

SOMETIMES NOTHING SEEMS TO HAPPEN

August to January 2019

Sometimes nothing seems to happen or so it seemed to me.

THE ALPS IN AUGUST

My summer bike tour travelled east at first, into Italy via the Vosges Mountains of France and the Timmelsjoch Pass in Austria, plus many more, before heading west from the foot of the Stelvio in Bormio, through Saint Moritz and on to Andermatt.

The ride from Bormio across the Swiss Alps is a magnificent day's motorcycling that I've ridden many times but it never fails to impress, unless of course the weather is miserable.



Grimsel Pass from the Furka

By the time I'd reached Andermatt I'd crossed at least seven passes in glorious sunshine. From here I usually ride over the Furka and Grimsel to Interlaken but this time I circled back so that I could ride the Susten Pass as well.

After another two days riding, taking in the St Gothard and Nufenen before crossing both the Grand and Petit Saint Bernard Passes, I arrived in Chamonix.

I met up with Sandy again, just a few weeks after being with him on Broad Peak in Pakistan. He was back guiding but still appeared troubled by Rick's epic on the mountain. Soon after I know he came to terms with it and is his old self again.

Read more overleaf...



Contact Gordon

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TRYFAN IN SEPTEMBER

It was 50 years ago, at Easter 1968, that I first climbed the North Ridge of Tryfan. I'd returned frequently over the years and lost count of how many times I've summited. I marked the 50 year anniversary on a pleasant late summer's day and recalled that moment.



Standing on the summit, amongst a jumble of rocks I felt immense satisfaction, having achieved something that I didn't at first think possible. I'd just climbed the North Ridge of Tryfan with my fellow Scouts and stood proudly in front of Adam and Eve, the two rock sentinels adorning the summit, for a group photograph.



Skip, our Scout leader, was resplendent in his breeches and red socks. He wore the finest pair of mountaineering boots and a bright blue anorak, reflecting the Alpinist in him. Far below were the dark blue waters of Llyn Dgwen and the shore road from where we'd started. Halfway up the mountainside was our collection of tiny orange tents on the edge of "Lake Australia". That's where we were heading next.



It wasn't obvious to me at the time but that day on Tryfan had a lot of parallels to how I would approach other challenges in my life. There's no way my Scout Leader would have known that it was to become a defining moment, used as a comparison to future challenges and not just mountaineering.

BERNESE ALPS IN OCTOBER

I was determined not to lose my fitness after returning from Pakistan, so I ventured out to the Bernese Alps for a week's hiking in and around Grindelwald. One walk took us up to the Waldspitz Hotel at 1,903 metres. Later I wrote...

The crisp autumn leaves crunched below our feet as we slowly but relentlessly made progress up the steep path to Waldspitz. It was here that the highest hotel in the Alps, at the time, was built in 1850, well before cable cars and trains were constructed. It sits halfway between Grindelwald and the summit of the Faulhorn, popular with 19th century adventurers such as Lord Byron.



From Waldspitz we traversed diagonally across the mountainside in bright sunlight and up on to the summit of First, taking in the newly constructed "Skywalk" as we did. A glorious day's walk completed in just a morning. I summited the Faulhorn on my last day. The weather was just too good to waste.

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Atlas Mountains and Jebel Toubkal. Summited in 1995.

Built by the British in 1908 the railway originally transported government officials and their families up to Ooty during the hot summer months. Now it carried tourists and steam train enthusiasts.

I completed my time in Kerala attending local cookery classes, visiting wildlife parks, that didn't have any wildlife and taking a houseboat slowly round the back waters. An absolutely sublime experience!

All the trips were bathed in sunshine and not once did I meet a character worthy of mention. Sometimes nothing seems to happen.

MOROCCO IN NOVEMBER

Is it worth a mention? I think not, in fact I didn't think any of these trips were worth a mention but others are of a different opinion.

KERALA & TAMIL NADU IN JANUARY 2019

This was my third visit to Kerala but I never tire of riding the Southern Ghats on a local Royal Enfield. I'd decided to stay for a month this time and after eight days on the bike I took refuge in a beach resort for a few days, before setting off on the Nilgiri Narrow Gauge Railway.



Nilgiri Railway



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