fagged out. While we rested the Laird explained that he was walking into Kinlochmoidart for stores but that he was returning without delay and would probably overtake us - an unspoken comment on the few miles which lay ahead, as he was on foot.

But in this he underestimated us and we had explored the tiny clachan in Glenuig Bay before his return. Our arrival created something of a sensation for to the best of my knowledge, no other motor vehicles apart from the "Scottish" competitors, had been there before. They are completely out of touch with the surrounding world and stores are brought in every week or fortnight by sea. Hospitable folk, these crofters live an extremely frugal life, in their tiny cottages through which the domestic fowl wander, cultivating a small strip of land recovered from the marshes - about six crofters share a square whose sides are no more than 100 yards long. The trial had been possibly the biggest event in their life since World War I.

During the next three days we were treated almost as the Laird's guests. Our tent was pitched on a knoll behind his house and farm products were brought up to us each morning despite their scarcity. Once we went fishing with him on his private loch and returned with a few sea trout, which made a wonderful meal - porridge was beginning to pall. But most interesting of all were our conversations with the Laird. He was an elderly man, still vigorous, holding strong views on the preservation of the Highlands and he would talk for hours of local history, of old Clan feuds, of the sorrowful scenes accompanying last century's forced emigration from the villages, of the declining fishing industry, of plans for the future and of the old local custom, now regretfully defunct, of slaughtering the Macdonalds.

After more rough going, we hit the beautiful Road to the Isles constructed, they say, by Jerry prisoners of the last War, which we followed towards Mallaig for some distance, skirting the silver sands, before doubling back to Fort William, on whose outskirts we spent a night. We had made two alterations to our plans - the first to supplement our porridge diet (carried unanimously), the second to leave the Six Day's course, which was far too tough for our much overladen ten years old 'Beam and us. I made a vow to revisit the Devil's Staircase but next time it will be as a competitor in the trial.

Following the new highway along the shores of Loch Ness, we made a detour to include Glen Affric, reputed to be the prettiest of all the Highland glens, which I can well believe. At the head of the glen we left the bike and continued on foot (we were surprised to receive a cheery "Good morning" in a broad Lancashire accent from the apparent owner of the large house there. It was a pleasant stroll but we returned to spend the night further down, where a long chat with a deer stalker, compensated us for the discomfort we endured from a multitude of gnats.

The next day we were slowed by strong headwinds as we made Northwards thro' Inverness & Dingwall and falling dusk found us climbing Tornapress, another old time "Scottish" terror. For the second time, the 'Beam seemed short of power and the unfortunate Sinclair had to get off and walk. He made a striking picture, striding into the face of a gale with the storm clouds gathering and the mountains grim and forbidding in the half light. At the summit, we left the bike and raced across country to catch a glimpse of what we had come to see - sunset over Skye - but all that met our eyes was drifting grey cloud. Disappointed, we returned to pitch camp in the darkness and spent a night disturbed by the rumblings of an underground stream.

'Beam misbehaved next morning again but the trouble was traced to slipping magneto timing and in the village of Applecross we were able to borrow keys from the blacksmith which soon put an end to such worries. But returning from Applecross we met with another mishap. Opening up on the rough track to counteract the effects of a gust of wind, I realised that it was a longer gust than usual and accordingly shut off. We drifted inevitably towards the ditch where brother Sinclair got pinned under the bike whilst the guilty party was thrown clear. His recently mended leg swelled up and provided an amazing display of colours - quite the equal of the missed sunset over Skye, as I pointed out.

As riding was now painful to him we decided to cut straight back to Lockerbie where we have relations and there is excellent fishing. This we did, taking two days over the run and passing through Inverness, Killiecrankie, Perth and Edinburgh. On the outskirts of Lockerbie we chose a suitable site on the banks of the Dryfe, where we spent three days fishing and resting. The final day's run was accomplished uneventfully with 'Beam running at her steady 45/50mph.

On working out the cost for this holiday, it was found that we had spent less than 35/- each, exclusive of the cost of the new tyre.

1989 COMMITTEE

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