



# The Hoggit





Magazine of the Oxford HOG Chapter





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Since writing my last editor's piece, I have enjoyed taking part in a prom escort ride and the display of members Harley's at Brize Norton's officer's ball with the chapter. One of the officer's wives was delighted to sit on my bike.

Chris and I rode the scenic route to Cassington Bike night with Kev Harris and Stu and Lyn Bennett. It was a scorcher! So pleased I changed into my shorts and sandals when we arrived. Thankfully by the following Monday the weather had cooled a little for Ludgershall bike night, making for a more comfortable ride and a pleasant evening looking at the bikes.

Ryan Young (fastsnapsphotography) captured some fantastic shots of all the bikers on arrival. When browsing online to order found out that Chris was followed in by Richard Owen. What a coincidence!

Hope everyone is out enjoying the rideouts and events too.



#### What's in this edition?

Bridey's Director's piece follows my editorial and she has also shared the Magical Mystery Tour to Northern Ireland; then there's the presentation of rockers and rideout pins at July chapter night; Paul welcomes our new members; after that, Dave's article about planning the Croatia trip complimented by Ruth's piece "from where I'm sitting"; next Head Road Captain Stew shares his experience of Greenham Common; following on from that is Pam's Ladies of Harley ride to The Baton; Frank reminisces about his time at Brize Norton and finally, Davide shares his experience of his first Dawn to Dusk ride and breakfast at the Waterfront Café.

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition and to Dave O'Dell for the use of his photographs.

The deadline for the next edition will be 30th September. Please remember to send articles in Word format and your photographs as separate jpeg attachments.

Enjoy, and Ride Safe! Anne



## THE ROADS DO NOT DISAPPOINT

I can't believe this time last year we were enjoying the European roads and soaking up the sun and partying with many a HOG chapter. This summer has definitely had a very different vibe but riding is riding and there are always plenty of scenic roads to be found closer to home.

Although I haven't covered as many miles this summer it has still been as exhilarating as always and the feeling of riding never changes whether I'm going half an hour down the road to meet a friend for coffee or spending the day out riding with the chapter I love the roads and they never disappoint. So far this year there's been great variety with the chapter rides and a new ride this year for me for the Thames Valley Air Ambulance which reminded me how disciplined a group of riders we are out and about!

Luckily, I've had 2 opportunities for riding slightly further afield this summer with the chapter and the roads and the company did also not disappoint. When the sun shines the Welsh landscape is stunning and lovely to ride through the Eden Valley, out to the coast and over to Eyri and through the passes. I'm lucky enough to have been over to Northern Ireland on a number of occasions so it was special to share some of these places and for me to see some new ones as well.

Let's hope the sun's around for a little longer to make the most of the summer and all the chapter events that we still have planned, and who knows maybe some spontaneous ones too.

As ever ride safe and have fun

Bridey x

### Pleeease feed me!

Can you think of a member that deserves a fine? Please let me know as Fines Mouse is hungry.

Mmmm, I seem to remember someone leading us to Brize Norton and calling it Upper Heyford! Does that count?



#### WE CHAPTER UK CHAPTER



## Magical Mystery Tour of Northern Ireland



Long anticipated and delayed even further thanks to Irish ferries finally we arrived in Dublin and so had the rain so a soggy start to the trip but wet weather gear on we began the first leg of our trip and off we went riding through Carlingford and Newry to Rostrevor. Despite the weather Mac was not deterred from a windy mountain road and an interesting choice of a turn that kept us all on our toes.

A little behind schedule we found Kim and Bob at the bar and sat down to a good evening meal. The Guinness was flowing and the music from the bar filtering through when a bearded fellow with a resemblance to Mac appeared to join our merry band and a few hours later in a change of bar the stories were flowing especially of the pub we sadly didn't have time to stop at... PJ O Hare's and the legendary leprechaun hunts. More Guinness flowed and a song or two got sang and when bedtime came around we were all in good spirits and anticipating what tomorrow would bring.



Unfortunately, what the morning brought was more rain so a damp departure, but after a refuelling (coffee and cake) stop the weather eased as we headed north toward Enniskillen along the Lower Lough Erne and the river Foyle to our abode for the evening and after decanting luggage to our rooms (a long walk for some) it was into the bar to plan the night ahead. The bar and menu were inviting so after some hot food taxis were called and into Derry we went. A reduced tour of the Derry murals and the Derry walls we followed our driver's recommendation to head to Waterloo St where Irish music could be heard coming from every bar and headed down hill to Peadar O'Donnells where, you guessed it, more Guinness and from a safe distance taking advantage of the mild evening we sat and drank and enjoyed the atmosphere.

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Day 3 was already upon us and bellies full we started our journey, in the sunshine, to the Giants Causeway and a few hours of walking, bussing and enjoying the lovely coastal weather and the footsteps of giants Finn McCool and Benandonner. Taking full advantage of the glorious sunshine onto the Causeway Coastal route, we went with fantastic views out across the sea to Rathlin Island and Scotland beyond as we headed around the Antrim coast into Belfast. On arrival in the city Mac led us around some of the notable places including the Falls and Shanklin roads and the Peace line where we stopped for a photo and quick discussion of some of the history surrounding their significance. Later that evening heading off on foot into the city to frequent some of the more well know watering holes a drink or two were had firstly in The Crown and then Kelly's Cellars before a slap-up meal at The Ivy. Whilst most then headed to bed I wished someone had taken the spare key to the room, so I hadn't lay awake waiting for the late-night drinking to cease.

Sadly, the end of the trip was in sight but what a final day heading south along the Mourne coastal route, over on the ferry to head towards Newcastle and into the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a lovely stop in Silent Valley at the reservoir. Beautiful roads with changeable scenic views and fun riding. And as Dublin Harley-Davidson was open we popped in there to depart with a good few pennies to have a memento or 2 so it was quite late by the time was eventually checked in at our hotel and headed out for some food. Before we knew it morning descended; but not before all drinks vouchers had been exchanged for more Guinness in the hotel bar, and we were once again on a ferry and homeward bound.

Such a memorable week and all I can say is bring on Part 2... come along if you can handle the craic. Thanks Mac... such fun!





The Oxford Rugby Club, Tuesday 8th July, and another fantastic turnout. It was fine for a change, so it was good to see lots of bikes out making the most of the good weather.

Congratulations to Graham and Hilary who were presented with their 10 year Rockers by Bridey; also to Geoffers for his 40 ride out pin and to Jane for her 10 ride out pin.





## A warm welcome to our New Members

I trust that all of the members who have recently joined our chapter have received a warm welcome and are enjoying the many rideouts that are on the calendar. Thank you to Richard Owen who has written a short piece to introduce himself.

Paul

Hello my name is Richard,

I recently joined Oxford Harley Chapter just before the untimely closure of the Oxford dealership. I am very excited to become a member.

I am new to the country, arriving from America one year ago. I got off to a slow start due to shipping damages, repairs, MOT issues, bad battery and my son's Saturday basketball schedule.

This is my 3rd Harley since my sport bike days; I may have found my comfort zone with my 2019 Road Glide. I think the only accessory I am missing is a heated seat, lol.

I am married with 3 kids. My 2 adult daughters live in the U.S. My wife and 12 year old son are with me here in Croughton. If you're ever near, give a buzz. I'm sure we can find a pub to share a pint.



# Croatia Hog Rally Preparations The View From The Front

(How it was planned, or not as the case may be)

So, I have been asked to write a little something about how I put together our little trip to the Hog Rally in Medulin Croatia, with the strict instructions not to put anyone off who wants to plan a similar adventure.

The first thing I did was speak to people who have organised these kinds of trips before asking for their thoughts and experiences, the general consensus was that I was very brave possibly borderline mad, so what do you do when you are told that? You put it out to the Chapter members to see if anyone would be interested of course. In my head I was expecting a response from about four of five people.

To my surprise we ended up with seventeen brave souls with a total of thirteen bikes, which I thought was amazing, and was no doubt down to the success of the previous European tour led by Clive, then I thought bugger! What have I let myself in for?

I must be mad cos I sure ain't brave.

So now we have the runners and riders, what next?

Well next I started working on a rough route so we can get a start date for the trip, that way everyone knows how long its going to take in case they need to take time off work etc.

So going on to Google maps, Calais to Medulin with it set avoiding motorways and tolls (I don't like motorways) which off the top of my head was around 27hrs, total riding time. I was looking at an average of around five hours a day, so five days ride down and then the same back, the rally was over three days but I decided to make our stay in Medulin four nights and return on the Monday, giving us an extra day for rest or more time to explore before we returned.

With that all locked in it gave me two weeks in total for the trip, now I had that the priority was to get the accommodation booked for Medulin as it was going to be busy

I used Booking.com for all hotels on this trip as its really easy to use and proved successful on the European trip last year. My criteria for the hotels were that they could accommodate the whole group, had parking, breakfast and evening meal plus somewhere of interest where possible, all of that squeezed into a reasonable price.

With that all, its time to open a WhatsApp group, which is again a handy tool for communicating to everyone and also a place for a lot of tips and hints and let's not forget the silly chatter.



This is where the hard work begins, well it's not really hard if I'm honest, it just takes a bit of time. I had already researched some of the best roads in the countries we are travelling through so I had a good idea of where I wanted to go.

So, me and my little mate the Google man on street view went looking, we looked and looked and looked some more, so much so that when we rode the route in places it felt like I had been here before.

Once the routes were locked in, I created a gpx file so each person had a route for each day, that way if the group was split, they had the means to get to the next hotel.

The daily rides themselves ranged from 3.5hrs to just over 5hrs, I did tend to put the shorter days rides in the middle to give a little respite, for example the day we stopped on Lake Constance it was only a 3.5hr ride, we got to the hotel nice and early, some went swimming on arrival, the rest relaxed or it could be called went to the bar!

Riding wise I used the Buddy system, the same system some of the tour operators use, which is a simple way of riding, plus it takes some of the pressure off the lead rider.

The advice I would give to anyone wanting to do this is go for it, you will be tested (sometimes daily) just stay calm and relaxed, chat with a few on the ride to get a perspective on how it's going, don't be afraid to change things if you need to and most importantly be strong when you have to.

Would I do it again? Definitely, I loved every minute, from the planning to the ride itself.

If you talk to any Road Captain, they will tell you there is no such thing as a perfect ride, and this ride was no exception, I missed turns almost on a daily basis, we had lost luggage even a lost rider but we all made it back, had such an amazing time and made so many memories.

This is all down to the all of the incredible people on the ride.

That to me is perfection.

Dave



### From where I'm Sitting

Having spent the past year alone in the living room whilst David sat in the dining room planning the trip was all worth it. The added bonus was I had total control of the TV remote.

I can only give you a small look into our trip as it would take far too long to list everything that was simply amazing, as I'm sure you could see from the many photos David and others posted. As a pillion I got the chance to take in all the wonderful sights. From mountains to lakes to picturesque villages. Passing through the National Park in France where there was no one to be seen, villages deserted it all seemed a bit Marie Celeste, I wondered where did every body go? Riding along Lake Constance in Germany and staying overnight was such an opportunity to admire, and enjoy the sights.



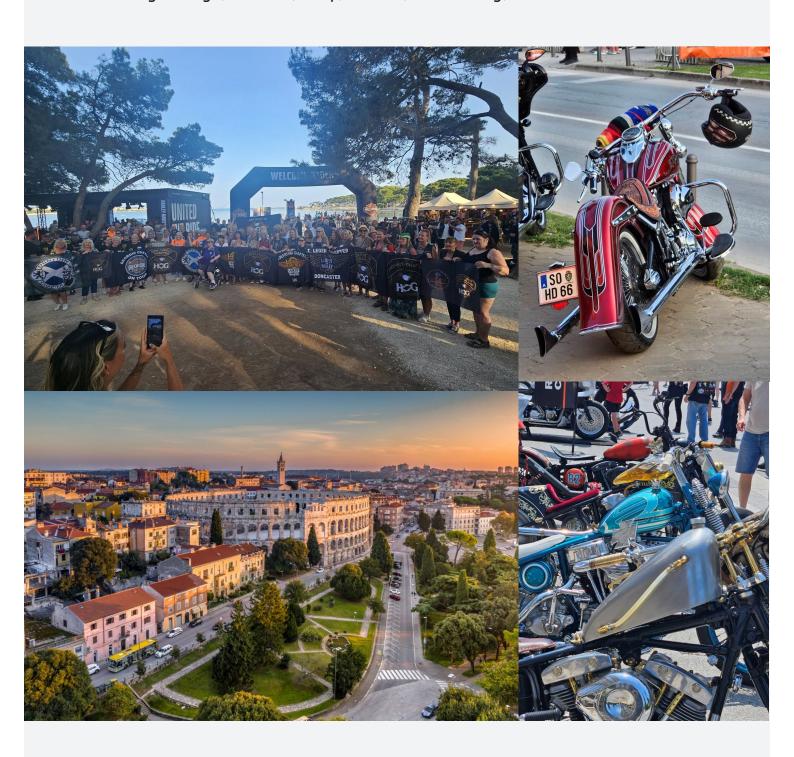
Austria never failed to deliver, the mountains are spectacular with snow still tucked away in the shadows. Planning a trip of this scale without the opportunity to recce the ride, made it all the more interesting, never totally know the roads, hoping there would be something for everyone. Each day would bring something new and interesting. From escaping luggage, landslides, a rider who went AWOL and a shot that I can only describe as jet fuel. Each hotel offered conversations from do you have air con? How big is your shower? Do you have a kettle? More importantly are we going to eat?

None the less we were all together, having a great time.

Getting to visit a few HD dealerships to collect poker chips, or buy t shirts was great, but tinged with a little sadness at having lost ours.



Arriving in Croatia was exciting, looking forward to the rally. Our home for the few days was nearby so we could walk along the seafront to the rally, stopping at a bar or two for drinks, as we needed to hydrate. It was set under the shade of trees which was a great idea as the temperatures were high. Hoping to bump into people from the dealerships we called into on last year's European trip. Rally day, David flying the flag for Oxford UK Chapter, we found a prime spot to watch the parade, a bar of course. Clive spotted David and managed to get a wave from him, flag flying high. The custom bike show was held within the shadows of the colosseum in Pula, where some very beautiful bikes were on display, I sat and admired whilst eating an ice cream. We leave Croatia travelling through, Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Luxembourg, to name a few.





The Black Forest in Germany was stunning, and just as stunning was the very large slice of Black Forest gateaux.

I loved the trip from start to finish, how could I not, it had everything from fantastic sights, great locations, great company, even the fuel/lunch stops were fun and interesting.

Ruth



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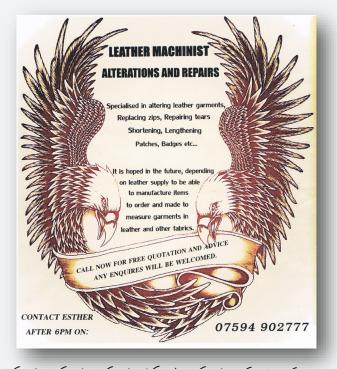
## Head Road Captain's Bith



Well, it's been a pretty active couple of months for the Chapter, with the main event of course being the hugely successful trip to Croatia for the European rally. Not forgetting the trips to Wales and Ireland too, of course. Congratulations and thanks to the organisers of these trips. As anyone whose done it will know, you're sticking your head above the parapet when you take on something like that.

One of the unintended consequences of the success of these trips however, has been that with many of our most active members away, we've been left a bit thin on the ground at home. Those of you who came to June's Chapter night (and there weren't many) will have experienced this first hand. I'd been a bit worried that low numbers might affect the rides we were able to run, especially in June, but we had enough people sign up to go ahead with all but one of the planned rides.

Back in the old days, at Chapter night, there used to be a sign-up sheet for rides. You'd write your name down if you were planning to go on one then turn up on the day. It wasn't a perfect system. If you couldn't get to chapter night but wanted to go on a ride then nobody knew you were coming and if you'd signed up but your plans changed then nobody knew you weren't turning up either. We use Facebook Events these days as our main source of ride-out information. It's not perfect but it is accessible and can be updated easily. I know of one large chapter whose ride-outs are so big they've moved to an event ticketing system but we're not in that league.



The Chapter website gives the year's calendar of rides and this is updated regularly, but the latest information on upcoming rides (and other events) is on Facebook Events. Click on the 'going' button if you plan to turn up and that way the ride leader knows to look out for you at the briefing. If you can't make it, then by all means click on 'not going' but it's not compulsory and there's no need to tell us why in the comments (unless it's embarrassing of course). If you click on 'maybe' that's fine but please, if you can, update your status when you know what you're doing, again so that the ride leader knows on the day.



One ride I was pleased to finally go on was Kev Elding's to Greenham Common Control Tower tea rooms. He'd tried to run it twice the previous year but both times was beaten by rain of almost biblical proportions. This time, the forecast was mixed but hopeful, so it was a case of third time lucky.

We met up at Tesco's car park, Abingdon and Kev took us on a ride over the Downs to Pewsey before working our way back past Choppers to Hungerford and Newbury then on to Greenham Common. I think it stands a good chance of winning the prize for the most indirect route to a destination this year (beating my own ride to the Atwell Wilson museum the previous month).

I'd never been to Greenham Common before. Of course everybody remembers it from the peace camp back in the 80s and the nuclear protests but the base is all gone now and the common has been returned to nature. Apparently a lot of the old runway was broken up and used as hardcore for the A34 improvements and the control tower is one of the few remaining reminders now of what used to be there.

It was getting pretty warm when we arrived at the Control Tower and it was good to find Trevor and Frank (J) waiting for us there. We ordered from the cafe then sat outside in the sun watching the storm clouds roll in. Kev's luck had lasted just long enough to get us to our destination and it wasn't long before everyone was huddled inside as the rain lashed it down outside. When the clouds passed we parted and all made a dash for home. I made it as far as Newbury before the rain started to come down by the bucket-load again. I pulled over and stood under a tree as I fought to get my over-trousers on. A young couple walked past and as they did the girl said "Nice bike!". I thanked her, but at that moment I'd have gladly swapped it for a nice dry car.



Soon it will be time for the Jake Spicer Toy Run again (Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September by the way, you can find it on the Chapter's Facebook Events).

With the closure of the Oxford dealership we've needed to find a new starting point for the ride this year and it's not been as easy to come up with somewhere as you might think. The criteria have been, it's got to be big enough for up to a hundred bikes to park safely, folk need be able to at least get a cup of tea there and finally (and possibly most importantly) there needs to be a toilet.

I'm please to say that we've now found somewhere, the H-café in Berinsfield. We still need to figure out how to marshal it but we've recce'd a route and it seems reasonably straightforward. Most chapter members will have been to previous Toy Run's but if you're a newer member and you haven't then its an event that's well worth supporting and a bit of fun too. Hope to see you there.

Steru







Mostly my world has been taken up with our puppy now 5 months old and a little terror, but I have managed to squeeze in a couple of rides including the Welsh weekender.

First time I've been and a thoroughly great weekend. Lots of lovely rides on fantastic Welsh roads and very few potholes and great scenery. A splattering of birthday celebrations for Bridey and a great curry to finish. A few celebratory drinks had by all. Of course nothing too radical and a super ride back led by Paul. The weather was outstanding and I won't say too hot as so good to get such a long spell of good riding weather. Greg stayed at home and looked after the puppy as his bike was off the road.



We had a lovely holiday in north Devon. Freki discovered the beach and the sea for the first time. I think digging huge holes in the sand were deffo a favourite. This was followed by a first camping trip and he soon got into the stride of it. We did experience I think the only rain we've had all summer!

I led a LOH ride out to the Baton at Upper Heyford accompanied by the 'honorary ladettes' just this weekend. It was substantially cooler but really nice bike riding weather once again. Definitely off with the mesh and on with the leather though. Thanks to Micheal for the suggestion and to Vince for tailing. A nice ride through lots of pretty Oxfordshire villages.

I'm meeting up with Loh ladies from Rolling Hills and Great Weston chapter next week. I shall update anything of interest in the next Hoggit.

Pam





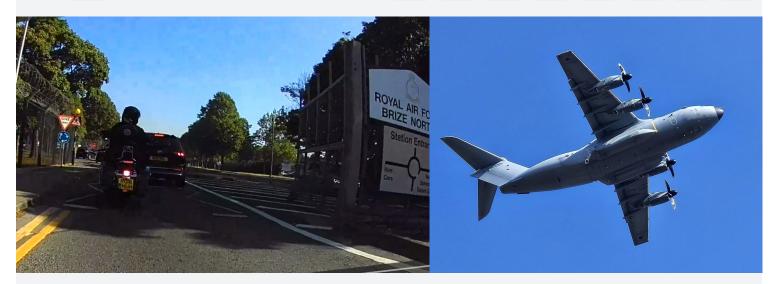
### RAF BRIZE NORTON OFFICER'S BALL



One of the best periods of my working life was between 1987, and 1994. During these years I worked for a company called J.V. Strong and Co, who had the grounds maintenance contract for RAF Brize-Norton. I had worked for Strong's since 1983, having been head grounds man at Wiltshire Police Headquarters prior to that, and being a qualified groundsman, I was asked if I would take on the job of head grounds man at Brize in March 1987. Having knowledge of the base through spending short periods there, and having never been responsible for others, I thought this a rather daunting prospect. Luckily I knew the three men, and hey, there's aeroplanes to see, so I took the job.

My duties on the base were obviously looking after all the outdoor sports facilities, plus the prestige areas, headquarters lawns/gardens, and the CO's garden, with the latter being the perfect place to watch aircraft landing and taking off, as it was just a short distance from the runway. Over the years I became very friendly with the Ped Flight, the fire section, staff in the tower, and the parachute school, all these folk helped me in my work, but they also help feed my love of aircraft, including flying in them. Sadly since I was a civilian on the base, I wasn't allowed to take a camera to work with me, and consequently there are no photos except the one of me in the back of a Hercules, with the RAF Falcons display team at 12500 feet, (stood on the ramp, looking down), and watching them free fall below me.





So fast forward 30 or so years, and the chapter had a request for putting on a display of Harley Davidson's at an American themed officers mess summer ball, WOW!!!, a chance to not only visit the base, but spend a couple of hours at the officers mess as well. I had often thought it would be good to go back, and here was my chance.

The 25th of July came around, and I took the ride to the Kingsley Café at Eynsham, where the rest of the group were waiting, and off we rode along the A40 to Brize-Norton. Upon arrival we were escorted to the officer's mess, where we arranged our bikes either side of the mess entrance. After a brief pep talk from our illustrious leader, we were at liberty to mingle with mess staff, officers and their ladies, and for me reminisce with anyone who would listen, and of course watch the A400 Atlas, and the Voyager that each did a fly-past, and landed. We were at the front of the queue for the buffet, (and very nice it was too), and an ice cream van provided pudding.





After we had fed our inner selves, we returned to chatting until around just after 20.00 when we were escorted to the main gate to make our way home. I think everyone enjoyed the event, but for me it was a very nostalgic evening, seeing the sports field that I spent so much time looking after. I was surprised that after 30 years the base is largely the same as I remember it, except for a few new buildings, and a few that have gone. The big shock for me was that the Gateway sports field has been stripped of turf, and they are building a new hotel on it.

Lastly, I would like to thank Bridey for organising an evening I will remember for a long time.

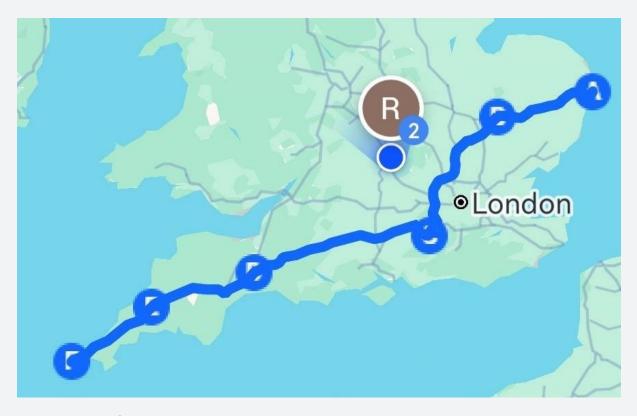
Frank



What a crazy adventure, this weekend!

With two friends, Vince and Mark, from the HOG Oxford Chapter. The three of us embarked on the Dusk to Dawn Harley-Davidson challenge ride on Saturday 14th June: from Ness Point in Lowestoft: most eastern point of Great Britain, leaving at sunrise, to Land's End in Cornwall the most western point of England, to reach before sunset, with 4 stop points along the way.

Great fun, and almost 1000 miles in 52 hours. Mad or what?





We met at Ness Point as the sun was rinsing at 4.29 a.m. on Saturday morning: having travelled up with Vince a steady 170/180 miles to Lowestoft the day before.

Way point 1 was the Harley Davidson. Dealership at Newmarket. From Newmarket we rode to Guildford Harley Davidson, where we received a warm welcome. Our next stop was Brightside Roadside Dining at Honition. From there we rode to waypoint four which was at the Jamaica Inn, Bolventor. Finally, we arrived at our destination; Lands End.

What a great experience the Dawn to Dusk challenge was. I was knackered, but totally content. Thank you to Vince and Mark for their fantastic company and the unique riding adventure we had.



It was a fantastic experience, and if you haven't managed to do it yet..... Put Saturday 20th June 2026 in your Calendar as it could be the year for you!!

#### Davide











#### **Breakfast Club**

An intimate affair of a breakfast at Waterfront Benson this morning. Mind you, that was not surprising as I turned up one hour late. So I was just there with these great bunch of gents mainly for a chat! The place is generally much bigger, and quite nicely done. I had a bacon and egg roll which I ate after the others had gone, not bad, although not too cheap (£7.50). But I'll definitely be back again.

Davide



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