

# HAB News



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# From the Chair



**HAB Chairman: John Kirkman**

**Email:** john.kirkman60@btinternet.com

I can't believe that we are already into October, summer seems to have gone so quickly. It's been a very active HAB summer with varied activities and strong turnouts for the rides. We have our last ride-out of the year on the 16th October, lets hope for fine weather and a good turnout.

You may be wondering why the news letter isn't being published a regularly as it used to be. It's simply because we don't receive any articles for publishing. In Mike Prytherch we have a keen new editor but he can only work with the material that is presented. If want to the news letter to continue please support it by contributing articles and photo's.

Be safe and enjoy

Chair

## **Winter Meetings**

Summer has passed us by so quickly and as we now move into Autumn and Winter our monthly meetings will be held indoors at Bilton Cricket Club, Bilton Lane, HG1 3DQ.

As always the meeting will be held the second Monday in each month until the sun starts shining in April, further details of next years ride-outs will appear in forth coming newsletters.

Meetings start at 7:30pm.

**Congratulations** to Donna Bristow on passing her test with assistance from observer Pauline.

# Moffat Trip (Wet Weather Riding Workshop)

**HAB Chairman: John Kirkman**

This year 17 members on 13 bikes set off on a soggy wet Saturday morning in July to Buccleuch Arms Hotel in Moffat. The trip up through the borders provided a great opportunity for some truly wet weather riding which everyone coped with extremely well.

The weather did improve for the last leg of the run from Selkirk down the A708 to Moffat. A truly great riding road with spectacular views. On arrival at the Hotel we were warmly met by the proprietors who helped us park our bikes up for the night in secure specialist bike garages - a great facility.



It wasn't long before a few of us were in the bar having a well earned drink before getting ready for dinner. The food at the Buccleuch is excellent and we all enjoyed a very nice dinner and great company. We also had a nice lady who entertained us with her Harp - something very different.

Next morning the party made ready for the return trip back to Harrogate via Alston which again turned out to be a very wet ride. Four bikes stayed on to tour Scotland for a few days which provided even more rain but that's another story.

The moral to this story is not to organise a ride out in Scotland during July or August the weather is just too unreliable. But in spite of the weather we enjoyed excellent company and a very comfortable stay in a Hotel that specialises in looking after bikers and does it well.

# Earplugs

HAB Member: Peter Harris

You do wear earplugs when on the bike, don't you? I have taken two opportunities at gatherings of IAM members to make the enquiry, and found to my astonishment in each case that there was a small number in each case, about 15%, who don't bother.

What are the facts? It is known from the medical literature that a sustained exposure to sounds of 90-95 deciBels (dB) or more is going to result in a progressive deafness. This is not curable; the dead structures of ear sensation stay dead. The sound level inside a helmet varies with the bike, the speed and the helmet, but above about 40 mph the wind noise predominates. At 60 mph, one can expect sound levels of 90-100 dB. Ear plugs are essential.

Which earplugs you wear is up to you, and it is worth trying several kinds. I have found, for example, that with some foam plugs the size I wear in my left ear is smaller than the one in the right. The correct earplug is not only the one which cuts the sound, but also the one that stays in place. I personally have never gone for the very expensive made to measure variety, and my chats with my former ENT colleagues do not suggest that they are vastly superior.

Currently, I buy my earplugs at Boots, though this is not the first place one would normally think of for the purpose. I can heartily recommend the wax variety, which can be moulded to fit comfortably and can be worn all day in comfort. I have no connection with Boots, other than as a satisfied customer.



# “TRIDAY”



## Roy Beniston & Barry Ring head to Triumph Heaven

Following an article in MCN, myself and Barry Ring decided to go to the “Triday” event in Neukirchen Austria to see what it was all about, a handy excuse to also get in some European touring, which we did in spades! As a result we both fully recommend that other members of our group should give it a try, particularly in view of the fact that we now have quite a few Triumph owners.

Although we only took in the Thursday, Friday & Saturday travelling back on the Sunday, the event actually runs for a full week Sunday to Sunday so sadly we missed some very interesting activities.

### Why would you want to go?

The event runs for a full week from Sunday to Sunday and takes over the small Austrian village of Neukirchen, and as the name suggests it is a celebration of Triumph bikes and is run and organized with the support of Triumph Germany and most importantly the VERY friendly locals. Although supported by Triumph it is by no means bombarded by overt sales pressure or crass commercialism just brilliant PR.

Triumph bikes of all descriptions, mods and personalisation's were on show, you could also test ride any and/or all of the various models on a set route through the local alpine area. In addition to the bikes and goods on display there were a multitude of other activities on offer, street entertainers, bands & groups playing both by day and night. Stunt shows, events for children, fireworks and parades. Optional bike ride-out tours were also on offer on the Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday with the choice each day of three differing ride-outs ranging from fast & experienced to slow and scenic.

## What we experienced

Setting off from Knaresborough at 10.00 am we travelled down to Dover to catch the 4.10 pm ferry to Calais via the A1, M25, Dartford Crossing & M20 to make the best time as we wanted to get well into France on the first day. We were aiming for Reims where we had pre-arranged accommodation at a small hotel B&B. [approx 550 miles]

Being on bikes proved to be a godsend as we had to do an awful lot of very tight filtering to clear the massive traffic hold-ups on the A1, M25 and Dartford Crossing, Barry soon found out that his new Tiger 800 panniers were slightly wider than mine on the Tiger 1050 in him having to paddle through the stream of traffic on a number of occasions.

The weather on route to Dover was a mixed bag but we arrived in bright sunshine and in good time meeting up with other bikers, a vintage Alvis and even some intrepid cyclists who were on route to Israel !! Losing an hour moving onto European time we landed at 6.30pm and began our onward journey through France using the A26 motorway all the way down. To ease our passage through to tolls we pre-purchased toll sensor card units that automatically registered your passage through the toll gate, opening the barrier and thus avoided the usual faff of sorting out tickets, money, change coinage and having to take off wet gloves and gear etc. I personally found this a tremendous advantage it also meant that you secured the cheaper biker tolls rather than the more expensive car tolls. The next 250 miles were mostly uneventful apart from crap weather and my Garmin sat-nav packing up thus having to rely on my map route notes that I had taken the precaution of preparing, for the rest of the journey.

For the more detailed town navigation to the hotel in Reims and later on in Germany & Austria we had to rely on instinct and Barry's old Tom-Tom unit which would only last for a limited time as it would not charge up from his bike power supply.

When we arrived in Reims it was 11.30 pm and virtually deserted, even the local MacDonalds where we tried to get directions to the Hotel was closing up and Barry's schoolboy French proved to be taxed to the limit. We continued to circulate around town like prowling vigilantes in search of someone to accost when we came across a group of teenagers sheltering/loitering on a shop corner. Again Barry's French was put to the test and found wanting but they took pity on us and two of the boys got in their car and took us direct to the hotel - what stars! As it was midnight the hotel was deserted and we had to rouse the madame to let us in to our rooms where we promptly took advantage of the beds and got some well-earned rest.

The next day after an early breakfast we set off for the German border and onto Austria, another 550 plus miles mostly in crap weather however it brightened up as we crossed into Austria and we caught our first sight of the Alps in all their glory - we had arrived in biking nirvana! - the last 75 miles or so were again completed in the wet and darkness but the hotel Vasere in Bramberg where we had arranged to stay was easier to find, however the road outside of the hotel had been dug up and consisted of just a hard-core base giving us a bit of testing off-road type riding!! - just what you need at midnight in the dark and wet when your tired and weary after a long journey!!

German/Austrian efficiency meant that by the end of the next day a new road surface had been laid and finished off - would take six months in the UK!

Fortunately the hotel had been warned of our late arrival and two plus two beers went down extremely well. The quality of our room was outstanding, more like a suite really with armchairs, sofa's and tables plus excellent toilet, bathroom and shower facilities.

## The 'TRIDAY" Experience

The next day brought better weather and we went into Neukirchen to register, collect our passes, welcome pack including tee-shirt, badges and massive grins and smiles all round!! also to check out the village plus the things on show. Neukirchen is a typical small alpine village that had been completely taken over by the biker fraternity.



There were wall-to-wall bikes, stalls, street artists, beer hostelries, bands and flags, there were more union jack flags than at the recent royal wedding plus loads of Triumph flags. It was brilliant to see the Germans, Austrians, Italians, Swiss and even the French celebrating the British Triumph mark - it made you quite proud really. They even had an open top double-decker bus going up and down the main street giving free sightseeing tours with two quasi cold stream guards giving out small Union Jacks to everyone. We spent the day moping up the atmosphere, good food, booze and music both by day and by night - bloody marvellous.



## Saturday Ride-Out Tour

We had already pre-booked the Gross Glockner tour for the Saturday which was a full-day 170 mile affair.

I attach some photos of myself and Barry enjoying our time at the Grossglockner stop-off, which was part of the 170 mile ride-out tour on the Saturday, it is some 2,504 metres in altitude and which is arrived at via the “High Alpine Road” containing 36 bends [mostly hairpin] over a 48 kilometre climb.



The mountain itself is 3,798 meters tall and the highest in Austria with the Pasterzengletcher glacier passing down one side. Also attached is a photo of the event “Mastermind” Uli Bree who is a fantastic guy.



All the ride-outs were well organised and we could select any 3 tours from 8 options which ranged from fast and experienced to relaxed and leisurely. What roads and what vistas! If you couldn't get round a bend when you started, you were certainly an expert when you finished.

## Return Journey

Our return journey was a repeat of the outward trip but with an overnight B&B stop over in Laon rather than Reims. Although the weather started off wet it brightened up at the German border and we had brilliant weather from then on. We did take a bit of a detour into Strasbourg when we needed to fuel up outwith the motorway - beautiful city would liked to have spent more time there.

## General

Barry and I had a fantastic time and thoroughly appreciated the welcome that we received from the everyone. It was really great to be a part of the grand parade on the Saturday and to receive such a warm response from the people lining the route. It was worth travelling all the way from the north of England just to experience that.

The bands, groups, street entertainers and events were all brilliant. This was our first visit to the 'Neukirchen Triday' event and we will certainly try and get there next year.

For my part I will certainly spread the good word to get more UK bikers involved as it is very poorly advertised in the UK at the present time. It was also nice that there was an absence of crass commercialism, trade stands were quite rightly advertising their wares but not pushing any direct sales, what a pleasant change to other events.



Our thanks and appreciation go to the "Mastermind" of the event Uli Bree for his efforts and organisation of the event as I understand he is the "Main Man", also to thank the tour guides especially Andreas Vorderregger who looked after our English group on the Grossglockner tour.

As feed back, we found the Hotel Kasere in Bramberg very comfortable with good food and excellent accommodation, the provision of a locked garage facility for our bikes was an added bonus.

# Ride-out Pics





# By bike and ferry in NW Scotland



## Journey in a bikers' paradise by Doug Masterton

Several trips to Scotland with Harrogate Advanced Bikes to Argyllshire and the Grampian region in previous years meant that I knew just how inspiring riding in Scotland can be but nothing had prepared me for the wonder of riding through the Outer Hebrides and at the Northwest fringe of the country.

On day one of a seven day trip I rode up to the Clyde Estuary and on my first ferry crossed to the Holy Loch. Next day I rode to Oban and then travelled by a larger conventional ferry to Lochboisdale in South Uist near the southern end of the Outer Hebrides. This is a five hour crossing to a different world. Lochboisdale is a very small village by our standards yet it is the main port of South Uist and almost before you are out of first gear you are in the middle of the country. It is a journey characterised by a treeless terrain, single track roads, scattered dwellings where it seems every house has its own private loch, distant hills and the most amazing changes in light as the weather varies. It seems almost every house is geared up for bed and breakfast and at the one I stayed I was greeted with a visit from a stag who was grazing just yards from the kitchen window. Eriskay, South Uist, Benbecula, North Uist and Berenay are a chain of islands now linked by substantial causeways - embankments and bridges that cross the shallow stretches of water between the islands. Formerly ferries were needed and a few remain to provide links to the other islands of Barra and Harris. Round every corner of the single track roads, it seems there is a lake or a beach with scattered cottages dotted across the landscape. In the south the churches are Catholic but heading north the Protestant names on the building appear.



Landing on Harris is another shock. The mountains fall to the sea in bays lined with golden sands lapped by turquoise water that would be a tourist magnet if the weather was not so cold and Harris were not so remote. Waiting for the ferry back to Skye gave



time for a small excursion to the island of Scalpay, with its community of some 400 people but linked to Harris by the most amazing 300 metre long high level bridge opened as recently as . 1997 at a cost of £6.4 million. The scale of investment needed per person that has given this small community its life-line is scarcely conceivable.

Skye is a wonderful place to ride. Some good roads, challenging single track routes and the most amazing views across another mostly tree less landscape mean that a bike seems the only true way to travel. Yet even Skye could not compete with the landscape and the roads north from the Kyle of Lochalsh (over the now toll free Skye Bridge) towards the top left hand corner of the mainland at Cape Wrath and Durness. Fabulous investment in roads means that the NW highlands must have some of the most satisfying routes to ride in this country if not the world.

Wide roads, high altitude, open bends, good cambers and unrestricted views through most stunning scenery means that your whole consciousness is challenged by the experience of the landscape and the roads as you ride through. Yet suddenly you can find that the money must have run out for what was a virtually traffic-free magic carpet transforms suddenly to a single track roller coaster lane with blind summits, twists and turns bet with yet more surprises around every bend. A detour off the main road took me to settlements on the edge of the sea where crofters' sheep and cattle live on the roads which at time cling to the cliffs and barely avoid the beaches.



After a night at Durness, the nearest village to Cape Wrath I turned south across the Sutherland wilderness moorland in thick fog towards the infamous hamlet of Altnahara literally in the middle of nowhere yet boasting a warm hotel which was a welcome refreshment stop in the fog and rain.

Infamous in that it is Altnahara that often records the lowest UK winter temperatures (-22.3 degrees C in January 2010). Gaining the civilisation of the east coast town of Lairg meant that the excursion into wild and remote Scotland was coming to an end and my last stop near Aviemore felt more the destination for a day out than a final overnight stay on an exploratory journey. The Scottish weather never fails to disappoint. A long-looked-forward to trip on the Cairngorm Funicular railway took me up once more into the pea soup fog limiting the supposedly magnificent vision across the mountains to just a few yards.

The large number of bikers in Scotland provide a reassuring camaraderie. My sympathy was with the many cyclists battling



against the unexpected northerly wind in the Hebrides and carrying minimal changes of clothes. I do not know what happens if you break down so far away on the outer islands. It seems inconceivable that a rescue organisation could keep to a one hour response promise and to give you recovery back home after the ferries have stopped for the night. I am sure that local people would provide some shelter as their welcome was very warm. Up in the highlands, some care is needed to ensure that you do not run out of petrol as service stations are few and far between and pumps are often run by shops that have limited hours. One surprise was the affordability of ferries. For my four hops including the two long crossings the bill came to just £81. The hazard of

Scotland in August is of course the midges and this is a bumper season. The Scottish secret is to see your Avon Lady and buy 'Skin so Soft'. The small shops and garages carry private stocks to sell.

In Scotland they say, 'Haste ye back.' My response is to say - 'Just as soon as I can'

# Slow Riding Workshop



# Skye is not the Limit!



**HAB Member: Andrew Pratt**

Whilst I have been to Scotland loads of times, I have never ventured North of the Isle of Skye. Neither has John. Keith has, but not for some time so he planned a route that would take in the West Coast, the North, & back South on the eastern side.

**Thursday** Late afternoon saw the three of us set off from near Settle, on a scenic route to Penrith, then M-way & dual carriage-way to Dumfries. We would be camping on this trip & arrived at our pre booked site just north of Dumfries for 19:30. Up with the tents then off to the pub for a meal.

**Friday** The weather is dry so tents dropped & on the road north 50 miles or so for a Kilmarnock ASDA fuelling of bike & body. We'd plotted a back road route to Largs & we dropped into the town with fantastic views across to Rothesay & Bute. North to the shorter Gourock ferry crossing to Hunters Quay in bright sunshine & then continued thru the Argyll Forest Park, to Loch Fyne & Inverary. We'd heard the weather was wet & windy back home in Yorkshire, so we had some fun mailing photo's of our sunny pavement cafe "office" to work colleagues & one southerner who was going to be on the trip, but then the lure of the M25 beckoned & he missed out (ay Steve). Ever northwards thru Glen Aray, the skies were darkening & the rain started as we entered Glen Orchy (B8074) This Glen is probably beautifully scenic, but all I can remember is torrential rain & the gravelly single track road. We were glad to leave this Glen onto Rannock Moor & Glen Coe on drying roads. Late lunch in Fort William & tonight we had planned a stop in Arisaig, but the sat nag told us we could make the 1630 Mallaig/Skye ferry, so we pushed on. Sat nag timing proved optimistic, & after an hour's progressive ride we made the ferry with only 10 minutes to spare.





Onto Skye & Ashaig campsite near the Skye bridge. Interesting place this, moorland & trees, informal, and campfires permitted with fantastic views over the Red Cuillin & Torridon. The owner was not on site, there is a honesty system for payment of camping fees, pay thru the letterbox & take a numbered stick as proof! The early evening breeze kept the midges away & we walked the mile or so to the Red Skye Restaurant in an old schoolhouse, for local mussels & locally brewed beer. Back to Ashaig in setting sun, the wind had dropped & midges had risen. Fireman John got a campfire going & soon we had a healthy blaze, not before the midges had feasted on all of us, but mainly John, who by morning looked like a refugee from some medieval plague!

**Saturday** A bright start & we were over the Skye bridge & on the mainland for 07:00 looking for breakfast. Nowhere open, we enjoyed good weather, dry roads & some fantastic views as we rode past Loch Carron, Torridon & Maree. In Gairloch, an open cafe, then north (again) we stopped to look at Gruinard (Anthrax Island) & then a coffee stop in Ullapool, then onto Durness on the North coast. We had planned to camp here, but it was quite early, & the cliff top site didn't gel with the strengthening wind. Not wanting to push on just yet we had a look at the breakers at Balnakeil Bay, & found frothy coffee at Cocoa Mountain. (Think of Highland Starbucks). A change of direction, eastwards now for 40 miles we found a campsite at Bettyhill & decided to stop there. We were warned the only pub/hotel didn't serve food, no matter the Tourist Information place has a cafe that opens in the evening, we'll eat there. Here's a tip, if ever you find yourself in Bettyhill, move on. The cafe was fully booked by locals, the hotel looked derelict, although the bar was open, & the campsite toilet block should have been condemned 10 years ago, definite need of renovation, or better still, knock it down & start again.



In strengthening wind (m/c jackets on ) we enjoyed fish & chips in the cafe garden, then up the hill to the bar -full of lively local footballers who'd just won the "cup", they left after half an hour or so & we had a good evening of pool & chat. As we left, that wind had turned nasty, picture those news reports from Florida with the horizontal rain lashing the street lamps & palm trees. No palms this far north, but you get the idea. Northern Scotland has a severe weather warning tonight, & we are camping. Deep Joy! We were pleased to see the tents still standing (we weren't sure they would be), straight into our 'bags to try to sleep. We got some sleep; the worst of it was that as the dawn broke, I could now see my tent almost collapsing in the wind, and then springing back on the poles. Couldn't sleep seeing that, we were all awake, so we dropped the tents & were away for 0630. Early I know, but really no point in hanging around.

**Sunday** Between the three of us we've ridden over 200,000 miles over the last 12 years; today would prove to be the worst riding conditions any of us have experienced. Heading East to Thurso & John O'Groats, strong wind on our left, straight from



Iceland & carrying most of the North Atlantic with it. At one point the road was lined with leafy hedges, the road was a carpet of slippery green, the leaves having been ripped off the trees. Going downhill into the wind, we rode thru road water being driven uphill by the gale. Pick a line round a corner - no chance, a gust would blow you off line, or there'd be a lake round the corner. The sensible thing would be to find somewhere warm & dry & sit it out. But nowhere was open & we'd booked an Inverness overnigher. If we didn't get to the planned stop tonight we'd have more to do tomorrow & 'Ness to home is far enough anyway.

Made Thurso for fuel & a garage coffee, then on to John O Groats, no chance of seeing Dunnet Head, too exposed, one of us almost lost the bike in the gale at JOG car park - place was deserted, no one else about. South now, we finally found a cafe open at Helmsdale, only 102 miles from our start. A

bunch of cyclists were already there, trying to get warm & dry - each group looked at the other & wondered who was the most daft!. Nicely fed & warmed, & ever the optimists we swore it was fairing up. Yes definitely drying out now & we started to enjoy the ride. Bonar Bridge > Alness (B9176) lovely road over the Struie Hill, the road was dry & the pace picked up. Feeling tired now we headed for our B & B at Dores, on Loch Ness.

Aldourie Castle ([www.aldouriecastle.co.uk](http://www.aldouriecastle.co.uk)- hardly a B & B) would be our stay tonight. Bought by the current owner (Keith's former boss) in 2004 it's a 15 bedroom castle (the only inhabitable castle on Loch Ness) available to rent by the week/weekend. Extensive refurbishment was required & Keith was in charge of the building works & initially asked Roger (owner) if we could camp in the grounds. Better than that we were offered one of the cottages for the night. A couple of days before, change of plan, we would stay in the castle itself. Pop Stars stay here, Middle East Royalty stay here, it's been used for the launch of prestige cars such as the latest Bentley Mulsanne. Quite the most luxurious place I have stayed in & very generous of Roger to invite us to stay. Maybe we can organise a HAB weekend?



**Monday** Late start today after a good night's sleep & excellent Scottish castle breakfast. We planned a scenic route via Tomintoul, Grantown, Balmoral, Braemar & Blairgowrie. Brilliant. Main roads to Perth & Edinburgh, then the fantastic A701 thru the borders to Moffat, & M6 home. Good days riding we were home for 1800, after 380 miles. A long way, we could have done a shorter route, but roads were dry & bikes are for riding, right? Anyone for the reverse route next year?