

Tour of Worcestershire 13th May 2018 - Sunshine, a Cloud and a Silver Lining

The Sunshine

A cracking day dawned after string of dubious forecasts and by 9.45 there were already bikes parked up at The Old Wagon & Horses pub in Ismere. Alan's gaffer – Marion - had dispatched friend Mal with the eagerly anticipated tin of lemon shortcakes, so it was amid cakey conversations that 15 machines and 1 pillion (Lesley, with Ian on his ES2) were signed on for the day's event.



Bikes ranged from two at 1939 through to one at 1987, with 2 Triumphs, 2 Morini's, 2 Moto Guzzi's, 4 BSA's, 1 Norton, 1 CZ, 1 Velocette, 1 Ariel and 1 Matchless. It was a delight to see Martyn Griffiths turn up on his lovely 3TA, determined as ever to overcome his difficulties to get there, though sadly not taking part in the run. And we were also pleased to see our webmaster, Mick Stanley, who had come along on his MZ to say hello, but not to come with us. Good to see you Mick, do make a day of it sometime. All machines were in splendid condition and we were raring to go.



I had planned a route of some 112 miles for the day. The first major hurdle is getting across the main spine roads from Birmingham, so this year we skirted the suburbs of Pedmore to pass the Old Halesonians Rugby Ground, briefly using the A456 to branch off to Clent, almost passing Julians patch - we hope your back problems soon improve. Using some pleasant lanes we wound our way to pass under the M5 & cross the A38 at Wychbold to get to more rural territory.

The Cloud

I had planned the route over the last 7 months or so by visiting it in several sections and linking them together, so I hadn't actually ridden the whole thing at a single sitting as yet. After about 16 miles, I arrived at a bend to find a gaggle of riders and bikes gathered around a dust covered and dazed Alan Bromwich, sat on the ground having had a mishap on a slow speed corner.

The Silver Lining

Whilst we were all gathered around deciding what to do, a young lady jogger arrived, assessed the situation and sprinted the half mile back home to get her car. Alan was then scooped into it and whizzed off to hospital with Stuart to explain things. It turned out that Alan had badly broken his collarbone, something that was not apparent to us at the time. It now seems that if it doesn't knit together, he may have to have it plated, though why he'd want a chromed collar bone defeats me. (*I'm not surprised, he is a bit of a 'Concours' type! Ed.*) Thirty minutes or so later she was back to sort us lot out, volunteering storage of Alan's and Stuarts bikes at her secure barn for as long as was necessary.

So, how long does it take 5 blokes to move 7 bikes half a mile down the road? Almost an hour! We'd never win a logistics battle. It's a wonder that further medical attention wasn't required as Stuart had taken the keys to his bike with him and I had to push it. Although the Morini was lighter than Alan's A10, which Jonathan rode to the barn, it was still a long hard push that left me sweating like a pig. Again our host came to the rescue with a tray of iced water for us all, to calm our fevered brows. John, Martin & Jonathan then carried on, shortcutting to the lunch halt at Winchcombe Station while Gary & I returned home to sort things out. So to date, I still have not ridden my own run fully.

It was planned then to pass close to Hanbury Hall, then via Crowle & White Ladies Aston, passing Croome Court this year, though I gather Ian & Lesley did stop off for coffee. Then via Bredon Hill to the lunch halt. We would then climb Sudeley Hill to join the ancient Buckle Street road passing Broadway Tower to descend, via Saintbury, to a potential riverside stop at Bidford on Avon. Then a cruise through the lanes via North Piddle to Droitwich and across to the finish back at The Wagon & Horses. Gary & I returned to the pub later to greet any finishers but none had arrived by 5pm, so if you did complete it - well done, and I'd like know how the run went for you. Alan, Gary & myself intend to complete the route ourselves just as soon as Alan is fit and able. Thank you, for attending.

I gather from Dave Spencer that the remaining route to the lunch break was not without incident either, so I will leave him to enlighten us.

Peter Gray

The Story Continues

So, a few miles after the start Ron and I nearly missed a right turn, my fault as I was leading, so pulled in to let traffic past before turning right and following Ian and Lesley on their Norton. As we did so, Alan and Gary came back from the other direction, having diverted off for petrol, and joined on the back. Some miles further on we came to the end of the first page of the route sheet and when Ian pulled over to turn the page over, I waved Ron past to take the lead as he already had page two loaded.

Then, while going along a narrow lane we first came up behind two horses and riders, so pottered along behind, it being far too narrow for us to pass or for them to suggest that we did. Then they came to a halt, there was an amount of scampering about and arm waving and they turned round and came back past us. I asked "Wossup?" and they said the road was blocked. Well, we NBS are seldom flummoxed by a road block so we rode on to see, and found Mike Cutler on his feet waving branches around. A fly tip of hedge cuttings had been dumped, completely blocking the lane, and Mike had made a way through sufficient for motorcycles at one side. Given that we had no three wheelers, we thought that would do and so carried on.



Then, at a cross roads just a few miles further on, there was another road block, this time with Road Closed signs and men in yellow jackets. "Wossup?" I again enquired. "The Crowle Fun Run, it's closed until 12.30" came the reply. We were meant to turn left in Crowle, but they would have none of it. Having discussed it with the men we turned left at the cross roads, then right at a T junction, and by some mysterious fluke, got back on the route, and there were no further problems continuing to the lunch stop at the steam railway station at Winchcombe. By now we were down to 4 bikes: me, Ron, Mike and Ian and Lesley, and no one else arrived for quite some time... What can have happened, did the road closure flummox them, and what happened to Alan and Gary, who had been right behind us?

Then my phone rang, it was Peter Gray in full Dalek mode, he has a hands free set in his helmet for conversing with Davros on the mother ship. All I could make out was “Alan” and “off” and something that sounded like “Exterminate....” I asked Peter to take his helmet off and try again, which he did, this time making more sense and we learned what had happened.

Now, for a run organiser, unexpected events, road blockages or diversions are a nightmare, all your carefully made plans can go awry, so my side of the conversation wasn't what Peter needed when he was probably already a bit stressed: “Where did this happen, was it before the road closure?” I asked. “Road closure?” He squeaked back at me, so I told him about that, and then “well was it before that lane was blocked with the fly tip?” I enquired. “FLY TIP?” he squeaked, getting a little more pent up as this went on. So I told him about that, though by now I wondered whether he thought I was pulling his leg.

In due course 10 bikes made it through to Winchcombe, the other six being ridden by Rob Todd, Peter Fisher, Jonathan Jinks, Paul Harris, Martyn Round and John Shaw.



As each rider arrived we had a debrief, with them telling us what they knew of what had happened, and others updating them on what we had learned from Peter and things they had missed, such as the road closure that had reopened by the time most got there. At the fly tip, later riders had met a local who had explained that he'd phoned the Council, who wouldn't turn out until a weekday, and that he had a delivery of some sort on Monday morning that needed to get down the lane. Our lot set to with him and moved the whole lot onto the verges. Rob Todd said it was like doing community service, though we didn't pry as to how he knew what that was like...

The best comment on all the events, length of run, and the fact that all that having happened, we were still in Winchcombe, was from Paul Harris: “Well, you have to say it's good value!” And so it was, well done Peter, mend soon Alan, and see you all next time.

Dave Spencer