

The Porscheshop Manx Tour 2006 (Geoff Ives A Personal Lap)

Imagine..... It's early morning late in May. You are in Douglas, capital of the Isle of Man. You have just driven a few leisurely miles from your hotel, the seagulls were calling as you drove along the seafront in the late spring sunshine and you are now by the grandstand at the famous T.T. circuit. To your left are the pits with their refuelling stations; on your right is the huge scoreboard that in two weeks time will be showing the positions of the riders as they cover the best known 37.73 miles in the history of motorcycle racing. You have been briefed and know what to expect and what is expected of you.

The lead car is away and you follow. 30 mph at this stage as you are in a restricted area; in fact you are in the middle of town. This can't be a race circuit, not with lamp posts, phone boxes, kerbs and all the usual road furniture. Ahead you see a large orange notice board showing the road direction and the words 'Quarter Bridge' Yes this is the T.T. course. Next comes Bradden Bridge with its pretty Church and a grandstand in the churchyard. The lead car suddenly accelerates hard, yes that was a de-restriction sign and you are concentrating on the road, no chance to look at the speedometer. Mile after mile of hard driving with chance to get your breath back in the restricted areas in the small villages. You see the now familiar orange boards with famous legends – Union Mills... Ballacrain... Glen Helen ... Kirk Michael ... Ballaugh Bridge where a motorcycle is air born at 40 mph. Apart from the speed limits you have still been too busy to look at your speedometer.

At the town of Ramsey you have covered more than half of the circuit and the roads change dramatically. From here you are on the fabulous 'Mountain Section' from here you will hardly see a building and you will be climbing from sea level to 1,401 feet and back to sea level!

You have been told that 'these roads take no prisoners' but you are aware that they are as smooth as silk and as grippy as you would expect on an international race circuit. In places you can see the road for at least a couple of miles ahead as you approach the 'Veranda' you have time to look at your speedo... really!! And it's legal. Ahead you see tram lines crossing the road, Bl**dy H**l but you don't even feel them; they are designed not to interfere

with a motorcycle cranked over at 180mph. Soon you will be on the downward section, Keppel Gate, Kate's Cottage and the steep drop to Creg-Ny-Baa. Where you pull into the hotel car park. Officially it is to await the stragglers but the real reason is to allow drivers a few minutes to cool down before arriving in Douglas. Six minutes later you are at the Grandstand again having experienced the most outrageous lap in motor racing history. What was that about the Nurburgring?

How do you experience this? Join us on May 26th to 29th on the Porscheshop Manx Tour 2006. For more information call me on 01865 880626 or send a Stamped addressed envelope to Geoff Ives (Manx Tour 2005) P.O. Box 2, Eynsham, Witney, Oxon. OX29 5RW.