

## Up North, July/Aug 2005

### Budge Burridge

Who: Budge & Di, Godfrey & Gill, John Jacobs, Mike Gomm & Andy Downs

When: 31st July – 7th August 2005

Where: The borders, Scotland & North Yorkshire

Why: Why not?

Total mileage: 1598 (give or take a few yards – and NO U-turns)

**Sunday 31st July.** Our departure morning dawned a little chilly but got decidedly better as the day progressed. JJ, Andy and Di & I met up at BEW at 0730, (Godfrey, Gill and Mike had travelled up on the Saturday taking in a Blues festival in Derby on the way). Following the usual greetings and wondering why we were up at this unearthly hour on a Sunday morning we set off on the first leg of our journey up North.

'Good progress' was made to our first break at the Trucker breakfast stop. Once the 'Low' calorie breakfast had been despatched it was off in an ever northerly direction to our stop on the A6. Bowness & Windermere was our next port of call for yet more coffee and ice-cream.

The Kirkistone pass now beckoned; would have been rude not to, wouldn't it? The temperature was warming up nicely and you could see for miles. Just a well really as it was absolutely packed with every other kind of 'four wheeled' vehicle you could think of. So we had plenty of time to take in the scenery.

We arrived at the Graham Arms in Longtown at around 1700, and after a 'quick' wash and brush up it was down to the bar for some welcome refreshment, (no sign of the others though so we were not able to help Godfrey celebrate his birthday, turns out they had gone to another Blues bash and didn't get back until we had all turned in). Our evening meal would have made 'Desperate Dan' smile because by the time the 'piece' of Steak pie was put on the plate, there was just enough room for the spuds and veg – if you only had small portions of each.

**Monday 1st August.** After a hearty breakfast we set off in two groups again, (I wonder if it was something I'd said)? Our route took us north westerly on some cracking roads via Selkirk, Peebles, Blyth Bridge, Kirkdean, Carluke and on towards Stirling where JJ took 'the point' and led us into the Trossachs ('into' Graham - not by the ...) to the David Marshall lodge which is situated in the (since 1953) Queen Elizabeth Forest park. The forest covers approximately 40% of the area and

yet again the scenery was stunning. The lodge and nearby house once belonged to the Carnegie trust who gifted them to the forestry commission in the 1960's. In the 70's the exhibition wing was added, here at this time of year the RSPB have cameras set up to observe the

various Osprey nests that are in the area. In 2002 the area became Scotland's first National Park.

Following a 'healthy' slab of cake and some liquid refreshment

in 'Liz Macgregor's café' (well worth a visit on its own if your in the area) it was time to press on again. It appears that there was also a Citroen 2CV rally in and around the same area as there were hundreds of the things about, (you would have seen most of them as they overtook you Graham – if you had been there of course).

We finally arrived in Oban which was to be our residence for the next couple of days and after some delicate manoeuvring we got the bikes parked up. The evening

consisted of a very tasty Mexican meal washed down with one or two? splendid ales. Godfrey, Gill and Mike joined us later that evening for a 'few' night-caps which brought day two to an end.

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>.** This was the day we had decided to have off the bikes.

Just as well; the weather turned from miserable to awful. But who cares? We were on holiday! What to do? Following breakfast it had to be a trip around the Oban distillery which just

happened to be about 50 yards from the 'hotel'. We were sure that the sun would come out whilst we were being given a full tour – honest. Out of courtesy we sampled a 'wee-dram' or two to make sure that the year was a good one. This was followed by coffee and cake (there's a theme building here) in a café opposite where a discussion about Camilla's knickers ensued (you don't want to know). We each did our own thing for the rest of the day and met up in the evening for a good meal. Then on to a cellar bar to finish off. We were treated to Godfrey mastering the



*Some people embellish their CVs*

latest generation of jukeboxes. When the live entertainment showed up (over an hour late) it finished the evening nicely.

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup>.** The day started off slightly damp. Well alright it was pouring down, but as soon as we decided that it was time to leave the rain stopped. Our destination for today was the Boat of Garten, a little village just up from Aviemore.

Our route took us north to Fort William where we yet again split into two groups (I had washed – honest). Godfrey, Gill, Mike and Andy continued north long Loch Ness and beyond whilst JJ, Di & I headed on through Spean Bridge to eventually pick up yet another great 'B' to Dalwhinnie (yeah you guessed it – another distillery).

No drinks this time though as we still had some mileage to do. When we finally arrived at the Granlea Guest House, our hosts, Jackie & Glen were there to meet us. As it turns out the others had only just arrived also, so once the bikes had been unpacked we were shown our rooms. After a quick drink and a chat it was back on the road again for a quick – no that should read VERY quick, blast around the area which Jackie obviously knew very well.

Godfrey even persuaded her into getting the RC30 out of the garage to give it an airing. Well it was either that or the SP1 or the newly acquired YZF R1 (perhaps you ought to get two or three Graham, you wouldn't have to change yours so often then!!). A most excellent dinner was had that evening at the Boat Hotel before we all turned in so that we could be refreshed for anything the following day would throw at us.

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>.** Once another wholesome breakfast had been despatched, it was what to do time, and today turned out to be yet another them 'n us day. Godfrey, Gill, Mike and Andy headed around the north coast (again led by Jackie, this time on the SP1). JJ, Di & I headed south to take in the absolutely brilliant road around Loch Earn. I confess there was a distillery on the way so we felt obliged to stop and have a look around. (Hmm... another theme building here).

On the way back we took in Pitlochry. Dinner was taken at an Alpine style lodge (whose name I cannot recall). The food was not as good as the previous night and they seemed only too glad when we left. Oh well their loss.

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup>.** Just a short trip today which would take us from the Boat of Garten to Blairgowrie. So after some morning sustenance (that's breakfast to you Graham) and a few more photos, we set off via Tomintoul to our mid ride stop at Braemar (just as well we did stop there as two VFR's and a FireBlade were practically on vapour by this time). Following a quick cuppa we set off and arrived at our B&B (the Ivybank Guest House – where the owners were kind enough to move their cars out of the garage so we could park the bikes up securely).

Just after lunch Di & I decided that we take a look around Glamis Castle

which is the ancestral home of the Duke of Strathmore and favourite holiday destination of the late Queen Mother. The folks in the entrance huts allowed us to stash our kit with them to save us having to carry it around, another nice touch.

We met up for the evening meal in a small bistro just down the road from the B&B, before yet again turning in for the night, which for Di & me meant

in a huge four poster bed. Ah the perks of sorting the bookings.

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>.** Due to confusion over the number of days that we were to be away, (sorry John), JJ left us at around 3am to make his way home, and from the conversation I had with him when we got back he made 'very' good time indeed.



*Budge leaves flags flying at home to fool burglars*

The journey saw us heading south, back into England, with our final destination in Hawes, Nth Yorks, but this was not until we had had a very good lunch back in Peebles where we were joined by Gill's daughter. The journey was uneventful apart from losing Mike and Andy just

outside Selkirk. We waited for them for a while, whilst Gill waved at as many strange bikers as she could, thinking that one of them might be Andy or Mike. We tried contacting them on the phone. Unable to get an answer we left messages then set off again.

We eventually got together again in Alston where we just managed to get a drink as it was around 5pm and

most places were closing. We finally arrived in Hawes at the White Hart 'hotel' (?) at around 7ish, (god that was a long day).

Then it was a quick change and back out to 'attempt' to find somewhere to eat, (I hadn't booked a table had I?). Everywhere was packed, that was until Mike spotted a café which had a reasonable looking

menu and turned out to be not too bad at all. This is more than can be said for the 'hotel'. There were no en-suite facilities, no toilet rolls in the loos, everyone from

the bar came up

the stairs to use the guest-only facilities, and to cap it all there was a lock-in. So you can imagine the noise levels were fairly high and the sleep levels fairly low.

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>.** All good things must come to an end, and the past week's 'trip up north' was no exception. Again, once breakfast had been devoured and the bikes packed, we said our farewells and headed home via a variety of routes. Di & I made a quick detour via the Wensleydale cheese factory (you know – the one of Wallace & Grommit fame) which just happens to be in Hawes, and then set off. We had a brief stop-over

at Di's mums before heading back down the A449 and home.

The highs had to be the company, the scenery and the roads (especially those north of the border) but not necessarily in that order. The company because we were all there to enjoy ourselves and have fun, (thanks everyone for making it a

great week), the scenery because of the mountains, valleys, lochs and sheer nothingness for miles. The roads because they were well surfaced and mostly very quiet or empty (and on those that weren't,

the other road users were well aware of our presence and very courteous).

Oh and I mustn't forget the fact that we didn't see any midges, (I bet if we hadn't taken all the creams – for the midges Graham – there would have been thousands of them and we would have ended up being bitten to sheds – and don't go there either...).

Would we go again? Definitely – there are still hundreds of miles 'north of the border' we haven't seen, and I think 'when' we go back we'll take a little longer and go further north. ♦



*Godfrey's late again!*