

SCOTLAND

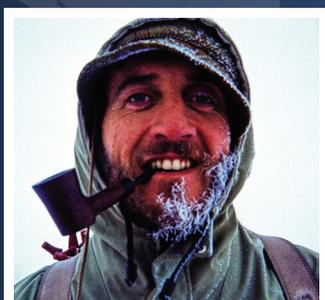
October 2016

Approaching Glen Coe from Rannoch Moor I was forced to stop singing and pull over to take a photograph. The Buachaille Etive Mor is an iconic Scottish mountain that I've climbed many times but never, in over 40 years, had I seen it in such splendour. The sharpness of the autumn light presented it in a way I'd never witnessed before.



Buachaille Etive Mor

I wouldn't normally write a blog on Scotland but this trip was worthy. Availability of accommodation dictated that I'd start by riding up through the Forest of Galloway, avoiding Glasgow by crossing the Clyde on the Gourock to Dunoon ferry. Once off the ferry I was soon into the Highlands navigating the shore of Loch Fyne to Inveraray and beyond.



Geoff Scott

The occasional patches of low mist, set against a clear blue sky added to the morning beauty of Rannoch Moor, often a foreboding place but today one of great serenity. The splendours of Glen Coe and the Caledonian Canal preceded my ride down through Glen Shiel with shimmering Lochs and 3000ft mountains for company. The memories of 30 years past came flooding back. I'd walked these hills and many others, with my lifelong friend, bagging Munro after Munro. Sadly Geoff has passed on but I could still recall our outings as if they were yesterday. I paused at the roadside, reliving those times. Wonderful memories if not a little emotional.

Given the weather Applecross was a must visit destination. By riding anti-clockwise I was rewarded first with the classic silhouette of the Island of Skye followed by the cliffs of the Bealach na Ba. Until 1975, when the coast road was built, the Bealach or Pass of the Cattle at 2,053ft was the only road into Applecross, until then the village was essentially an island in winter, serviced by sea.

The mountains of Torridon towered above me as I cruised along the single track road in the morning sun. The old winding road, heading east from Kinlochewe and up to Achnasheen has been replaced by fast sweeping tarmac, courtesy of the European Union. I was soon heading south through the eastern Cairngorms over the Lecht and the Spittal of Glenshee via Braemar.

I've explored various options but found no better way of getting past Edinburgh than crossing the Bridge and hurrying around the bye-pass. I prefer to ride down to Hawick and across to Carter Bar before entering Northumberland and riding south. Today however the forecast was for rain in the east so I headed for the sunshine of Cumbria and the Western Dales.

A cursory glance at a weather forecast a few days earlier had encouraged me to travel and I was certainly rewarded. For once there were times to stand and stare.

“A poor life this, if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare”.

William Henry Davis



Contact Gordon

Email gordon@linbeck.co.uk for a chat or advice on your next motorcycle adventure.