



## De-mystifying the Scottish

### Introduction

Finishing the 2002 SSDT in Fort William, hammers the wish in my mind, to compete often more in this unique event.

Waiting for entry news and ballot announcement has accompanied me during the year 2002. Trying all obstacles and circumstances during practicing with my trials machine, what remembers me at my first entry 2002 (successful finishing, but with no award) gave me the attention and concentration to the only target it seems to exist in my actually decade: be there once more and compete!

Without classifying different manufacturers, I changed my Pro to a 6 years old TYZ YAM, finding comfortable on the bike, by riding it with much more confidence. That would be the bike to use in my next SSDT. Months of preparation and the security of being notified in the entry list, brings me to the departure on April 30, with 1 more bike carried in my van; Eusebio Gago finally entered in the competitors list and I helped him to transfer his tools and bike to Scotland.

Visiting the Highlands for the fourth time since 1977, 1979 and 2002, I feel a very deep satisfaction to be there.

Contacting the past and future friends of this fantastic Trials Sport, hugging Guy Smeeth from Canada and shake hands with Christophe Bruand, accompanied by a domo harigato kosaimasta to my friend Masayoshi Tsuji from Japan, let jump the heart and gives force to attempt a new step in my own personal history of life -

**the SSDT 2003.**

Walter Traber  
Diary 2003 SSdT  
# 113



Date: Sunday, may 4 2003  
Weather: mostly cloudy, hourly rain, few sunny moments  
Starting time:

### **Fort William / Scotland, Milton Hotel, SSdT Secretary, Sign-In procedure**

After travelling from Belgium to UK by night- ferry, visiting the Pre-65 Trials in Kinlochleven on Saturday, I finally arrived in Fort William. Eusebio did the transfer from Inverness Airport by Bus and feels very comfortable in the shared room at the Grand Hotel. The end of preparation and the beginning of operative action takes place.

Searching for wind shield beneath the wall in the Fort William Car Park, to fix our place for the whole week and be sure to get a place; the manufacturers like GAS GAS, Sherco & Montesa, occupying 50 % of the space, reduce the remaining place for the privateers. Good to be there early and safe a place.

Checking in will be from 10:AM till 14:30PM and 5 Swiss riders take the line to receive their so long awaited starting plate, they have to fix on their machines.

These are # 76 Jack Aebi, # 113 Walter Traber, #114 Francis Freudiger, # 115 Dominique Guillaume and finally # 133 Eusebio Gago.

They all take place in the riding order, officially displayed by the Edinburgh & District Motor Club Ltd.

Sunday passes with final adjustments at the bikes and no surprises have been seen. The long awaited 4-strokes pre-serial bikes from Montesa, Sherco and GAS GAS, are not on the place; however SCORPA entered their known 125 / 200 cc 4-stroke models with Japanese riders on board. Looks impressive the behaviour of the small engines, it seems that will be fun riding them in the Scottish.

Weather forecast was right, all day cloudy and rain from different manner accompanies the folks, who set live in the Fort William Car Park.

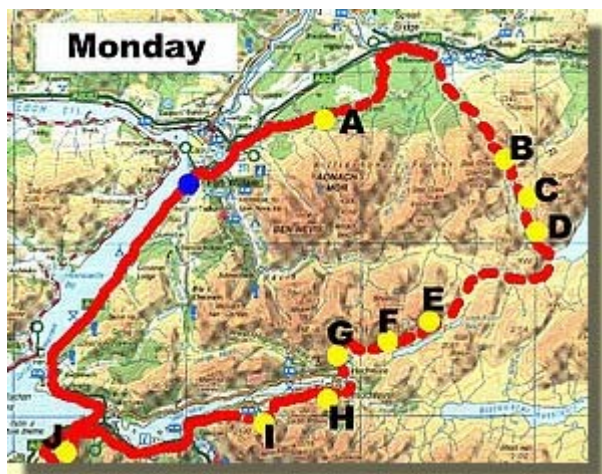
The Cavalcade of Riders trough Fort William Main Street, with many national flags mounted on bikes and helmets, gives impression of the enormous amount of people, material and interests, putting in force for this event.

Refuelling the bike at the ARMY petrol check in the park fermé and final check of the equipment, carried in the backpack for tomorrow, give us all the security: it's started now. Their will be first man (there are many female starters this year) away at 7:30 AM, Monday may 5<sup>th</sup> 2003 for the start to the SSdT.

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Date: Monday, may 5 2003  
 Weather: cloudy, 10 degrees, falling mist, in the highlands clear with rain  
 Starting time: 09:22



Map Ref		
	Fort William	
A	Leanachan Forest	OH (3 Sects)
	Spean Bridge	
B	Bradilieg	OH (3 Sects)
C	Alt na Lairige	OH (2 Sects)
D	Ghuanach Gorge	OH (3 Sects)
E	Loch Eilde Cottage	OH (4 Sects)
F	Dharich Burn	OH (2 Sects)
G	Schoolhouse	OH (2 Sects)
H	Garbh Bheinn	OH (2 Sects)
I	Pap of Glencoe	OH (2 Sects)
J	Lagnaha	OH (7 Sects)
	Fort William	
<b>Time Allowed: 7 Hrs 00 mins + 15 min rest stop</b>		
<b>Miles: 64</b>		

Finally, starting the event, competitor # 1 Mark Whitham starts the minutely take-off for each rider. There is normal weather, with clouds entering from south-west trough Loch Linnhe. Road to Leanachan Forest with 3 sections to familiarise with the bigger size of stones, that usually built up the surface for Scottish sections.

Refuelling stop, serviced by the Scottish Army and further to the next secs at Bradilieg and followings Alt Na Lairige & Ghuanach Gorge.

Doing the secs with enough confidence, gives you more excitement and success, then trying and struggling. Using this instinct and searching for more ingredients to mix a cocktail of adventure, feelings and excitement on this really exclusive place on earth, who in a no-mans land are picked out points and corners to brave-heart a trials rider.

The tears in my eyes, by hearing the secret scottish melodies, accompanying the riders to start in this wonderful country is the experience you will never forget.

Doing at last Lagnaha with 7 tough sections, let me turn back to Fort William, to prepare the TYZ / YAMAHA for tomorrow's exercise. Hand in the bike in time and helping Eusebio to fix his rear tire on the BETA Everything is ok, he hands in and we turn back to the Grand Hotel for excellent dinner.

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Section Garbh Bheinn

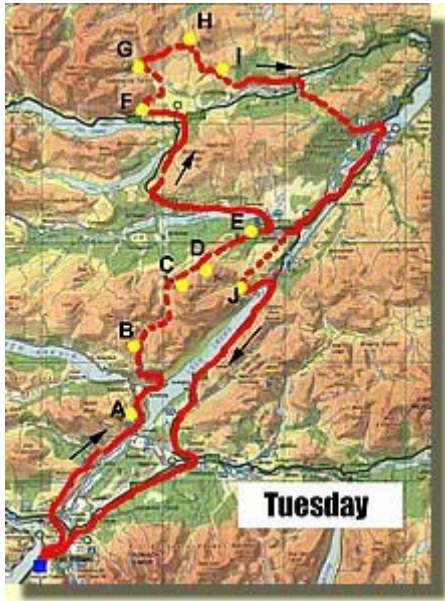


( Fotos: Courtesy of Patrick Frei)

Walter Traber  
 Diary 2003 SSDT  
 # 113



Date: Tuesday, may 6 2003  
 Weather: morning sunny, with changeable conditions to rain in afternoon  
 Starting time: 08:22



Map Ref		
	Fort William	
A	Witches Burn	OH (1 Sect)
B	Glen Cia-Aig	OH (2 Sects)
C	Meall Choire Glas 1	OH (3 Sects)
D	Meall Choire Glas 2	OH (4 Sects)
E	Forest Gate	OH (2 Sects)
F	Creag Lundie	OH (5 Sects) (Note 1)
G	Ceannacroc Forest	OH (3 Sects)
H	Crag Nan Gobhar	OH (2 Sects)
I	Meall Dahm	OH (5 Sects)
J	Laggan Locks	OH (3 Sects)
	Fort William	
<b>Time Allowed: 7 Hrs 40 Min + 15 min rest stop.</b>		
<b>Miles: 106</b>		

Note 1 - There are newly planted trees at Creag Lundie. Please keep clear of them.

Really long ride! Many sections with 5, in the afternoon exhausted and first tumbles in sections and bugs. Luckily not get hurt, but bike in conditions to service.

The start during the morning sunshine gives the kick to attempt a new day in Scotland, changing to rain during the road transfer to Witches Burn with the step in the second part. Acting a five under such circumstances, happens often during the day. Finally I'm trying Creag Lundie step and crashing hard twice during the attempt of the 5 secs, gives me the impression of a much harder exercise this day.

Leaking oil from the defeated front fork, I smessle (don't look SSDT officials, from whom's bike comes the oil) trough the secs to the final 3 Laggan Locks sections. That what it means to me; a whole year waiting and getting in mind these sections to finally having the opportunity to challenge them. But before, it was a kind of suffer, descending from the highland crossing to the sections, with oiled front brake callipers, quiet dangerous. I did it, 5, 3 and 1, personally enjoying the

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ride without danger but many genius moments from the 2 sub-systems, called driver and bike.

This years experience will be the memory feelings I had trough sections, highland crossing and bugs. It's the kind of flow you feel during your ride, doing several things automatically adapted to the immediately changing circumstances; that results conform and economical behaviour.

These fine feelings sometimes are cracked by cracks, passing me in the moors: no obstacles visible, no bugs under the machine - are they flying?

Bilbao, Braybrock and others show the standard, to economise driver and bike.

Entering to Fort William starts the rain, partly showers developing to heavy rainfall. Eusebio is entering 10 minutes later then me in the parc fermé, what means I lost some minutes during the day and he advances in time. Both entering directly in the parc fermé, without bricolage(working on the bike), we will receive time points for every minute late to hand in. Our calculation: Eusebio 10, Walter 26 penalty points, for being late to hand in the bike to the parc fermé.

It's 8:00 PM, riders are always arriving in to the Car Parc in Fort William, there should be a problem in the highland cross before Laggan Locks, caused by weather conditions. Are they out of competition with 60 minutes late? Hope not, each one did a great job during the day and many adventures happened like overheating, running out of fuel and tires off the rims.

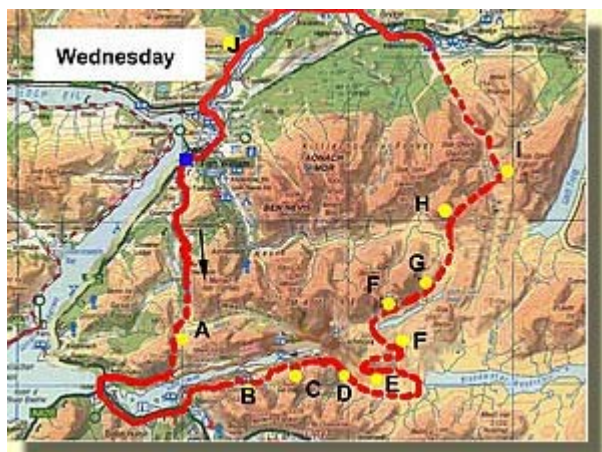
So this wonderful, hard day ends with preparation of front fork and brake parts for my TYZ ( I'm so happy to have carried my spare TYZ for the Scottish) they will be replaced in the 30 minutes before starting time tomorrow, Wednesday may 7.



Walter Traber  
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Date: Wednesday, may 7 2003  
 Weather: mostly cloudy, no heavy rain  
 Starting time: 07:42



Map Ref		
	Fort William	
A	Callart Falls	OH (5 Sects)
B	Cameron Hill	OH (2 Sects)
C	Cnoc A Lihhne	OH (2 Sects)
D	Coire Mhoir	OH (3 Sects)
E	Blackwater	OH (5 Sects)
F	Duibhe Burn	OH (2 Sects)
G	Loch Eilde Mor	OH (3 Sects)
H	Luibelt	OH (2 Sects)
I	Bradileig	OH (2 Sects)
J	Trotters Burn	OH (4 Sects)
	Fort William	
<b>Time Allowed: 6 Hrs 55 min + 15 min rest stop</b>		
<b>Miles: 65</b>		

Riding "un dia de descanso" (rest day), will prevent accidents. Physically tiredness is putted back, leaving the Parc Fermé on your bike and focused on the oncoming route of this day. Callart Falls, Cameron Hill and Cnoc A Lihhne, I'm the first competitor to go trough, with slippery surface on the stones. The Blackwater sections stop my effort with slip and crash. Beautiful cleans, stopped by marginal incorrect handling of my bike, pays high.

My points score will be high today, what counts is to be in the finish line, uninjured and happy to compete. Did a stop today near the Blackwater Reservoir, to take a picture from the unique landscape of the Scottish Highlands. Trying to not loose much time, I speeded on the road, that's why I was first on earlier sections today. The guys let me pass trough to ride my 5 and watch my line; but I try often a different line to find confidence in my own style off track and riding. It's to far away to ride their lines, so I believe in my capacities.

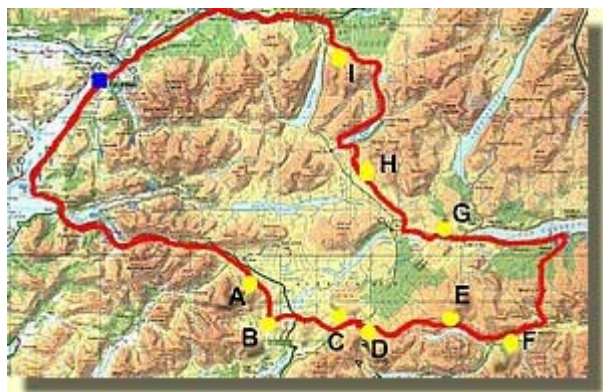
Bradileig, an other classic section, running trough the wrong side of section markers, points me a five, after a good ride - forget it and go on, slow but steady.

With this reason I arrived in the Fort William Car Parc with 20 minutes rest to my scheduled hand in time. Changing the rear wheel I verify my brake pads. They have to be changed tomorrow, together with Air Filter and Chain,

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Date: Thursday, may 8 2003  
 Weather: windy morning, with showers during day, generally good  
 Starting time: 11:48



Map Ref		
	Fort William	
A	Chairlift	OH (3 Sects)
B	Ba House	OH (3 Sects)
C	Gorton	OH (4 Sects)
D	Creag A Bhuie	OH (2 Sects)
E	Coire Nam Miseach	OH (3 Sects)
F	Lochs Wood	OH (3 Sects)
G	Dunan	OH (2 Sects)
H	Lubnaclach	OH (2 Sects)
I	Fersit	OH (8 Sects)
	Fort William	
<b>Time Allowed: 7 Hrs 35 Min + 15 min rest stop</b>		
<b>Miles: 116</b>		

A jewel day will contain all kind of adventures and happenings, so this Thursday makes no exception. The remaining 3 days of this years Scottish, are opened with a long transfer today, We did Chairlift and the following sections at Ba House was cancelled, the competitors takes the wrong way - what happens? No one give advice to the little Swiss rider # 113 and he will end at Ba House Sections, where no officials are active, no competitors, no spectators. Decision: turn back and ask! No Observer, Marshal or SSdT Official near the path at chairlift, but Spanish rider Angel Magrinia explains, that the following group Ba House was cancelled. I couldn't announce a delay of 15 min to a marshal and go my way further.

We passed wonderful glens and highland zones, they cannot be described and the xxxx- digital camera has her daily time out, so these impressions will be not recorded . Risky as I am, to ban beautiful sightseeing's in my camera, gives each time pressure, to regain some time. That pays hard and double: I crash hardly on stones, but no non-conformity's on pilot or bike, so let's get steady and slowly, to find way and time to watch the scenery.



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Catastrophically finished the day, There are only a handful of section, who permitted to ride trough (my level of physical condition at the end of the day at Fersit was low), despite this, I tried and struggled often.

You have to go on. A hard days end in mind, I'm on the way back to Fort William, pushing the old YAMAHA engine hard to get time in hand to change exhaust parts. The silencer suffered from a crash early in the day and was plied inside, so he touches the rear wheel. The surface is honed and the behaviour of the engine for low torque pushes has not improved. Lucky to have spares for exotic bikes, I changed the silencer and did some servicing to the bike.

A new chain has to be fitted tomorrow, also air filter and cleaning the bike.

Walter Traber  
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Date: Friday, may 9 2003  
 Weather: morning rain, evening rain  
 Starting time: 10:22



Map Ref		
	Fort William	
	Corran Ferry	
A	Gearadh	OH (3 Sects)
B	Gearadh 2	OH (3 Sects)
C	Meall Nam Each	OH (4 Sects)
D	Camasnacroise	OH (2 Sects)
E	Coire Dubh	OH (5 Sects)
F	Loch Shiel A	OH (2 Sects)
G	Loch Sheil B	OH (2 Sects)
H	Doire Dhamh	OH (4 Sects)
I	Pipers Burn	OH (5 Sects)
	Fort William	
<b>Time Allowed: 7 Hrs 00 min + 15 min rest stop</b>		
<b>Miles: 102</b>		

5<sup>th</sup> day in Scotlands finest event (I d'ont know other ones, surely the Highland Games are also funny) and the forecast gives his clear devices of rain in the munros. There was a break in the showers, so the riders could be riding fortunately some tracks or roads without Belstaff, Barbour or other rain suits. Sections enough heavy for me today; it has to be competitive for all kind of competitors, so we all choose the line in the sections, who permits to pass trough.



Ok, let the day begin with the classic transfer with the CORAN Ferry, this added a delay time to our route card, to diverge the competitors before the following sections.

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It was difficult to find the rhythm from road or track, to the refined style of riding with modern 2-stroke Trials Bikes. Don't forget, there is participating a 4-stroke YAMAHA powered SCORPA and if I watch him in the sections, I'm really surprised about the capabilities of rider and machine. Is it the stuff of the future?



Many bad and unlucky situations today for a few riders. my only problem is physical and not mechanical like others are aware. Ventilators out of order or coolant problems on bikes beside the track, are showing the immense pressure on the mechanical part of the bikes. Takumi Narita seems to be quiet and sure on his air cooled 4-stroke powered SCORPA, the engine revs high and round as new.

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I take some photographs today, Scottish highlands and landscapes are so impressive, you can't tell and on pictures the feelings like humidity, seclusion and wideness aren't enough detailed.



Oh, don't forget, I'm blessed at my right knee; two of the many disasters today, hit my knee badly. Will see to care it and have a good recuperation period till tomorrow.





Date: Saturday, may 10 2003  
 Weather: rainy in the morning, hazards on munros, but finally good  
 Starting time: 9:58



Map Ref		
	Fort William	
A	Sleubhaich	OH (3 Sects)
B	Stob Coire Eirghe	OH (2 Sects)
C	Lower Mamore	OH (3 Sects)
D	Pipeline	OH (4 Sects)
E	Loch Chairain	OH (2 Sects)
F	Ghuanach Gorge	OH (2 Sects)
G	Allt Na Lairige	OH (2 Sects)
H	Tramway	OH (2 Sects)
I	Leanachen	OH (2 Sects)
J	Ben Nevis	OH (7 Sects)
K	Town Hall Brae	OH (1 Sect)
	Fort William	
<b>Time Allowed: 6 Hrs 50 Mins</b>		
<b>Miles: 65</b>		

It's a long day to conclude the 6-days and usually full of dramaturgical stuff.



The early morning bricollage on the bikes takes place 30 minutes before each competitors start.

Wheels, chains, air filters and fittings has to checked or changed. A huge amount of material is used.

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The off road part at this days route is requested to check out the forgotten rests of physical and mental capabilities of the competitors. Any feet long, you have to take attention where to ride; things, they would not be remarked at the beginning of the week, would be treated with higher importance at the end, when mental tiredness would take place. That what happens to a Spanish rider, who has to be evacuated from the moors after a hard crash on his face. I passed the place 2 minutes later and spanish countryman was there to help. My first aid kit would not be the thing to help, but I could help with my lighter, to alight a fire as marker for the rescue helicopter.

Attention high for all following riders, this accident pacifies all, not to speed trough this path.

Later in the day, before Leanachan Forest sections, I remarked a puncture in the front wheel air chamber, cruising to fast trough a corner on the forest road. To late! I crash hard on the surface and following riders take care of me. Friend Eusebio stays by my side for a few miles to look after me, but I was OK.

Leanachan sections not ridden and marked 5 points each, to get time to change the front wheel tube. I'm late now, the acts during the day takes some time. Go on further and attack the classic Ben Nevis sections, to ride cleans, 3 and 5's. Riding slowly back to Fort William with a flat front tire, to conclude the 2003 Scottish Six Days with the Town Hall Brae section.

After a final talk with Don Smith on the finisher podium, back to the car park, to store our stuff in the van.

All 5 swiss competitors finished the event in good conditions, with new experiences about the Scottish.

Final results:

Start #	Name	Machine	Award	Points
115	Dominique Guillaume	SCORPA	Special First Class	124
76	Jack Aebi	SCORPA	First Class	240
133	Eusebio Gago	BETA	Second Class	348
114	Francis Freudiger	SCORPA	Second Class	499
113	Walter Traber	YAMAHA	Second Class	660

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The Scottish is finished with friendship and happiness, competing in this event for the second time - I need a lot more experience about, maybe to find the key to demystify the Scottish.

We like to come back!

Walter Traber / Fort William / 11<sup>th</sup> may 2003