

20th Anniversary Imp Ecosse – Report

Blair Atholl, Pitlochry, Perthshire, Scotland, 7th-10th April 2017

Jim Fraser (Imp Ecosse 2017 Organiser), Fife, Scotland

After weeks of planning and organising, Scott Skinner and I arrived at Blair Atholl on the Friday with both our Imps ‘stappit fu’ for want of a good Scots saying! There was barely room for Stevie in mine and Senga in Scott’s – coupés, lacking the opening rear window, really aren’t the easiest of Imps to pack! Several Imps were already in the hotel car park and so we quickly unloaded the cars and set up rally control in the residents’ bar to welcome our guests as they arrived. We had also borrowed the Visit Scotland welcome pop-up banner that tied in with Iain Morrison’s article in last month’s April’s *Impressions*.

A steady stream of Impers arrived all afternoon and it was great to welcome friends that we hadn’t seen since last year as well as some new faces too. Each arrival was presented with a goody bag containing a miniature of whisky complete with Anniversary logo, a window sticker, a bottle of Irn Brew, Tunnochs caramel wafer and other bits and pieces kindly donated by Regalia, Knockhill Racing Circuit and Arnold Clark, who kindly supplied the hessian goody bags for us. To help mark the occasion, we had also produced some special Imp Ecosse regalia items too which Sue and Andy Ellis did a great job of selling all weekend. The limited edition Imp Ecosse model was very well received and completely sold out over the weekend. Plenty of the ‘T’-shirts that Sue had had printed also found new homes and orders were also taken for the commemorative quaiach (a traditional Scottish two-handled drinking cup), similar to our trophies. For those who placed orders, they should be ready by the end of May so I’ll be in touch in due course.

Come 7pm it was time to sample the cooking at our venue, The Atholl Arms hotel, which we had effectively taken over for the entire weekend! Most of the people staying at the hotel had opted for dinner, bed and breakfast and many of the non-residents joined us too for some great Scottish fayre; the three-course meal certainly didn’t disappoint. Once

No longer can this event be called ‘Camping Imp Ecosse’

Photo: Dave Scott



fed, most people headed for the bar areas or the snug at the front of the hotel to catch up over a drink and a natter.

Saturday dawned bright with clear blue skies and after a hearty breakfast and booking in more arrivals to Rally Control, we headed off with a convoy of 30 Imps and Clans to Glenshee ski resort, taking in some great roads including the highest road in Scotland. All the Imps performed admirably up the long steep incline, over what was once was known as the Devil’s Elbow, due to its hairpin bends. These have been straightened out now but it’s still a fair climb to the top. I opted to park the cars in a long line next to the main road, maximizing the impact of such a large number of Imps for all to see. An hour or so was spent at the resort with some hardy souls venturing up in the chair lift, despite the fact that it was minus 3°C at the top! The return journey was a reversal of the inward route due to the mountains and a pleasant walk through Pitlochry in beautiful sunshine was enjoyed by many on the way back.

Saturday night saw an unbelievable 70 people seated for the three-course dinner with many more opting for the smaller menu



Imp Ecosse Organiser Jim Fraser’s Chamois Coupé
Photo: Michael Hill

Convoy to Glenshee

Photo: Barry 'Baz' Blackmore



available in the hotel's public bar. The staff were amazingly slick at serving such a large crowd and again the food was marvellous. After the meal, there were just short of 90 people seated in the dining room – a record attendance for Imp Ecosse. Scott and I had to pick up the pace a bit after the

meal for the quiz as we needed to clear the dining room by 10.30pm, so that it could be set for breakfast before the staff finished for the night. Scott rattled through the quiz with the questions being read out, so reducing the opportunity to Google the answers! After the quiz, we invented another new sport, following on from the 'Extreme Raffling' that we held in a snowstorm at Killin several years earlier. This time it was 'Speed Raffling' with Scott selecting a prize, Chairman James Henderson pulling out tickets from the rotating cylinder and me calling out the numbers. Senga and Stevie acted as runners, taking the prizes to the lucky recipients. Poor James was complaining of repetitive strain injury from the cylinder's handle but I did at least switch sides so that he could use his other hand too! After the raffle, it was a repeat of Friday night, with people chatting in the bar areas and snug into the wee small hours.



Glenshee: the Hill-Smiths look down at the Imps from the ski-lift
Photo: Gillian Hill

**"The sun shines on the righteous!"
Imps of the Hill-Smiths (foreground)
and John Fenton**

Photo: Michael Hill



Sunday was a bit greyer but still fairly mild and once all the moderns were moved from the front of the hotel, we lined up 37 Imps and Clans in two rows for the show 'n' shine. This made a great spectacle in front of the 300-year-old building and attracted many members of the public who came by to reminisce about their experiences with our favourite little cars. After some great group photos it was time for the prize-giving. We had decided to have something a little special for this year's trophies and opted for hand-thrown pottery quaichs made by a Scottish potter, Marion Husband from Auchtermuchty. These were finished with a central decal bearing the 20th anniversary logo and the winning class on each one.

Best Hillman was judged to be that of Alan Farquharson while Hans & Marion Slenders, who had come from Holland to join us, were awarded Best Sunbeam. Best Singer was Dave Robson's, Best Van/Husky (actually, the *only* Van/Husky present!) was the well-known example of Dave Andrews. Best Imp-based car was Scott Fanning's Clan (one of three present) and the furthest driven Imp was deservedly won by Gillian Hill after driving over 500 miles to get to Ecosse from West Sussex.

After the prize-giving, Scott presented the hotel manager, Caroline, with a bouquet of flowers and some chocolates for the staff. The whole team at the hotel looked after us fantastically well and nothing was too much trouble, proper Scottish hospitality at its best.

After a short break, those who were staying on until Monday departed on a shorter scenic run, taking in the spectacular views along the side of Loch Tummel on a great road with lots of twisty bits, perfect for an Imp. Then it was back over the mountain before a stop at The House of Bruar for a cuppa and a walk up the Falls of Bruar for those feeling energetic. More food was consumed on Sunday night with the portions seeming to get bigger each time! Another relaxing natter and after-dinner drinks finished off what Scott and I hope was a fitting way to celebrate 20 years of Imp Ecosse. A huge thanks to everyone who helped out over the weekend, especially Senga and Stevie for their sterling work with the raffle and Sue & Andy for the Regalia sales. Most of all, a much deserved thank you to everyone who came along to help us celebrate this milestone event and we hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!



Glenshee
Photo: Gordon Hill-Smith