

VIBRATIONS!



Looking down the south side of the Bealach Na Ba Pass. One of the best views to be seen from the back of a motorcycle in Britain.

July 2018



Triumph Owners M.C.C.

Northants Branch

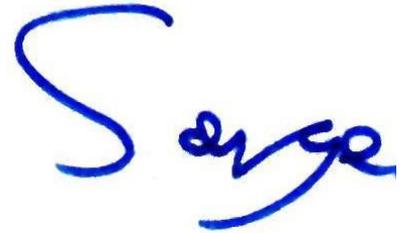


Scribblings

As with all organisation that hold personal details, we are affected by the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Branch holds this information from your club membership application: Name & Address, Membership Number, Phone Number, E-mail Address. Those details are held solely for use within the branch for membership purposes and will not be divulged to anybody inside or outside the club without your permission. We do not have your machine details!

Communications, such as this newsletter, will only come from me as Membership Secretary or from Philip Wallington as General Secretary. If you have been in touch with other committee members for specific reasons: ride-outs, tickets for displays, etc; then those committee members will have your contact details for that purpose only.

If you have any concerns about the data held by the Branch, or the way it is used, please get in touch with me.



33 Argyle Street, St.James, Northampton NN5 5LJ
Tel: 01604-582468

e-mail: Sarge.Northampton@btinternet.com

New Members

Welcome to the following new Branch members, who have joined in the last couple of months.

Dean Coxson of Desborough

Michael Stanley of Earls Barton

Neil Daniel of Wellingborough

Robert Swann of Northampton

Ali Hunt of Rushden

Paula Ward of Rushden

Steve Patenall of Higham Ferrers

Al & Angela Warner of Wellingborough

Nick Rabson of Great Houghton

Membership Renewals

If your club membership is due for renewal here are the best ways of dealing with it...

- 1) Renew on-line via tomcc.org/Home/Membership with a credit card, debit card or PayPal account. You can also get a £2 discount using this method.
- 2) Fill in the membership form that was sent to you, then post it direct to the HQ Membership address at Horley, as shown on the form. Include a cheque made payable to Triumph Owners MCC.
- 3) Fill in the membership form and hand it to the Branch Membership Secretary at a club night. Payment by cheque or cash. Memberships renewed this way are only sent to HQ a couple of times a month, so will take longer to process than 1 or 2 above.

Don't worry about the money as the Branch receives the same amount per person regardless of the method used to renew.

Northants Branch Info and News

Non-club members are welcome at all events unless specifically marked otherwise. Listen out for details at club nights, or check with committee members beforehand in case of short-notice alterations or cancellations. Except where indicated, club nights start at 8pm.

	Events List
Sat-Sun 30 th June-1 st July	Summer Nationals at Santa Pod Raceway. Gates open 8am; track opens 9.30am. See "The Accidental Racer" on page 6. www.santapod.co.uk
Sun 1 st July	Triumph Day at Jack's Hill Cafe 10am-3pm. Organised by the Branch so we will need volunteers there to help set up at 8am.
Wed 4 th July	Club Night at The Crown from 8pm
Thu 5 th July	Wrinklies Run to The Wharf, Welford, NN6 0JQ. Meet at Pure Triumph 10.45am.
Sun 8 th July	Festival of 1000 Bikes at Mallory Park. Branch Run
Mon 9 th July	Evening Run to Norton Owners Club at The Wharf, Welford. 7.15pm from Premier Inn, Junction 7 of A14 at Kettering.
Sun 15 th July	Ton-Up Day at Jacks Hill Cafe. Branch display
Wed 18 th July	Open Evening & Barbecue at The Crown from 8pm. Note change of date Invite all your friends along, no matter what they ride.
Thu 19 th July	Wrinklies Run to The Swan, Bromham, MK43 8LS. Meet at Pure Triumph 10.45am.
Sun 22 nd July	Founders Day Rally at Stanford Hall. Possible branch ride-in
Wed 1 st August	Club Night at The Crown from 8pm
Thu 2 nd August	Wrinklies Run to The Greyhound, Milton Malsor, NN7 3AP. Meet at Pure Triumph 10.45am.
Sat-Sun 4 th -5 th August	East Carlton Transport Gala. Possible branch display. Talk to Phil Barton
Mon 6 th August	Evening Run to Bedford Triumph Owners.
Sun 12 th August	Brackley Festival of Motorcycling. Branch Display. www.brackleyfestivalofmotorcycling.co.uk/
Wed 15 th August	Club Night at The Crown from 8pm
Thu 16 th August	Wrinklies Run to The Carrington Arms, Ashby Folville, LE14 2TE. Meet at Pure Triumph 10.45am.
Sun 19 th August	Stilton Bike Show (organised by Peterborough Branch). 11am. Possible branch run.
Thu 30 th August	Wrinklies Run: Magical Mystery Tour. Meet at Pure Triumph 10.45am.
	<i>Advance Notices</i>
Fri-Sun 14 th -16 th Sep	<i>Bonneville 60 at Uttoxeter Racecourse. See July Nacelle Page 12-15.</i>
Fri-Mon 19 th -22 nd Oct	<i>Trifest Skegness. See July Nacelle Page 18.</i>

Events in bold are branch events, others are for information only.

Volunteers wanted to lead the evening runs (preferably people who know the way to the destination).

Northants Branch Info and News

Branch HQ:

The Crown, Senwick Road, Wellingborough, NN8 1NJ. The pub is on the south-east side of Wellingborough, a 5 minute ride from the A45 and the southern section of the A509. It's only a few hundred yards away from Pure Triumph, so if you know where the dealer's showroom is our HQ will be easy to find.

Meetings are held on the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of each month, starting at 8pm.

Please park motorcycles in that section of the car park to the right of the pub's front door (by the crossing in Senwick Road).

Pure Triumph:

Our local Triumph dealer is based at The Embankment, Wellingborough, NN8 1LD. The company's website can be found at www.puretriumph.co.uk.

On production of a current Triumph Owners membership card, Pure Triumph at Wellingborough will give a 10% discount on the following items: Clothing, Oxford Products, Helmets, Oil products, Labour on Servicing.

The Branch on the Internet:

Our website can be found at: www.northantstomcc.org.uk. Most pages are public but there is one small section that is restricted to branch members only, accessed via the password that is advised separately.

Steve Haughton is the webmaster. If you have any content for it please have a word with him.

We also have Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/northantstomcc/

If you go on any branch events please make a conscious effort to take a photo (high quality mobile phone OK) then send it to Sarge and Steve. This will ensure the newsletter and website have something to show when writing the reports.

Other Internet Links:

Triumph Owners MCC national website: www.tomcc.org

Triumph Owners MCC events website: www.tomccevents.co.uk

Triumph Owners Clothing: http://redlineclothing.co.uk/redline_clothing_025.htm

The club also has a page on Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/4526704577/.

British Motorcyclists Federation: www.bmf.co.uk

Triumph Motorcycles: www.triumphmotorcycles.co.uk



Northants Branch 40th Anniversary pin badges still available. £3 each from Sarge. Add £1 for postage if not collecting from a club night.

Northants Branch Info and News

Northants Branch Clothing Range

The range of Northants Branch clothing: T-Shirt, Polo Shirt, Sweatshirt, Hoodie, Fleece, Business Shirt and Baseball Cap; can now be purchased on-line rather than having to wait until the next club night.

Some items can also be done with a large back-print for an additional fee.

To order click on this link:

www.customkit.co.uk/northants-triumph-owners-club-52-c.asp

Ordering instructions:

On the web page, click on the Garment you want to purchase then fill in the size, badge version and back print (if required).

Click on ADD TO CART

In the Shopping Cart page double-check your order then GO TO CHECKOUT

One more chance to check your order or Checkout Securely

Enter your e-mail address and password to set up an account

You can now go to > Delivery Details > Order Summary > Payment Details

At the Payment Details you will see 3 Options:

Pay Pal-Click and Pay > Go to Order Complete

Credit Card-Click and Pay > Go to Order complete

Debit Card-Click and Pay > Go to Order Complete

Or you can pay by phone during office hours using your credit card, you will see > Telephone > Click here and the order will be placed and ask you to phone 01327 311125 (office hours) and make your payment. You will be asked if you want Delivery or Collect

When your order has been placed you get an order confirmation, with unique number to quote, which will be copied to you in an e-mail.

If your order gets mucked up during all this, click on Cancel to return to the main Custom Kit page and start again. Select Club wear and then select Northants TOMCC.



The Accidental Racer - The Continuing Saga...

As many of you already know, for the last couple of years I have been drag racing a most unlikely bike at Santa Pod and other venues around the UK - a 2015 Triumph Tiger Explorer.

2018 has had a particularly slow start, the first round of the 2018 ACU ET Bike Championship at Easter was all but rained off and round 2 was cancelled completely due to the weather and spectator areas being totally waterlogged, resulting in most of the point scoring rounds being towards the end of the year. The next championship round is on the 30th June and 1st July at Santa Pod.



Away from the ACU ET Bike championship I have been racking up the miles this year with some solo excursions and some group rides, but I also entered the National Association of Supertwins 25th Anniversary Challenge - which this year is open to all engine configurations and not just twin cylinder machines.

Round 1 was at Santa Pod on May Bank Holiday weekend and Rounds 2 and 3 are also at Santa Pod in September and October. Many of the Supertwins racers also compete in the ACU ET Bike championship and are some of the friendliest people you could ever meet.

The NAST Championship is a closed club event, and with the support of the Santa Pod staff and marshals is run as an event at a normal "Run What You Brung", so all that is needed is to sign on for the RWYB, pre-register with NAST, pay your entry fee to NAST - all of which is paid back to winner and runner-up as prize money - and away you go.

As the challenge is run alongside a normal RWYB, runs have to fit in with the bike sessions - no special privilege, so due to the number of other bikes and cars - I've never seen so many bikes at a RWYB before - we only managed to get 2 qualifying runs and after an awful first pass, my second run was good enough to qualify P3, 0.09 off my dial in.

The Accidental Racer - The Continuing Saga...



Waiting to qualify - Some of the diverse machinery in the class

The first round against Mick Winyard, a regular competition bike competitor on his Hayabusa, was too close for comfort, just 0.009 of a second separating us at the line - fortunately for me, Mick was just 1/1000 of a second off a perfect reaction and red-lit.

Round 2 Saw me against Andy Ball on his TZR250, who must have been off his best as I was level just after the 1/8th and could back off at the stripe.

The semi-final was against Peter Harrison on his Ducati, another good reaction again enabled me to back off at the stripe to ensure I didn't break out..

Which left the final. Against 8.50 bike racer Ian Critchlow. It also meant that the final was between probably the two most unlikely drag bikes of the day - Me on my Tiger and Ian, having a change of pace from his usual turbo 'busa, on his Honda CB250 circa 1974 - dialling in at just over 20 seconds. This meant I had almost 9 seconds to wait on the line after he had set off. As I left the line he seemed so far away and as I passed the 1/8th he looked to be almost at the finish, but I was now closing fast and as we crossed the line, I had no idea that I had made it until the win light came on in my lane. Another close race at the line 0.04 seconds between us!



A most unlikely final. Ian Critchlow's Honda CB250 and my Tiger.

I say this as the winner - but what a superb day. Great organisation from the crew at NAST, especially Robbie Dobbie for always making everyone so welcome, thanks also to the start line and timing crew at Santa Pod for making it possible and all of the other racers who create such a superb atmosphere at every meeting.

And what a cracking trophy too!

The Accidental Racer - The Continuing Saga...



A productive day - A rather cool trophy and a wedge of cash. Splendid!

It's a pity the Tiger has 50% too many cylinders, as I am 260 points clear of second place. Unfortunately, only twin cylinder machines are eligible for the overall championship. Of course, if someone would lend me a nice twin cylinder Triumph for the next 2 rounds.....

If you have Facebook you can keep up with my exploits here

<https://www.facebook.com/Uncorrugated>

Dave Grundy

ET Bike Racing:- The Basics

Several people have asked how an Explorer can be a competitive drag bike when there are far quicker bikes running in the same class. ET racing is a form of drag racing that allows for a handicap between the estimated times of two bikes (or cars) across the quarter mile.

Dial-in

Each bike chooses a dial-in before the race, predicting the elapsed time the driver estimates it will take his or her bike to cross the finish line. This is displayed on the bike or by the crew so the starter can adjust the "christmas tree" starting lights accordingly. The slower bike in the race is given the green light before the faster bike by a margin of the difference between their two dial-in times

In principle, if both riders have equal reaction times and they run exactly their posted dial-ins, both should cross the finish line at precisely the same time. In reality, this is an extremely rare occurrence. Measuring devices both at the start and at the end of the track post times down to 1/100000 of a second (0.00001s precision), which makes tied races almost impossible.

Reaction Times

The timer for each lane only starts for a run when the vehicle moves and breaks the timing beam, not when the green light comes on. The reaction time is the difference between the green light coming on and the vehicle moving.

The Accidental Racer - The Continuing Saga...

Sounds easy? In theory, yes, it is. In practice, there are a number of pitfalls which can make like difficult and end up with you losing or gifting the win to your opponent.

Breaking Out

Breaking out is running quicker than your estimated time and gives the win to your opponent. If both bikes break out, the winner is the bike that breaks out by the least, regardless of who crossed the line first.

Red Light

If you set off before the green light comes on, you get an automatic red light and disqualification. If both vehicles red light, then the first red light is the rider that is disqualified.

A red light outweighs an opponent's break out.

Lane Violation

Crossing the centre line, hitting the guard wall or timing lights results in disqualification. Lane violations outweigh red lights and break outs.

The Result

Exciting close racing, where a diverse range of bikes often cross the line within a few inches of each other, even when there are greatly differing closing speeds at the line.

The winner is the rider that is the most consistent and makes the least mistakes.

The format is also really successful for cars too.



6 Men, 6 Triumphs, 6 Days, 1,600 Miles

The Cast: Paul Anderson (Sprint 1050 GT), John Caullay (Sprint 1050 GT), Henry Richards (Legend 900), Steve Rattley (T120 Bonneville), Ian Sargent (Tiger 800 XRx), Norman Waples (Bonneville America).

Prologue: Late one night in the King Billy, December 2017. John Gibbs and John Caullay are talking and call me over. *"We're thinking of doing the North Coast 500 next year. Do you think anybody else in the branch would be interested?"* *"Well, you can count me in."* *"But you haven't got a bike on the road."* *"That's a minor problem."*

After announcing it at the branch nights in January six people said yes (we didn't want to go over this number to make it easy to sort out accommodation). A rough itinerary and a June start date were agreed, with Norman volunteering to sort out the hotels and do the route planning. That was followed up by five of us having a Monday night meeting at The Crown to finalise the details (with Paul down in Cornwall trusting our judgement).

On the day before we go I drive down to Spyder Motorcycles at Silverstone Circuit to pick up my hire bike, a 2018 Tiger 800 XRx with 2,967 miles on the clock – just nicely run in then. It's been two years since I last rode, but having used a Tiger 800 before I didn't expect it to take too long to get used to this one. A nice circuit via Middleton Stoney – Chipping Norton – Stow on the Wold – Fosse Way – Southam – Daventry – Northampton to shake off the cobwebs, then one more ride out to Foxton Locks late afternoon meant 156 miles for the day and I was happy with that.

Saturday 9th June: 9am at Kettering and all six of us are there on time; Paul having ridden up from Newquay a day or two earlier. On the road and we take the A43 to Stamford to get onto the A1, riding non-stop to Whetherby where we have our first break for loos, drink and fuel. At Scotch Corner we take the A66 across the Pennines to Penrith to join the M6. Across the border into Scotland and the M6 morphs into the A74M (you can't see the join).

Our second stop is at Annandale Water services. More fuel plus a bit of food. We can see that we are going to be heading into some wet weather, so on go the waterproofs. Within a few minutes of setting off we hit some very heavy rain with the motorway awash in places, At Hamilton Paul pulls over and says that he will see us later. Further on we see that one car has come to grief, going up the bank into the fence then back onto the hard shoulder, with bits of wood from the fence in the main carriageway. On the outskirts of Glasgow we take the M73 and M80 for the last bit of the trip to Stirling. The rain has eased off but it's still wet on the ground when we get to the King Robert Hotel at Whins of Milton just south of the city at 4.30pm. 360 miles away from Northampton and behind the reception desk is a clock presented by the Cogenhoe Sports & Social Bowls Club!



After checking in and a change of clothes we meet down in the bar, with Paul turning up just as we are about to go into the restaurant. Once fed we stroll down the road to the 1314 Inn. Outside it claims to serve Real Ale; inside it most definitely doesn't. On our way back to the hotel we divert to the Battle of Bannockburn Memorial; the result of that battle can best be described as Scotland 1, England 0.

Statue of Robert the Bruce at the Bannockburn Memorial.

6 Men, 6 Triumphs, 6 Days, 1,600 Miles

Sunday 10th June: Breakfast at 8am and on the road at 9.15am, thankfully yesterday's rain has gone. Whereas Saturday was all about getting to Scotland as quickly as possible today is really where the holiday starts. North on the M9 and A9 to Perth for a fuel stop. Still on the A9 (watch out for all those average speed cameras), with the scenery starting to change. Into the Cairngorms and the first unscheduled stop of the day at a lay-by near Dalwhinnie. Is it because someone has an unforgiving saddle or is it to look at patches of snow on the hills I wonder? A train heads south on the adjacent railway line and I'm able to tell everyone that it is the one service of the day from Inverness to Kings Cross.

The second stop comes just a few miles up the road, for teas/coffees/snacks at the Rahlia cafe near Newtonmore. The next leg of the journey takes us to Inverness. Though we don't stop there it is a significant point in the journey as it marks the official start of the North Coast 500 route – a circumnavigation of the far north of Scotland, which is the whole reason for the trip. The Kessock Bridge takes us over the Moray Firth and up to Tore services for fuel. Well, when I say services it's really just the village shop with a few pumps.

More bridges over the Cromarty and Dornoch Firths, and over the River Fleet. Time for another unplanned stop in a lay-by just south of Golspie; not my choice but by coincidence it's just where there happens to be a road sign that I was looking for (sad isn't it!). Into Sutherland, and through Helmsdale. High up on the cliffs at this point with a steep descent almost down to sea level to cross the Ord Burn on a sharp hairpin then back up to the heights again. A distinct change of scenery here gives to a definite feeling of being far far away.

We've been on the A9 since Perth but we leave it at Latheron, taking the A99 through Caithness via Wick to John O'Groats. Parked up, we get the obligatory group photo at the signpost.

While the other four pay a visit to the tea shack, Paul and I ride a couple of miles east to Duncansby Head for a stroll across the cliffs to look at the sea stacks. When I was here two years ago they were buried in thick fog so I'm really pleased to get a clear view of them today.



Back to John O'Groats to rejoin the rest, we continue west for a few miles and then turn off for 5 miles of mostly single-track roads to Dunnet Head. The RSPB have an information point here in the form of a wooden shed; must get windy as it's tied down by ropes. From here we can see across the Pentland Firth to the Orkney Islands.

Returning to the main road it's just a few miles to our destination for the day: The Royal Hotel in Thurso. Mileage for the day is 298. Check in and get something to eat. Norman and Steve stay at the hotel while the rest of us stroll down the road to the Comm Bar for a couple of beers – and yes it does have real ale.

6 Men, 6 Triumphs, 6 Days, 1,600 Miles

Monday 11th June: Getting into a routine now, down to breakfast by 8am then on the road just after 9. West out of Thurso, past the decommissioned Dounreay nuclear reactor and along the north coast with occasional views of the Atlantic to our right. Nice and sunny and warm, certainly beats being in the office on a Monday morning! Several other groups of bikes on the road, some like us going anti-clockwise and some going clockwise. A stop at Bettyhill for tea and then onto Tongue where I've made a special request to stop to look at the bridge, though when we get there I tell everyone to carry on as it's not the bridge I was expecting (doh!).

The next leg is quite stunning, a mix of remote moorlands, lochs and sea views; difficult to concentrate on the roads and on the views. We pull over at Ceannabeinne to look out over the beach. There's a zipwire here between two of the cliffs, only £12 so Paul decides to have a go. We have a fuel stop at Durness (unmanned so debit or credit card required) and this marks another significant waypoint. Since John O'Groat's we have been heading west along the north coast. We are now heading south, along the west coast. Another wilderness stretch brings us to Scourie. Pulling into a pub for refreshments; the steep slope of the car park catches Norman out and he drops his bike. Another group of bikers there rush over to help him up. A scuffed pannier the only visible damage.

Suitably refreshed we go south again and at Kylesku we find it – there's the bridge I've been looking for, only 60 miles from where I thought it was! What's so special? Well, it's only a simple reinforced concrete structure but it is built on a graceful arc over the narrows between Loch Gleann Dubh and Loch a' Chairn Bhain. As the bridge itself is interesting and as the whole area is quite stunning, the rest of them forgive me for misleading them as to its location.

A couple of miles on from Kylesku we leave the main road to take in a single-track loop over the hills and down to the coast via Clashnessie, with a couple of stops for photos of glorious beaches and amazing mountains. Some of the best scenery of the trip so far, but I think I can speak for everybody when I say that it was a relief to arrive at Ullapool. Only 169 miles but as our average speed was a lot lower than on the last two days it involved long hours in the saddle.



Sulven Mountain

The Argyll Hotel is our base for the evening. Previously we've had three twin rooms but here we could only get one twin for Norman and Paul, and one four-berth for the rest of us. First time I've slept in a bunk bed for about 40 years. Instead of a meal in the hotel we stroll down to the chip shop, eating our food on a picnic bench overlooking Loch Broom. Back at the hotel we get a pint and sit outside but an encounter with the midges eventually sends us in.

6 Men, 6 Triumphs, 6 Days, 1,600 Miles

Tuesday 12th June: No breakfast at the hotel today so on the road earlier than normal, intending to eat somewhere en route. It's wet so we start off in waterproofs. At the south end of Loch Broom our route takes us off the main road to Inverness through another loop across the hills and round the coast, heading towards Gairloch. A group that some of us know stayed there last night and are heading our way – we should pass each other but don't know where. Just near Drunchork as it happens; we get to wave at each other but some confusion as to whether to stop and chat. They pull over at the next lay-by whilst we carried on to a nearby cafe so no meet & greet. Had we have been 5 minutes earlier we'd have already been in the cafe when they rode past so wouldn't have seen them at all.

Through Gairloch, down to Loch Maree for a brief stop and then to the village of Kinlochewe. The rain has been left behind and the sun has come out again. Up to this point Norman has been the run leader but I take over for the next stretch as I've done part of it before. More spectacular scenery on a mostly single-track road to Shieldaig. A parting of the ways here; Norman and Steve head off on their own with the other four heading towards Applecross. It's 25 miles away on what is called the Coast Route but the first 20 of those are over more hills, a lovely ride but very twisty and needing a lot of concentration. Not helped by me coming face to face with a lorry on a blind summit with neither of us wanting to leave the tarmac. With the lorry edging past we come into contact and all it's a good job the Tiger has metal panniers instead of plastic ones.

I am getting a little bit worried as there are lots of brand new "Diverted Traffic" signs and the only possible reason for those is that the road we want to take out of Applecross is closed, meaning a 25 mile ride back. We stop at Applecross for 30 minutes and find a blackboard notice telling us that the road closure doesn't start until 6pm. Phew.

Now to tackle the reason for our trip this way: the Bealach Na Ba pass, which rises from sea level to 2,053 feet and back down again. Still in the lead I take this at a slower pace than the rest would have wished, wanting to keep the group all together at the passing places and to try to make sure that we can do the last bit to the top without having to give way to traffic coming down. A brief stop at the summit view point before the descent. The road up was good but the best is yet to come. After a few hundred yards we round a bend and the ground drops away to our left to give an absolutely amazing view. The road snakes down through a series of hairpins and then hugs the side of the valley. Henry, John and I take it in a group, while Paul hangs back to get some photos. Even though I have done this pass both ways before the view still overwhelms me.

Leaving the pass we head to Lochcarron to fill up. At this point the official NC500 route heads back to Inverness to complete the circle, but we turn off south to take a quick look at Eilean Donan Castle.



The A87 and A887 take us through Glen Shiel and Glen Moriston to Invermoriston, then along the southernmost part of Loch Ness to Fort Augustus for one final break. It's later than we would wish so it is now a case of getting to the hotel. There is no direct route so we have to head south 20 miles down the Great Glen to Spean Bridge and then 35 miles east to Newtonmore.

6 Men, 6 Triumphs, 6 Days, 1,600 Miles

That last leg was not my favourite road, possibly because I was tired and my riding was ragged (apologies to those who were following me), so it was a relief to get to the Glen Hotel. Norman and Steve were already there; while we were doing the Applecross bit they has spent some time in Kyle of Lochalsh. We didn't stray any further than the hotel in the evening and during the meal we present Norman with a glass tankard in appreciation of all the work he's done in booking hotels, route planning and leading the run. 263 hard miles today,

Wednesday 13th June: Leaving Newtonmore, we re-trace yesterday's route back to Spean Bridge. Seems I was right to be worried about that road as we come across a car stuffed into the grass bank with Police and Fire Brigade in attendance. Spean Bridge is our first stop to have a look at the Commando Memorial – great statue and a fitting tribute to those who served. From here we can just see Ben Nevis and the intention is to stop in a lay-by on the outskirts of Fort William to get a better view of it. The only trouble is that the lay-by I used two years ago is now lost to a roundabout and retail park – sorry lads.

South from Fort William alongside Loch Eil and then over the bridge across Loch Leven we come to Ballachulish for our mid-morning tea/coffee stop. Takes a long time for everybody to get ready, which is annoying as this place is full of midges (Perhaps they remember me from last time). Heading towards Glen Coe and we encounter the second accident of the day, a coming together between an artic and a left-hand drive coach. I'll bet that both were glad of the laminated windscreens, which buckled but didn't break. Wonder which one strayed over the centre line? Paul's not too impressed with Glen Coe but the rest of us like it.



I also like the next stretch over the wilderness that is Rannoch Moor. The next refreshment break is the Green Welly Stop at Tyndrum and here we don waterproofs as we can see rain ahead. The A82 takes us down the west side of Loch Lomond and at the south end we stop at Balloch to get a brief view of it – not terribly good view in the wet and overcast weather so I might have to come back another day.

And that's really the end of the adventure, if not the ride. From Balloch we navigate the jumble of roads and motorways that skirt Glasgow to get onto the M74 to Moffat. 213 miles from Newtonmore. We are booked into the Buccleuch Arms, which is a fantastic biker friendly hotel. As it's our last night most of us decide to go for the steaks, then four of us head down the road a bit to another bar for a couple of pints and whiskies.

6 Men, 6 Triumphs, 6 Days, 1,600 Miles

Thursday 14th June: Strong winds have been forecast today and boy, are they right. Today was never going to be the best day's ride, being the journey home, but this is a chore. M74 and then over the border into England on the M6 just after 10am. Keeping the speed down as we are being blown around our first stop is earlier than expected at Southwaite services. Paul carries straight on as he's heading all the way back to Cornwall in one go. And then there were 5.

As we leave the services the exit road is partially blocked by a tree that has been blown over. There was a discussion about whether we stick to the M6 and get south as quickly as possible, or head over the A66 to Scotch Corner and the A1. We decide on the latter, hoping that the wind won't be so bad on the East side of the Pennines. Nope, still getting blown around. Whetherby services is our lunch stop.

And then there were 4. At Leeds most of us join the M1 but Henry decides to stick to the A1. Though still a bit windy it's nowhere near so bad as it was, which is a bit of relief. Just that this is so boring that we make one more stop at Tibshelf service. Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire. And then there were 3 as Norman cuts off at Lutterworth to head for Gretton. And then there were 2; my turn next as I leave the motorway at Crick to do the last few miles back to Northampton on the A428, with Steve and John staying on until Junction 16.

290 miles on my clock for the day with total mileage for the six days coming in at 1,595. A great time with a great bunch of people. I'll leave you with some puzzles...

Who ordered Fish & Chips but didn't eat them? Who repeatedly forgot to cancel their indicators? Who kept leaving their glasses behind at breakfast? Who was generally the first to want a break to ease the saddle sores? Who kept disappearing off for their own adventures? Who was generally the last to mount up after each stop? Who set off the fire alarm, causing a partial evacuation of the hotel? What are the missing letter in an Audi TT badge?

Sarge.



The northern-most point in mainland Britain? Been there, Dunnet!

2018 Branch Concours Results

	Classic Class	Hinckley Class
1 st	Kev Hedges – T160 Trident	Steve Wickes – Speed Triple
2 nd	Steve Rattley – T120 Bonneville	Ralph Love – Thruxton S
3 rd	John Caullay – T140 Bonneville	Paul Humphries – Trident 900

