

North Birmingham

News

NEWSLETTER

Flight of Fantasy – Sept 7th 2014

I had planned a route around Rea Brook and Clee Hill to Burwarton. I drove the proposed route last Monday. The first section Deuxhill, Eudon George, Stottesdon and on to Neen Savage ford were fine with super views of the rolling Shropshire countryside. The next section around Milson and Corley were awful and I did not want to take the run this way on safety grounds. Loose gravel, mud inches deep and potholes abounded, so this was cut out and the main road over Clee Hill was



substituted. No real hardship, as the views here are stunning. When I got home, the car was covered in mud and cow muck to the extent that I took all four wheels off and jet-washed the wheel-arches and the underside, Ray asked me what the smell was, I said it wasn't me!

Sunday 7th was a glorious day and



twenty riders signed on at Tony's Diner for the abbreviated run. Brian and Pat Emsall brought the oldest machine of the day, the splendid 1928 Triumph model N combination. How many



miles has this machine covered on our runs? Bill Harley's Tiger 100 was so shiny that it made my camera produce dazzling starburst effects.

The atmosphere seemed relaxed and people were not too anxious to leave the sanctuary of Tony's. Bill Danks was still finishing his breakfast at 10.50. We went to the bikes to discover Martyn Round unable to start the Ariel. A good spark was confirmed and so the main jet was the prime suspect.

Bill suggested that I carry on so I left to catch up with the peloton. I rode pretty much solo until just after Neen Savage where I caught up with Brian and Pat on the Combo.



Dave Roberts on the big V Twin Matchless trying (unsuccessfully!) to keep his feet dry at the Neen Savage ford

At the Crown at Hopton Wafers was an impromptu coffee stop. I did not know if people would want to stop after only twenty miles or about an hour's ride through the lanes. Well, everyone stopped apart from Ian Harris, who didn't realise we were going to, and it made a pleasant break (right). It was here that Dave Spencer pointed out that I had made a mistake with the mileage. Having done the route on separate days I had mixed the totals so that a couple of readings were lower than previous ones. It was suggested that I added a disclaimer to the route, "Mileages may go down as well as up; you may not get back all the miles you originally invested. Terms and Conditions apply."

The route took us over Clee Hill and down to Bitterley in the shadow of Titterstone



Clee Hill. Some road works caused problems last week but the only other trouble today seemed to be that Dave Williams failed to notice the red phone box marked on the route. However he arrived safely at the lunch-stop, The Boyne Arms at Burwarton, who were expecting us and regaled us hospitably with drinks and snacks. Bill Danks and Martyn Round had already safely arrived, the trouble being slipped ignition timing after the retaining nut had come off the magneto spindle, fortunately causing no damage. Then, after due refreshments, we judged The Flight of Fantasy, awarded to the machine, other than your own that you would like to take home. We are a disparate band of enthusiasts as the first ten voting slips were for ten different bikes. A consensus emerged with Martyn Griffith's fine 1951 Tiger 100 (below) just squeezing into pole position. Well done to Martyn and to all the other very fine and well-presented machines that took part. A question arose as to why we did not have a "Best Opposite Class" (a traditional and little understood VMCC category) and thinking about it, it would be "The Bike you would least like to take home"! A bit unkind, but I did laugh a bit. (*The Flight of Fantasy? Ed.*)

The Landlady of the Boyne Arms was very happy to have us and we have a cordial invitation to return, so you organisers have a possible venue. Many thanks to all those who turned out, and made it a success. They say you can't please everyone but most people seemed to enjoy the day, I know that I did.

Thanks again, Trevor.



Autumn Run – October 12th 2014

Organising the Autumn Run is more of a gamble with the weather than it is for most; 2012 was a beautiful day, then 2013 was absolutely foul, so what was it to be this time? Well OK actually, foggy first thing, but lovely when and where the fog lifted. As an optimistic run organiser I told people



it may be 'misty' and urged them to focus on the fact that it wasn't raining. The gathering at Tony's was in fog, and not only that, the car park was full of Honda Gold Wings, massive 3 wheelers and other things we don't normally see (below). This was a party who had gathered there prior to an expedition to Llandudno and we spread ourselves round in amongst them. In due course 20 people turned up and signed on, a broad selection of machinery including 2 each of Norton, Ariel and AMC, 1 Honda, 5 Triumphs, including Brian and Pat Empsall on the 1928 Model N Combination, and 5 BSAs, including 2 Golden Flashes, one of them mine, and Paul and Chris Harris in the Triking. I had agonised over whether to bring the Flash or the Velocette, deciding on the Velo until I took it off the stand and discovered a rear wheel puncture, so left it at home in disgrace.

Trevor Bull arrived on his 1940 Triumph T100 and was immediately accosted, before even getting off his bike, by a young lady member of staff from the café who greeted him by name and told him his wife had phoned and needed to speak to him as he'd left his telephone and keys behind. Trevor was bemused to say the least that his fame and recognition had spread so far, until I told him that I had personally already been accused by the young lady of being Trevor Bull and had pointed him out to her.

There was a certain amount of dithering about while people waited and hoped for the weather to clear, you could see the sun through the fog and it looked as though it may be OK later. Then the other party gathered round to be instructed by their organiser and they got ready to leave. Theirs was to be a convoy so one of them stopped the traffic on the main road while they all lined up, and they were off. It was then time for us to go. Ron Higgins set off first to show an example, and I hung around to go last in case I could offer assistance if there were any problems.

As we wound our way north through Bromley and Rindleford, and then Badger and Beckbury, visibility was good, but it was too foggy to see the views. The first straggler I came across was Martyn Round, whose 1939 Ariel had spat it's spark plug out, not the first time that's happened to someone this year. The threads were OK and Martyn had a spare so was not delayed long. Next was Trevor Bull, who was putting on an additional coat and warmer gloves; it was a chill morning. After Sutton Maddock we descended to cross the river at Coalport and I thought the fog would be thicker there, but no, it cleared and we had a lovely ride through Ironbridge

(below).



After Ironbridge we rode into Coalbrookdale and then left up the hill to Little Wenlock. I had warned Brian about the 'steep' hill, but he had no problem with it at all. Then it was alongside The Wrekin, down towards Wellington and back into the fog. It was while going down here that Brian and Pat nearly had a deer accident. I was following and saw a deer run across the road in front of them. Just as Brian was pointing to it, two more made the



same dash, and there really can't have been much clearance between them and the outfit. At this point the run organisers curse struck, a road closure, but everyone made it to the coffee stop at the Long Lane Café, either by following the diversion or ignoring the road closure. After the coffee stop we made our way back through Wrockwardine, round the other side of the Wrekin, where the sun came out again and from there on it was a lovely day. We went across the river to Cressage then to Acton Burnell, Frodesley and up over the shoulder of Lawley Hill to Broome and Hughley. A feature of the afternoon for me was

coming across Martyn Round sitting quietly waiting for Trevor Bull to come back from up the wrong road. The first time it was because Trevor thought he knew where we were going

(always a risky presumption on our runs!), and the second because his speed and the muddy road made braking to turn left unwise.

By about 3pm everyone that had not already peeled off for home had arrived back at Tony's, with most going in for a meal of one sort or another. As far as I could tell everyone had enjoyed themselves, no one had got wet and there had been no mishaps. That must count as a successful day.

Thanks to all who came, hope to see you next year.

Dave Spencer

Above: Brian and Pat Empsall on the lane up out of Coalbrookdale to Little Wenlock.
Right: Founder Members of the NBS Healthy Eating Group giving a tutorial at Tony's Diner. (*Your editor does realise that he lives in a glass house, but then he's usually the one with the camera!*)



Levis Cup Trial and Marjorie Cottle Trophy Trial - 28th September 2014.

As in previous years the week leading up to the event is one spent going over the preparations – mechanical or organisational and keeping an eye, or ear, on the old weather forecast! Fortunately the last couple of weeks in September remained settled and predominantly dry – and that included Levis Sunday – what a relief! Light early morning mist soon cleared and by 8.30 the signing-on table was being visited by a steady flow of entrants lead by Keith Sams (ABC) keen to receive route, number and time cards.



10.01am and this year's starter – Peter Ashen flagged away Bob Ashwin riding his 1913 Campion with, he told me later, lowered gearing so as to tackle the various hills and though Flagstaff and Farlow bank beat him he had no trouble on Whitbatch and his efforts gained him the George Yeomans Cup [Best Veteran]. Following Keith's ABC came a brace of 500 Rudge Multis and a Blackburn engined Sun ridden by Jon Smith (the latter 3 are shown above). Mike Stephenson astride his Ariel 'E' closed the first batch of vintage machines and was followed by the first of the Marjorie Cottle competitors; Ian Harris [50cc Kreidler Florett]. Sadly clutch control cable problems lead to Ian's early retirement which was disappointing for all as many believe that this diminutive machine would have given a competitive performance. The next batch of six spanned the period from 1924 – Jon Phillips' L-24 BSA to 1942 – Reg Eyre's Ariel W/NG, the latter being the first of the WD machines, a class that included Martyn Griffiths and Bruce Grant both on Triumph 3HW's, Trevor Bull- Triumph T 100 and Jonathan Jinks – BSA M20.

With John Morris riding his ISDT DMW (seen right in Ludlow) awaiting the starters flag the sprinkling of Marjorie Cottle entrants throughout the starting line prompted a couple of spectators to ask why there were "modern" machines entered? Happy with the answer given they were somewhat surprised to realise that the youngest "modern machine" (Honda CB160) was 48 years old and that John rode the DMW in the Austrian ISDT amongst others.

Jenny Hart and Frances Arrow (BSA Trike - below) were the sole representatives of the three wheel fraternity this year as there were neither Morgans nor sidecar outfits entered and once they were away it left the road clear for Tim and Trish Penn –BSA Empire Star. Sadly 'cush-drive' problems meant an early retirement for them whilst fuel and clutch problems on Flagstaff Hill prompted Dave Spencer – BSA Sloper to return to base and home – though an afternoon spent in the garage saw him return and crest Flagstaff a few days later – problem solved!



Once away there is little for the Clerk of Course to do other than chat with some of the spectators over coffee and wait for the returning riders. The day stayed fine and riders returned with smiles though maybe a little tired and as trailers were loaded and farewells said we waited for Steve Weller on his 98cc James Comet chaperoned by Adrian (Skippy) Lockrey (1919 Triumph) This was Steve's first "vintage event" and though he walked up a number of the hills he finished the event – just as Skippy ran out of fuel and paddled the last fifty yards! For his effort and tenacity Steve is the recipient of the Endeavour Award this year.



No report would be complete without mention of the effort put in by the teams of marshals without whom this event would not run, they are drawn from both within and without the VMCC and all pulled together by Bill Danks. My thanks to them and to those who rode.
Martyn Round.

Results:

Levis Cup:	Gordon Smith,	Levis Model A.
Alec Ross Cup:	Keith Sams,	Sopwith ABC.
Alice Round Cup:	Jenny Hart,	BSA TW-3.
Marjorie Cottle Trophy	Bob Sherras,	Francis Barnett Falcon.
Time Keepers Trophy:	Andy Geden,	BSA S29.
George Yeomans Cup:	Bob Ashwin,	Campion.
Bert LeVack Trophy:	Peter Kent,	Ariel Model D.
Omyga Trophy:	Richard Hobart,	Ariel NH.
Peter Ashen Rose Bowl:	Cathryn Barton,	BSA.
Sgt. H.J.Colley V.C. Trophy:	Bruce Grant,	Triumph 3HW.
Levis Tankard:	Stephen Nutt,	Levis Model A2.
Calthorpe 100gns Cup:	Mary Roberts,	AJS Model 22.
Endeavour Award:	Steve Weller,	James Comet.
Albert Mattox Trophy:	Peter Kent, Reg Eyre, Geoff Brown, Ariels Model D; W/NG; SQ-4.	

Winter Wander – 16th Nov 2014.

As has become customary, the season ending Winter Wander again featured both Southern and Northern start points, with routes organised by Martyn Round and Paul Harris respectively, both converging on Tony's Diner for lunch.

Southern Start

Well here we are at the end of another riding season and the Winter Wander is upon us again – strewth, you wonder where Sundays go! The route sheet helpfully (I hope) warned of narrow and suspect surfaces together with low angles of sunlight on a particular stretch



beyond Liverage and before Rock - it needn't have bothered for unlike the past three years we rode in a typically Novemberish sort of day that was Nosun, Nowarmth, November! What the heck... Bill Danks lead the charge from The Lock car park with a cry of "let's see if we can get the FTD" – we saw Bill again at the lunch stop! The RAF Triumph

exhausted Martyn's kickstart leg but a short push got him underway.

Our route took us over the familiar road over the top through Trimpley and into Bewdley. The ford through Gladder Brook didn't present any problems though the water level and flow were a little up on last year's. We dropped off the Heightington high ground down through Greenway and Rock to emerge at Pensax where we came across the Expectant Peter Gray playing with his 'phone – he was about to be a Grandad! At Stockton on Teme we lost a couple of riders who chose an accidental exploration of the Tenbury road rather than cross the Teme at Stanford Bridge.



Bob Ewins 1964 BSA Bantam and Mike Stephenson's 1960 BSA A10 combination

One of our members is a Gas Engineer....

The river crossing at Eastham was probably

the furthest point out, being some twenty five miles from the start. A short main road "blast" lead us back toward Bayton but as a concession – only for this year mind, we didn't take the Nineveh road to Cleobury, or the mud bath that was Aston Botterel but picked up the 'B' road to Six Ashes and so via Kinlet back to Bridgnorth and Tony's where, in the car park, we were reunited with Stuart Munroe's 'Tenbury Explorers' and the Northern contingent. On such a November day the café was warm and welcoming and despite the lure of a home cooked Sunday Roast one just had to sample the chips.....again! (One day I will confess all to the missus). *(If she's seen the Autumn Run report Martyn, the secret is out. Ed)* Thanks to all for riding. *Martyn Round*

Northern Start

A small dedicated gathering at the northern start for our last run in 2014 all choosing to ride well trusted British Machines.

Ron Higgins on his much travelled excellent 1958 BSA A10 rode over from Bridgnorth to sample some South Staffordshire countryside for a change. Brain and Pat Empsall rode down from



Lichfield on their trusty 1961 Triumph Speed Twin.

Maurice Trupp on his superb 1954 BSA B33. Bill Harley, forsaking Triumphs today, to ride his 1958 BSA B10 and Keith Little on his stunning 1959 Ariel Huntmaster.

A fine display of well over 50 year old machines to brighten the damp dull and chilly morning.

The route took a sweep through South Staffs into Shropshire crossing the Severn



Above: Keith, Ron and Bill in Historic Cannock. Left: Keith and Maurice all a blur in the murk

Gorge to Much Wenlock then via Bourton and Monkhopton to meet up with the western starters for lunch and usually banter at Tony's Diner in Quatford nr Bridgnorth.

All reported a safe enjoyable ride with the last of Autumns colours just about peering through the murk. *Paul Harris*