

RIDEOUT REPORT
Rathgall Hill Fort & Dwyer/McAllister Cottage **28th July 2012**

Dermot's Teas-made/alarm clock rang out to the dulcet tones of Tubular Bells as he woke from a deep slumber. He kicked off the burgundy silk sheet and French satin duvet cover. As he sipped the hot cup of Djaarling tea with his little pinkie sticking out from the side of the bone china cup, he raised the lace-trimmed Roman blind to peer out the bay window which overlooked the massive patio and designer bike garage. As he had surmised from the darkness of the boudoir, it was teeming rain outside. "No spin today" he muttered to himself as he scratched his buttocks and climbed back into the King-sized memory-foam bed and dozed off again. Meanwhile, Claire had already been up since 5:00am and was in the sound-proof, bomb-proof Study, still trying to balance the books since last weekend after deleting the Sean Quinn legal expenses payments.

A few miles further south in *Villa O'Shea De Balrothery*, Mick too was like a grizzly bear stirring after a long hibernation. He had slept in his bike gear and helmet to give himself a head-start for the planned spin. But just as it was in Dundalk, the skies around Balbriggan were a dark shade of grey and the rain was pelting down. Mick changed into his nightgown and matching bed-cap and went back to bed, dreaming of rows and rows and rows of apple-tarts.

Over to the West in Lucan, Andy was twitching and turning as his nightmares about being attacked by vicious cigars and cigarettes continued. Just as the smoke was about to reach his nostrils, he was awoken by the deep bass sounds of his infra-red, WiFi, 26GB, digitally monitored iAlarm clock. He was relieved to be woken as he wiped the sweat from his brow. He remotely-controlled the opening of the blinds and zoomed the 74inch TV monitor back into the ceiling. His auto-display which monitors outside temperature, precipitation and sunlight, as well as the presence of nicotine, was beeping furiously and warning of extreme weather conditions. He grabbed his iphone in a panic to check with his Leader if the spin was going ahead. After several hectic minutes and multiple text messages, he decided he didn't like getting wet and reluctantly went back to bed, keeping his eyes wide open and clinging onto his Winnie the Pooh duvet cover in case the evil Hamlet man came back to attack him again.

Meanwhile, myself and Jason - two dog-lovers (of the canine variety) - were walking our dogs on opposite sides of the city in brilliant sunshine, oblivious to the trials and tribulations of our country colleagues. It was only when Mark2 sent a text to say that it was also raining in Dublin 16, that I began to think this might turn out to be a disaster. But I made an Executive decision to go ahead and meet anyway - I hadn't heard from the others anyway and it was too late at this stage to cancel. Needless to say, it turned out to be the right decision. So the five of us - Marco, JR, Jason, Mark2 and myself - (probably the five hardiest members in the Group) met at Topaz as arranged. We decided to cut the spin short and head to Tullow for breakfast where we would decide where to go from there. JR had a massive appetite on him and led us at a mighty pace down the N81 towards Tara's Arms. We were lucky with the weather as there was only the occasional light drizzle and the roads were mainly dry.



DOUBLE PRESENTATION : Marco & Jason are now fully initiated into the CRRG and received their keyrings.

We had a fabulous breakfast in Tara's Arms. Again, I tried to bring some class to the Group and they were treated to clean cutlery wrapped in serviettes as well as beans in small ceramic bowls in nice comfortable surroundings. Marco was over the moon with his presentation and the normally soooo cool Jason managed a wry smile as he finally got his very own rare keyring.

I decided to bring the lads on an educational tour, taking in the nearby Rathgall Hill Stone fort which dates from prehistoric times and the Dwyer/McAllister Cottage dating from the 1798 rebellion. None of the lads had been to either site before and were in for a treat. Speaking of history, the Italians are a hardy race as demonstrated by the achievements of the Roman Empire. Marco is no exception and turned up in just a flimsy top and leather suit - no rain gear or warm tops for this Italian!

But we were lucky again as we reached Rathgall and the sun was shining. JR enjoyed the run up the hill and climbing on the massive dry stone defensive wall. The view from the Fort is magnificent and we took a few photos while we had a look around.



We headed on via some lovely winding, twisty roads to Shillelagh and Hackettstown. From the map, it looked like there was a shortcut to Dwyer's Cottage but it turned out to be little more than a bóthrín (that's gaelic for shitty little road!). Then we came to a crossroads with no signs anywhere!!! Where was Mark1 with his SatNav when we needed him?? Actually, it was one of the few rideouts which Mark1 hasn't been on and he was sorely missed but the ozone layer was all the better for it. Jason logged onto Google Earth and we headed on up an even worse road with grass in the middle!



I think Jason just wanted to try out his "branch bashers" on the handlebars of the Tiger but it wasn't ideal for the sports bikes. After what seemed like several miles, we eventually reached a so-called "main road" and spotted the sign for Dwyer's Cottage. We parked the bikes and JR ran up the hill to reach the cottage first. We had a good old natter there all about bikes, helmets, bike trips holidays. Then Mark2 told us all about the time he the Australian Bush and got bitten by a deadly spider. Normally the bite would be fatal to an adult, killing the person in a matter of only a of hours. But big Mark wasn't having that and as he was

and
was in
couple
fought the venom *Where the fcuk are we ???*
rushed to a Bush hospital and a witch doctor filled

him full of some local brew
while cutting open the infected wound which had by now spread to his face causing permanent disfigurement (as can be seen today). Luckily, the poison was drained in time and Mark survived but was permanently scarred. He doesn't like talking about it now.....

Jason had a quick nap, looking cool in his Foster Grants (do you think he looks a bit like George Clooney in those?). JR wanted to climb the big mountain behind the cottage but suddenly a rain



cloud appeared and we sheltered under the beautifully thatched roof of the cottage. We headed on as the rain stopped, planning to stop for a coffee in Blessington. JR led us on a tour of his old "courting ground" as we took some bumpy roads with poor surfaces and bad bends through gaps in the forests. This was real "Deliverance" territory". The heavens opened and it was pouring rain and we tried to find our way back onto the N81. We eventually reached Blessington where we had the by now customary coffee at the Wicklow West (???) pub. We held on as the rain came down again. The hardy Marco was beginning to feel the cold as his gear was probably damp by now so he put on his new CRRG polo shirt which I had brought with me in my backpack.

Jason headed off as he had to be back early while the four of us left shortly afterwards, running into some floods as we had just missed some heavy downpours. Despite getting lost a couple of times and the heavy rain on the way back, I think I can say for all 5 of us that we had a brilliant day out. As usual, the craic and banter was great and the spin down to Tullow was excellent.

So, 'til the next one, ride safely and make sure you remove your disc lock.

Alan



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