

ISLE OF MAN TRIP - 2007

INTRODUCTION:

Well I decided, as late as March 2007, I was going 'alone' to the Isle of Man for the Centenary TT Celebrations, the 100th running of the world famous Isle of Man Tourist Trophy Races, from May 26th to June 8th inclusive. Leaving the decision so late forced some urgent Web based planning, surprisingly that part went rather smoothly, actual events with Travel Documentation, Isle of Man Ferry Timetables, Ferry Ports etc., were somewhat chaotic at times. The following is a brief summary, with photographic evidence of the highlights and lowlights!

20-05-07 ~ Brisbane to Singapore:

The Qantas flight between Brisbane Airport and Singapore, (Changi Airport), went very well, nominally seven (7) hours, with reasonable meals and in flight Movies/Games in Economy, quite a surprise really and the plane was an Airbus not Boeing machine, then again having no experience with such things/planes, it was all new to me!

My first real problem started at Changi Airport, I remained in the Terminal 1 Central Area, but my flight connection between Changi and Heathrow had been delayed by at least one hour, must be all those Computer meglibits that I sneaked on board!, with too much fuel used by Qantas on the initial flight!

Anyhow, I had a look at Duty Free, noted three Heavily!! Armed Security Guys, (Machine Guns, Automatic Pistols and Machetes), ouch. They were Airport Guards just casually wandering around the Concourse. Absolutely no Qantas presence, help desk etc. you were totally on your own to figure it all out from the somewhat busy and confusing Flight Display Boards!

Wow, the board went up for the connecting flight to Heathrow, security was quite tight, my Laptop created some considerable interest, Security Staff directing me to boot and shut down the device to prove it was in fact a Laptop!!

21-05-07 ~ Singapore to Heathrow and so much more:

A huge day, including the flight between Singapore and Heathrow, a disappointing flight on a Qantas Jumbo 747-400, actually the 'Longreach', which I understand is the current Qantas Flagship. Quite dirty and absolutely appalling Economy Class leg space, Oh and with enormous room for those in First Class. Basically I could not sleep more than minutes at a time, enormous engine noise, passengers constantly wanting something and of course the length of the flight, simply awful twelve (12) + hours. Oh, and just as one realised they were now flying over European Mainland it took nearly two more flying hours to actually touch down at Heathrow.

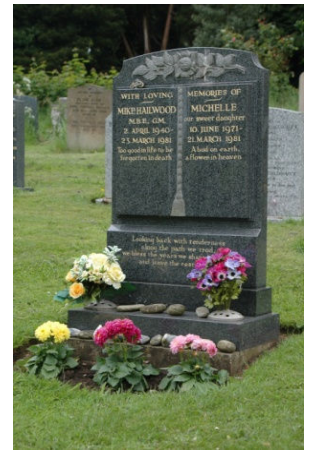
I gleefully disembarked at Heathrow and was then faced with a massive back up of arrival passengers from everywhere trying to get through 'Passport Check'. It took at least two hours to get through, I did not actually witness any problem for any passenger, all getting through eventually. I had plenty of discussions with mainly English people whilst waiting.

Europcar, say what, clearly my next step was to 'get the hire car', no way. Europcar were 'not at home' at the Heathrow Help Desk. I had to call on their 'free' phone, wait for their 'free' shuttle bus, took the chance to ring home, all OK and unbelievably clear reception, hello Telstra, why is reception in the greater Brisbane area so poor. The Shuttle bus took me to god knows where, (head office/dispatch), just outside the Heathrow Secure fencing. Finally did all the paperwork, took out collision cover and received an 'upgrade' car to a Mercedes powered 'Smart Car', well I don't think so, Mercedes have a crazy 'six speed' automatic gearbox, not much go but found the car will do 70mph quite well! Oh, whilst in the Shuttle bus I tried to activate my TomTom GPS with no success, terribly disappointing situation. So, I decided to ask for a Navman, TomTom or whatever from Europcar, no, they were negotiating with a new supplier and didn't have any! The Desk Clerk was proved to be correct however that the problem I was having with my GPS was actually the extreme close proximity to Heathrow with the massive electromagnetic radiation, signalling systems effectively blocking out my attempts at uplinking to GPS satellites. I was provided with complimentary paper maps, not so good when one is alone and there is nowhere to pull up to check my map location in and around Heathrow and environs due probably to Security measures, suffice to say I went round and round trying to get some idea how to simply head north. Alas not a good time for nominally an half an hour. Maybe I should have brought a compass!!!



Not so Smart, Mercedes Powered SmartCar

The GPS suddenly sprang to life, no idea why, I must have driven beyond the referred zone above, you know how that feels, 'it suddenly starts talking at you'. I selected my first already programmed target to pay respects to Mike Hailwood and his daughter Michelle. The drive to the gravesite in Tanworth-In-Arden was quite uneventful, excepting my eyes were history, little sleep on that plane, and of course my sunglasses broke, I did not take the time to find my back up glasses, actually there was nowhere to pull over safely. Luckily it was slightly overcast, still my eyes were in a lot of trouble and my general state was ordinary, what's new. I still had the same clothes on from leaving Brisbane, clearly my first nights stay looked very inviting, albeit some time away.



Mike and Michelle at rest

The GPS worked its normal magic, I took the turns as directed and ended up at the St. Mary Magdalene Churchyard, Tanworth-In-Arden, eventually found the Hailwood's Grave Site, absolutely beautiful place of rest, albeit slightly overgrown in parts. The beautiful headstone and grave look out over beautiful fields, someone is maintaining the gravesite with real flowers in front of the headstone. The Church was very old and quite appropriate. A lovely little town, so close yet so remote from freeways, no noise and nice fresh air. Gave my respects, what can one do when faced with this, the great man and his so young daughter at rest for eternity, God bless them.

The GPS was again reset to target the UK National Motorcycle Museum, the GPS took me within miles, but I could not find the Museum. Ultimately rang the Museum and was told they are actually privately owned and all the 'good' signs installed by the Government indicating the way to various 'Museums' were only for Government owned establishments and I had been going round and round for no purpose. Finally, with mobile phone on line to the Museum, I 'found' the Museum, very big and very well presented. I was simply *too tired* and the Museum was *too big* for me to ever do it all. Had discussions with staff about their fire protection endeavours, this after the complex was totally destroyed recently and totally rebuilt.



UK National Motorcycle Museum

I absolutely loved the place, met a guy over from New Zealand, almost as old as me!! He also was in the UK for the TT100, we agreed we might see one another somewhere on 'the island' I took numerous photos of particularly interesting machines and some general record shots.



I simply had to leave, to ensure I could get to the prebooked Hotel in Derby, (pronounced Darby please), with some level of alertness, I should not have been driving, I wacked and I mean wacked my face many times to keep concentration. I located the Hotel, reasonable, but poor location. Mind you a lot of England seems to be in the grip of non English people, they want your money and are hanging around in the street, not good. The Hotel room was located on the 3rd floor and of course the Lift was out. My main bag, of course totally overweight nearly finished me getting it up the narrow switchback staircase. Reasonable facilities, Ensuite, colour TV and comfortable bed. WiFi was available, in fact my Laptop found three available WiFi points in the local area. The Computer advised none were secure and I decided not to use same.

Well, that was the first actual day in England, very tiring, hope for improvements. Oh, received an 'urgent' call to my mobile from the Steam Packet Company. They had restructured the Isle of Man Ferry timetables and my outward sailing had now moved from Heysham port to Liverpool, with a similar sail time of day.

Some Irish guy from the Steam Packet Company was the caller, I could hardly understand him, it took a while to find somewhere to pull over and write down his gibberish. Correction, I believe I discovered later that he was in fact a Liverpoolian, some would say the dialect would be even harder to understand.

On reflection I cannot remember a day in my entire life when so many new things have happened to me all at once, it simply felt like many days had passed in achieving all of the above, especially when considering I did not actually 'get the car' at Heathrow until after 9am Heathrow time, and then lost the referred half hour attempting to leave Heathrow's environs!!

22-05-07 ~ Getting lost in Nottingham:

Woke at nominally 5.30am, and reworked my carry bags to leave the main bag 'in the room' and use the Backpack for the Computer and Camera, with all cables etc. placed in the 'official' Laptop bag. The original arrangement had the Laptop bag simply too cumbersome for my ability, I'll see how it goes. I am a huge Robin Hood fan so of course I programmed the GPS for Maid Marian Way, Nottingham.

Well, the best laid plans, the drive to Nottingham was quite uneventful, successful in fact, the problem was that Maid Marian Way is actually the 'main drag, four laner' in Nottingham City and I admit not realising how incredibly busy the heart of the Nottingham of today is!! Suffice to say I spent a great deal of time trying to locate Nottingham Castle, Robin's Statue likeness and the like. I made a huge error, giving up driving around streets with no parking allowed and ever present buses trying to wipe me out.



Maid Marion Way, very busy....



I decided to *park the car* near Nottingham Trent University, (two hour regulated street parking), and walked at least a kilometre, some decent hills involved, asking a few very helpful Nottinghamites along the way and finally located the 'Robin Hood Shop'. Purchased some keepsakes and was advised by the Salesperson that Nottingham Castle was located very close, nominally 100 yards away, around the corner, off Maid Marian Way.

It is *very important to note here*, numerous lovely beige/brown Tourist Signs indicated the direction to Nottingham Castle 'except' the actual turn off Maid Marian Way, extremely frustrating. Anyway, I picked myself up and walked around said corner and surprise a Castle appeared, took record shots of all externals that time now allowed, having wasted so much time again, driving around, simply not knowing I was so close to the objective.

I am recording all good and bad events, the *walk back to the car* was catastrophic for me, I lost my way back to the aforementioned University and ended up very tired, extremely nervous and covered in sweat. I asked a couple of very helpful young people, both carrying College type books etc. They gave me the general direction and clearly I had walked too far with significant reascending of hills required to the correct general direction. Luckily and I mean *luckily* for me a London style Cab

appeared with a thoroughly helpful Indian Gentleman Driver. He took me to the front of the University and around the exterior, we finally found the car with minutes remaining on the parking ticket.

This Cab hire cost me a total of Five (5) Pounds Sterling and I record here that it is to date one of the most critical rescue event in my life, given the state I was in. I firmly believe I would not have been able both physically and mentally to find the car without help, I do not know what would have happened.

Of course I remained so disappointed at my lack of knowledge of Nottingham, the location relative to Sherwood Forest, related Abbeys and the like and most critically a lack of time in Nottingham given the impending Ferry Trip timetable.

I returned to Nottingham on my journey back from the Isle of Man, these adventures are covered in later pages. Heh, at least I knew where the Castle was on my return, and I had the Friar Tuck Brekkie!!!



Robin Hood Statue Pictures, outside the Nottingham Castle walls

23-05-07 ~ Derby to Warrington, Bootle and the Liverpool Docks:

This was a critical day, leaving Derby, travelling to the now advised Port of Liverpool, (actual address unknown), via Warrington, (My late Brother's birthplace, he would have been sixty (60) this year) and Friend's birthplace (Bootle), for a Ferry Trip to the Isle of Man, let's see how it all goes, hmmmmmm.....

Warrington:

An easy drive across the heartland of England, quite an old place generally but considerable remodelling and a large new Shopping Centre have opened and the Centre is being further extended, about the only beautiful thing I found was the gates of the Council Building which I photographed. I did it again, I had to get some form of memento of Warrington and after the debacle of Nottingham I carefully chose my path from the car to the main shops. I found the Information Desk where they also marketed gifts and memorabilia. Purchased a Display Plate and stand for remembrance of my Brother. Returning to the car I made *another wrong turn* and proceeded to get lost again, it took nominally one hour to find the car, getting quite forgetful with a very poor sense of direction. Again this could have been a real disaster for me....



Warrington Council Building Gates

Bootle:

Another easy drive from Warrington to Bootle, a very old place with no real sign of any development, Bootle seems to be really an offshoot of the Liverpool Docks Complex. Very run down with Town Centre Gardens in very poor condition. Absolutely no one was aware of any memento of Bootle, until the local Milk Bar Manager remembered about a 'History of Bootle Book' being sold in the 'Tiny' local Post Office. Sure enough the book was there and I picked up the latest issue with some interesting old photography therein. This was the only item I could find as a keepsake for my friend.



Older Structures at Liverpool Docks

Ferry Trip:

From Bootle it was very easy to find the Liverpool Docks, a massive extent of old and new facilities and when I say old I mean 'old'. I finally located the Steam Packet Port and Car Park area. I made sure I was in the correct area and then drove around Liverpool immediate City areas for some time. Finally I returned to the Steam Packet area and waited out the 12.00 midnight, or 1am departure time, depending whom you spoke to.

Farcical events proceeded on the docks and any logic regarding loading of cars and motorcycles was clearly by chance rather than planning, I'm told they have had 100 years to perfect their methods but not much has apparently improved.

The Ferry was on loan from a French Company, twin hull, front loading and looked reasonably speedy, no way, it was suffering some form of engine anomaly, later advised as a gearbox gremlin, this required that the Ferry could not get 'up onto the twin hulls', Catamaran style, a slow trip, some three and a half hours, hang on it was longer because the Ferry actually arrived in Douglas at nominally 6.30am on the 24th of May.

Honestly, as the morning sun cleared the mist, a look out the Passenger Windows really did indicate 'manning of the oars' would have helped, incredibly slow progress. I estimated a speed of nominally

10 knots, appalling....



The evolving skyline of Liverpool, in the foreground is the parking control areas to 'improve' Steam Packet Ferry Loading..... (not)

24-05-07: ~ THE ISLE OF MAN, WOW!!!!!!

Yippee at nominally 7am I finally arrived to a 'non tumultuous' welcome on the IOM. Once I had disembarked, I drove down the Douglas promenade and of course headed straight for the TT Circuit, not really hard to find as most of the padding, bunting and race hoardings were already in place. I decided this is it, I was going to do a full lap of the TT course, hmmm....

All went very well, albeit with very narrow roads and Bray Hill which appears on videos as a gentle long downhill is anything but, it is 'very' downhill. Then came the mountain section, total fog, I could only just make out the white centreline in the middle of the road. Typically, drivers came up behind me at some speed but could not overtake in the fog. I did complete the full lap and then proceeded to find my Bed and Breakfast lodgings near Castletown, actually Ballasalla.

Success, I found my Lodgings and met the Couple I had booked with, wonderful people, so friendly, I felt immediately at ease, later I met a couple staying for part of the TT from Canada. I unloaded some minor things into my room and went for another drive around the IOM, yep went for another drive around the TT Course, this time I was a little quicker, no 130mph average lap mind you, but clearly I felt more secure being able to 'see' where I was going. However I was still not anywhere near quick enough for the flotilla of drivers, yes car drivers, coming up behind and around me, absolute maniacs. But wait there was more, without even noticing it a Motorcyclist came up behind me on a red (of course) Honda VFR800 V4, he could not get past for what seemed like a millisecond, due to oncoming traffic, and then he was off and I mean off. I have never, never witnessed any type of vehicle disappear in front of me like this guy did, and all of this on a road bike, eek. During 'this' lap I obviously could appreciate the now clear air on the mountain, (no fog) this allowed me to also appreciate the insane height of the mountain road and extreme drops on either side, all of which I was totally oblivious of in the earlier fog.

I returned to my Lodgings for my first evening in the IOM and was soon introduced to an Irishman who knew Joey Dunlop very well, we held great discussions about Joey, SMBH the IOM TT Race History, Bryan Hindle, Ken Blake, the Castrol 6 Hour and lots of other motor racing stuff, I thoroughly enjoyed meeting a true fanatic of the sport and its history and whilst I know very little, this gentleman was a true inspiration to talk to, most Riders I have met don't really know much and/or get pretty bored talking about motorcycle racing, not, repeat not this gentleman.

That evening I typed some more of this overview and charged all batteries, including my own!! I planned for the next day to ensure I tried the Horse Trams as they were rumoured to cease throughout the actual TT week and my friend would never forgive me if I did not take on some real horse power!!

25-05-07 ~ Trams, Trains and an MV750S:

I woke at nominally 8.30am, ridiculously late for me, anyhow I enjoyed a beautiful breakfast and that readied me for the day ahead, here come the real horses....

Douglas Horse Trams:



noteworthy, *except*, this was a MV AGUSTA MV750S, the red/white/blue effort with the Italian red (of course) single seat. It was never known for high reliability but owe so beautiful, took the obligatory record shots of course. This motorcycle is my all time favourite, I just love the thing, its Italian, unreliable but so beautiful to my eyes, no it isn't a Honda but, I just love it. The one time I ever witnessed a MV750S raced as a Production Machine was in the Castrol 6 Hour Race at Amaroo Park, Sydney, the machine handled well and had good speed but curious engine noises were of concern, it was retired!

I drove down to Douglas and paid my money for a return loop along the Douglas promenade, a great experience, albeit somewhat bumpy. The Conductor, very approachable, held little hope for our Arabians being suited to the task at hand, up and down the promenade and then up and down the promenade again, etc. I could just see Pure Bred Arabian Horses performing this task, (not).

Crikey, whilst entering the Trams area I spotted a Motorcycle parked just outside the Entry Gates, nothing particularly



MV Agusta MV750S

Electric Railway:



The Electric Railway was an easy follow on from the Horse Trams as the start points are adjacent one another at one end of the Douglas promenade. I parked the car in a derestricted area as the Railway journey was longer than the general two hour parking limit, even with the 'famous' blue disc displayed, don't ask, refer my 'first week notes'

I chose the full trip, a return journey from Douglas to Ramsey and back, of course in the open rear carriage. Well the front car windows would distort my picture taking, no really. As it turned out the climate, wind chill factor and the like were excellent for me, mental note, my friend would have been in the front car, huddled somewhere out of sight, chuckling!!

Oh, and what a sight I witnessed, absolutely gorgeous green fields, beautiful flowing hillsides and quaint small towns and villages, I took lots of general photos but the true depth of the scenery can really only be captured by the naked eye, certainly not digital photography. The cattle, sheep and goats on the IOM do not know how lucky they are, beautiful lush pastures and seemingly plenty of huge rolled hay bales for roughage and beautiful flowing streams.

At Ramsey there was a nominally a half hour wait whilst the Electric Rail carriages were reorientated for the return journey, I took the opportunity to look at the beautiful shops in the heart of Ramsey, of particular note was the Art/Souvenir Shop where I purchased a lovely Manx Cat ornament for my friends. I then ventured into a Drapery Shop and found three beautiful Tea Towels depicting Motorcycle Racing, Trains of the IOM and of course the prerequisite Viking stuff, so cool those Vikings!!!

The return journey was uneventful, I thanked the Conductor, then went down into Douglas and checked the location of the Manx Museum, as the IOM TT display opened for viewing on the 26 May, well that's of course tomorrow. I returned to my Lodgings for the night and typed some of this, recharged batteries etc. The plan for the next day being the Manx Museum and the 1pm fly past by Second World War Aircraft across the Douglas Bay.

26-05-07 ~ Manx Museum, SMBH, Joey and the Fly Past:

I woke at nominally 6.30am, somewhat more in keeping with my normal timing, a beautiful clear morning promised a quick trip into Douglas to the Museum and a short walk down the hill to witness the Aircraft fly over.

Manx Museum:



An uneventful easy trip into Douglas and a good parking spot, with no entry fee into the Museum, that's my kind of place to visit! The Museum had put on a splendid albeit smallish display of IOM TT stuff. Notwithstanding there were some extremely notable exhibits which meant a great deal to me personally, specifically the SMBH Suzuki and Mike's last Race Leathers. Further one Joey Dunlop's VTR1000 SP1 was on display, I actually touched the machine and took lots of record shots.

Had a short look at other exhibits, some surprising Deer (Elk) skeletal remains in perfect condition, with antler size beyond belief.



Second World War Aircraft Fly Past:

Wow, at almost exactly 1pm, way in the distant sky I spotted what looked like a huge Ancient Bird and two siblings, actually they were one of only two airworthy Lancaster Bombers in the world and a Spitfire and a Hurricane. Fantastic stuff, whilst they remained at a reasonable altitude the sight and noise of the massive engines was inspiring.

I took the best shots I could given the distance of the Aircraft out in Douglas Bay. The display only lasted some ten minutes but the like of it I will probably never witness again.



Castletown and Environs:

I discovered Castletown!!! I travelled generally in the direction of 'home base' but made a slight detour to Castletown, a Maritime Museum and an Aviation Museum, all pretty standard fare. Some of the Castletown environs being incredibly old, some small villages and inlets relied mainly on Bass? Fishing, sadly more modern trawling methods by various Countries, including Scottish Fishermen, ultimately denied IOM Fishermen of generous catches and so many Fishing facilities folded completely long ago, derelict remnants of these sad times are clearly on display out in the open, all pretty sad stuff. Lots of fish types are all imported to the IOM now.

The Maritime and Aviation Museums were very small with seemingly limited financial resources and displays, but I had a quick look anyway. Certainly not major Museums by any standard. My plan for tomorrow is Steam Trains, yippee. The local Steam Train Station is an easy walk, just passed the Monks Bridge and Abbey display, so I can 'gladly' leave the 'Smart Car' to its own devices.

27-05-07 ~ STEAM TRAINS, Gotta Love Em:



I made ready for my Steam Train extravaganza, batteries charged and hopefully I'll get a good run and some great shots. There is however a threat of some rain, hhhmmmmmm.....

The Steam Train trips whilst not offering the scenery of the Electric Railway most certainly did not disappoint with the beautiful narrow gauge railways, original Locomotives and Carriages. They ran on time and the Railway Personnel were excellent people, I could actually talk to them, you know what I mean, real people.

Of course I took the full trip from Ballasalla to Port Erin then returning all the way from Port Erin to Douglas, then from Douglas returning to Ballasalla, the local Train Station. These railways are only used by the Steam System and I do hope it stays that way, no fancy new stuff, they are just so classic in the environment. Everybody accepts the steam methods and appears to be prepared to wait at level crossings and the like, all waving to the little Steam Trains blowing their whistles, tremendous stuff. Whilst in Port Erin I took the opportunity to purchase some small items of IOM Memorabilia. I also met a couple of 'old fogies' on Veteran Bikes, they will be 'competing' in the TT re-enactment tomorrow, so I said I hoped to see them there, also met an 'old guy' like me from Mackay in the Port Erin Railway Museum, amazing....

I took as many photos as I could but everyone is enclosed in the old Compartment Type Railcars with limited photographic opportunities.

I came back to 'home base' at nominally 3pm, typed this lot, noted in my mind that was a total of one week and prepared for the first actual TT Official event being the re-enactment of the original 1907 TT, with some fellow called Duke!!



Some thoughts about the Isle of Man:

A wonderful place the IOM, the people are extremely friendly and it is not a 'put on' for the TT, they genuinely are helpful, courteous and supportive of hopelessly lost interlopers like me. Except when they get behind the wheel or the motorcycle throttle. The vast majority really go at it, they are very adept at high speed, accurate driving and riding on less than acceptable roads both in surface quality and width of road.



Incredibly, there are so few places on the roads to park, so the locals just pull over on lesser roads, partly blocking their lane and everybody has to wait and/or work their way around the latest obstruction to progress. The roads structure and overall width appear to have simply evolved from earlier days with no one forced to relent some degree of land to allow for realigning or widening. In outer areas the Driveway Gates and Entries are almost directly on the tar edge of a typical roadway, there being simply no dirt threshold or safety margin. This is no place for a wide American type car, to me the ultimate car here is the Mini Cooper S of which there are many, with many women driving them with great gusto!! Oh, and there are certainly some very smart looking WRX Turbos getting around quite nicely thankyou, hint hint.

Talking of parking, the Manx Traffic Coppers are very strict about anyone parking illegally in designated 'Blue Disc' areas. Now you would think to get the required 'Blue Disc' to display inside your car window would be at considerable cost and only granted to maybe locals that own property to allow them to park outside their home. No way, the Discs are available 'free' from most shops, it all seems crazy to me, then again what is not crazy is that if you park in a 'Blue Disc' area without displaying your disc, lawfully adjusted, the fine is Fifty (50) pounds. I simply don't get it.

The Manx Police appear to be very professional and most importantly appear to apply a great deal of common sense in their activities, I noted their presence whenever Steam Packet Ferries came in, discharging another group of interlopers. The Police manned roundabouts and the like to ease the immediate traffic burden rather than react after the accident or bottleneck gets out of hand. Mind you their pursuit cars are interesting, I actually saw a Honda CRV Police Car!!



No one in the UK or the IOM seemed to know what an ATM was. They call them Cash Machines, these are plentiful when one gets to know the layout of the place, Oh, and if one had cash to withdraw!!

Fuel, well it can be purchased but there are few Service Stations and none that equal the scope of Australian Stations, they are a lot smaller, offering less types of fuel, but everyone seems to get by. There are quite a few specialist Garages for Car maintenance and after market updates etc, read more speed and handling.



With regard to Road Safety, there were plenty of signs around requesting TT Visitors take it easy, there are also permanent signs listing the death toll in certain high risk roadways over nominally the last three years, somewhat disconcerting. Sadly there's a great deal of makeshift flower displays attached to pillars etc. where people have lost their lives in accidents.

Mind you there are some strange 'registered' vehicles on IOM roads, the most surprising to me are Quad Bikes, I nearly fell over witnessing these machines around Castletown and at the IOM pit areas, amazing.

Smoking, or the lack thereof, is amazing. I have not had one whiff of cigarette or pipe smoke come my way and generally litter is far less than in Australia.

OK, I admit it, I love the Isle of Man, wish could live there.....