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After breakfast on Saturday we headed south on the hilly road to Dippen and Kildonan Bay. A steady drizzle ensured our elevenses were taken inside the Kildonan Hotel and not outside as planned; coffee and biscuits for fifteen, not a bad order! The staff were friendly and the lounge olde worldly with a real feel of the highlands. The hotel though is being refurbished and we were invited to explore. It will become one of the most elegant hotels in Scotland next year, but whether we would still be allowed in with our wet gear would be doubtful. Within the hour the rain had ceased and skies began to clear on the far side of the village. We went straight ahead on a narrow grass track along the shore towards Bennan Head. It was tricky going with even Beryl and Gerry Shaw dismounting as we pushed the bikes for about a mile to a secluded bay full of seals. A great spot for lunch.

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We left Whiting Bay in rain and wind the following morning en route to Blackwaterfoot for lunch; a fifteen mile ride. Turning north a few miles beyond Slidderey into a fearsome headwind, but then the rain had stopped the sun was out and the views of Kintyre were superb. Straggled out along the coast road with Roger Turner as the Lantern Rouge (a position most of us held at some time), we battled the wind and one by one swooped into Drumadoon Bay and the village of Blackwaterfoot, meeting up at the Shiskin Golf Club Restaurant for tea and toast. They made us very welcome and I was even able to watch a few overs of the England v India Test Match in their comfy lounge.

Half an hour later we cycled into the wind as far as Machrie for lunch. Colin, Uschi, Gerry, Graham Foster and others walked from here to the famous standing stones on Machrie Moor (2 miles return). Mick and Gill had their lunch by the sea. The rest of us stayed in a field with the bikes and witnessed an amazing low level rainbow against a backcloth of the Arran Hills (Bein Bharien). The afternoon run to Pirnmill was in lovely sunshine and a more gentle wind. We stopped here for afternoon tea and ice cream, whilst Gerry and Uschi also indulged in enormous meringues. Most of us were inside the café watching this spectacle when an anxious looking Gill opened the front door. "There's a bad storm coming, Gordon" she said. "We're pushing on to Lochranza before we get wet through." "It's only 6 miles " I exclaimed, "you'll be there in half an hour; there is no need to rush."

We foolishly, despite Gill's warning, settled back in our seats enjoying the delights of the ample teapots and the warm ambience of the crowded room. We eventually emerged just as the first spots of rain started to fall and rumbles of thunder echoed across the sea. The outline of Kintyre had gone and in its place was the darkest most threatening sky I had ever seen. It was capes and waterproofs on and peddle as hard as possible. The first three miles were flat and easy but as we approached Catacol Bay the storm intensified, the rain came down in sheets and the road became a river of water with the claps of thunder almost lifting you from the saddle, whilst sheet lightening lit up the sky!

"Find shelter" shouted Colin, but there was none. As we slowly progressed along the road, getting wetter and wetter, a solitary red phone box came into view with two bikes lying in pools of water beside it. Inside two faces peered through the tiny steamed up windows; it was Edith and Gerry, two of the faster members of our group. A mile further and the rain turned to hail, a lethal combination in the conditions. We were now in the centre of the storm, the thunder was more or less continuous and forked lightening was lighting up the road ahead. "Ouch" Uschi yelled from behind me as a hail stone penetrated her helmet vents, then it was my turn to feel the pain as another got through mine.

In the midst of all this and with three to four inches of water covering the road, Margaret shouted to me that she was going back to find Shirley who was some way behind us. Ten minutes later the storm abated and ahead of us we could see the welcome lights of Lochranza. As we reached the village the sun came out and one by one we assembled by the harbour wall to take

off our wet gear and photograph the magical views of Lochranza Castle. Beryl, Gill and gang who had beaten the storm then organised the accommodation at the hostel. Later that evening we enjoyed a first class meal in the Lochranza Hotel.

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We landed at Port Askaig on Islay at just after 3 p.m. then transferred our bikes onto the waiting ferry bound for Feolin on the Island of Jura. Half an hour later we were cycling along the narrow coast road (the only road) looking out for otters and red deer. It was great to be back on this Island after a lapse of more than twenty years. On my previous visit I had traversed the Paps of Jura with Frank Goldsmith and Rick Eagles and also walked to the famous whirlpool Corryvreckan with Margaret. Tonight through we were staying in luxury at Small Isles Bay in the Jura Hotel (the only hotel on the Island).

As we stacked our bikes beside the hotel back wall it started to rain - we had been so lucky. That evening we enjoyed a sumptuous meal as the rain hammered down and a gale force wind rattled the windows. Our fellow guests and their wives were there to stalk the deer or fish for salmon; together we made a curious combination.

Next morning the weather was still inclement, but by the time we were ready to leave the rain had ceased. Most of us cycled north towards Lagg as skies began to clear and patches of blue appeared. After a few miles we reached the highest point of the road with good distant views, but the mountains still shrouded in mist. We turned around here and with the wind roaring behind us we enjoyed a great run along the wild coastline, the weather improving with every mile. En route we indulged in photography and geology, Gerry in charge of the latter; we also visited the Jura Distillery and the tiny ancient chapel near Keils.

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Thursday was even better as we cycled north then west on delightful narrow roads to Loch Gorm before turning east to the fantastic beaches of Loch Gruinart and Ardnave Point. Lunch in the sun as Gerry and Uschi joined us, having earlier cycled to Portnahaven after a 6 a.m. breakfast. As we relaxed George noticed that Stuart's bike frame had snapped near the back stays. With the help of Gerry's magic tape, Stuart headed straight back and his frame was welded at the local garage before 6 p.m. that night! After a walk along the beach and a paddle, we cycled west to Saligo Bay where the afternoon was spent exploring, beachcombing and admiring the spectacular coastal scenery before returning via Loch Gorm to the hostel after 34 memorable miles

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Sannox under a cloudless sky. In the afternoon on the last few miles to Brodick we stopped to try and climb the giant boulder called the Cat Stone near Corrie. Only George and Beryl got a foot off the ground, yet we used to climb it with ease in our youth. Some of us visited Brodick Castle and later others swam in the warm sea from Brodick beach.

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