

Capital Wings

At last, after 16 long months, a real live Mole Meeting with real people and a real, welcoming pub. Fourteen friends - Yetti, Ginny, Joe, Wayne, Ingrid, Dani, Ray, Rose, Barry (Beaver 001), Colin, Steve O, Buzz, Johnny and myself - with six GoldWings met at the Woodbine Inn in Epping on 1st July 2021 to enjoy a warm summer's evening sitting outside with a drink and a meal, chatting and watching the microlight scan the M25. Ray and Rose always bring their homemade produce on the off chance that there will be some customers and very soon they had sold out of red hot stir fry sauces, chilli jams and, of course, pickled onions. They stand no nonsense and bartering is not allowed, is it Joe? I wonder when we'll meet again to have a pickle eating contest. Remember those parties?



We are open



Pickled Again

A lot of Capital and Essex de-camped up north for holidays in Scotland during June and July, leaving, it seemed, Yetti in charge of London. John and Julie, Colin and Chris, Bev, Dave, Rocky, Phil and Liz, Steve and Carol, and Johnny and myself.

Johnny planned a mystery trip for me, so every day was a surprise. We visited the Highlands, Islands and Borders, the ski resorts of Glencoe and Aviemore, and the Cairngorm and Cuillin mountains, as well as a few famous Lochs and landmarks, out of the many, en route. The Chairmans Challenge cafes were not forgotten, nor were the foodie delicacies such as the seafood, haggis (pakora anyone?), black pudding and cranachen. We clocked up almost 2,000 miles over 12 days.

Our ultimate destination was the Isle of Skye which was beautiful even in the wind and rain. While the Moles sizzled, there wasn't the slightest chance that we would get sunburn. Ardnamurchan Point used to be the furthest west that you could drive to on mainland Britain until the Skye bridge, part of the A87, was built. Now, Neist Point with its lighthouse is the most westerly. We had to visit both landmarks, or at least try to get close. Johnny walked a fair distance to the Neist lighthouse but it turned out to be a lot of effort for no satisfying photos because the light was poor.



Ardnamurchan Point



Neist Point

Steve and Carol were holidaying in their caravan and we managed to catch up with them for a chat on the quayside in Portree while they were on Skye too.



Rainy Portree

If you are visiting Portree and want to eat out in a restaurant, we recommend that you book ahead to ensure you don't starve.

Scotland is famous for its castles so we visited Dunvegan and its gardens on Skye. This is the ancient seat of the Chiefs of Clan MacLeod. The Covid effect hit us as we queued in the wind and drizzle for an hour to get in and then a warming soup or cuppa was denied us because the cafe was closed. There were some interesting items to see in the display cases, however. We found a cozy, warm cafe in Dunvegan village, the Blas cafe, and would recommend it. We arrived on Skye via the ferry from Mallaig and left three nights later via the Skye bridge and the Kyle of Lochalsh. Eilean Donan castle beckoned, famous in the James Bond film *The World Is Not Enough*. It's wasn't far away and we stopped off in the sunshine for morning coffee and to take more photos. And who should we bump into but the Trike Travellers from South Wales Region - Roy, Chris, Lynette and Ray. We remember Roy affectionately as Yamahoa when we met and rode together many years ago with Jeremy at the BAR Wing Dings in the Swiss Alps. How lovely to meet him and Chris again. They were travelling in the opposite direction, to Portree.



Dunvegan Castle



Eilean Donan Castle

Then our travels took us south, looking for Nessie and after that eastwards to meet up with family in Beamish, County Durham. On our way was another famous bridge at Queensbury - the Forth Bridge - a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a magnificent red structure. We took photos from a different viewpoint and then rode south over the new Queensferry Crossing.



Where's Nessie?



Forth Bridge

Another landmark and another photo opportunity was Antony Gormley's Angel of the North, near Gateshead, the largest sculpture in Britain at 177ft across. This wingspan dwarfed our Wing.



Wings Over Wing

Our holiday also incorporated visiting some of the Chairman's Challenge cafes and we managed to tick four off the list of 20. If you're a Wallace & Gromit fan and love cheese, then make time to visit the Wensleydale Creamery in Hawes when you go to The Penny Garth cafe. We arrived too late to see the demos of cheese making but the cheese and gift shop was a worthwhile visit.

While the Essex Moles were in Scotland, Liz celebrated her 60th birthday with a surprise piper to serenade her (if that's the right word for bagpipes). Phil and Liz also celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with a trip on The Jacobite. Harry Potter would have been chuffed to bits. We send our congratulations to both of them again.

It's great that Wing Dings are now possible after the relaxing of our Covid lockdown and Taz and Big Les both attended the Centre event at the beginning of July in Bromsgrove. Thanks to them for sending in their contributions.

Taz arrived on Thursday, in good weather, towing his 1800 solo, packed with everything except a helmet. He borrowed one to go shopping and met Big Les, Sue and Jeff. On Friday he rode to Cadbury World which is really suited for under 13s and also bought a helmet for £35. (My spies tell me it was a horse riding hat!). With rain on Saturday, Taz visited the National Motorcycle Museum with its really good collection of British bikes and then the Coventry Transport Museum with its own very impressive collection of cars and bikes including three world land speed record holders.

Meanwhile, Big Les and Graham Grub Atkins had also arrived on Thursday followed by Derek and Linda and John and Steve on Friday. After setting up, it was time for a beer or two and having a chill weekend.

All the wingers were looking forward to the England Euro 2020 game but unfortunately they had to share the TV with the rugby players - what a noisy crowd. You have to imagine the cheers when England scored and then it was more drinks and off to bed.

On Sunday they woke up to rain, so after packing up and saying goodbye, it was a very wet ride home. All-in-all a nice relaxing weekend apart from the rain. Many thanks go to the organisers. It was good to be back.

Finally, it's good to know that we'll be able to remember Adrian on our rides out. When he passed away, Sue, his partner, presented Colin with Adrian's teddy. The teddy on Adrian's top box rack was always a talking point because his eyes would light up when the brakes were applied. Now Colin has mounted and connected the teddy up to his bike, Adventure before Dementia, so please look out for teddy with the Beavers and remember the good times with Adrian.

Enjoy your own holidays and the rides out and hopefully we'll see you in Newark at the end of the month.

Miss (Helen) Whiplash



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