

Autumn Run October 11th. 2015

For the last four years I had taken the Autumn Run into Shropshire, always a popular area, I thought that a change might be a good idea this year. I'd hate anyone to think we were set in our ways... Maybe a start point nearer the Black Country to ease journey times for some? This led me to The Vine Inn at Kinver, now where to go? Looking at the maps I saw a Museum near Wythall, which Google then told me was a Transport Museum, in fact mostly buses. Further research showed that on our date they had an Event Day, with additional attractions, buses running and so on, but a higher entry fee than usual. So I asked the question, gaining a favourable reply. We would be welcome, an area set aside for us to park, and riders would get in without charge. Result! We had become one of the additional attractions! Now to plan a route underneath the belly of Birmingham through countryside...



You'd think an Autumn Run would be more of a lottery with regards to the weather than summer runs, but this year we had often been hit by rain. As it turned out, the 11th October was a lovely Autumn Day, swelling the number from the 8 or 9 I expected had it been wet to a season's highest turn-out of 28, very rewarding for a run organiser, thank you

everyone. As more and more machines arrived at the Vine (above) I realised that the 23 route sheets I had brought weren't going to be enough, but fortunately there were a few people happy to manage without and follow someone else. One of these was prospective new member Nick Fitzpatrick (right) with his recently acquired 1954 BSA A7. With myself, Ron Higgins and now Nick there are three of us in our street. One more and I think we'll be applying for Section status.



Another new face and bike was Greg Stokes with his very nice and much admired 1957



Douglas Dragonfly (left). Both Nick and Greg were very welcome and I hope we'll be seeing them again. Most of the other riders were people we see regularly to a greater or lesser extent and as the numbers were so high I won't mention everyone here.

Soon after 10.30 the first riders started out, the route taking us up Church Hill out of Kinver and then through Caunsall and Churchill to Clent. Going up onto Clent Hill I came up behind three people on horses, so fell in slowly behind to wait till it was safe to pass. The leader pulled off onto a large grassy area on the left, and then I noticed the middle rider was holding a smartphone out in her right hand, apparently filming us. Was she a motorcycle fan, or was she seeking to record evidence of inconsideration? And what sort of evidence would that be if she felt safe enough to ride one handed? I can imagine how I would be treated if I filmed my own accident while riding one handed! Better wait here I thought, but then the rearmost rider waved me past, which I did, very carefully. I have no idea what was going on.

After Clent we went up Romsley Hill (more horses), before going through Fairfield and Catshill and ascending the Lickey Hills, past the old treacle mine workings from which the area gained its name. Then it was along through Cofton Hackett, Barnt Green and Hopwood.



Along the way we came to the run organisers curse, an unexpectedly closed road. Fortunately Bill Danks had taken charge, advising riders that it was OK to get through alongside the trench, or sending the nervous or the wide round a short detour. Thanks Bill.

On arrival at the Museum (left), we were ushered in



through the gates to a reserved area where we just managed to squeeze all the bikes in, the numbers having been far greater than I had forewarned them off. There was quite a bit of interest in the bikes from the bus enthusiasts and I heard comments that it was like the Ace Café, and that it was like a scene from *The Wild One* (left). Now I'm not sure about that, but I do now understand the look that Alan Bromwich aspires to, to go with his Triumph...

We stayed at the Museum for over two hours, with many of us availing ourselves of the very reasonably priced snacks in the café, along with the unfeasibly large wedges of fruit cake (they shall be nameless, I've embarrassed Martyn Round enough...).

Members had a good look round the museum, mostly buses but also the odd vintage fire engine, support vehicles such as a Land Rover, and a collection of electric vehicles. The scale of some of the restoration projects was daunting, putting some of our 'struggles' into context. I gained the impression that people enjoyed the visit, finding more than they expected, or more than they remembered in the case of people who had been before some years ago.

By about 2.15 it seemed time to move on and there was a degree of shuffling required to get bikes started and out, again drawing spectators. By the time almost everyone had left and I wanted to leave I noticed John Shaw's Velocette but no John to be seen anywhere. He later turned up at the finish, explaining that he'd been out having a bus trip around the countryside that he thoroughly enjoyed.



The afternoon route took us south east towards Tanworth in Arden and past Umberslade, where BSA Triumph had their Research and Development Department from 1967 to 72 (I believe some rudely called it Slumberglade). In Tanworth I saw the Goodhall's Norton ES2

parked outside the church. They later told me they had been visiting the grave of Mike Hailwood and his daughter. I didn't know that it was there.

After Tanworth we circled round through Ullenhall, Studley and Astwood Bank, avoiding Redditch, and then across to Hanbury, past the Jinny Ring Craft Centre, which gave some a landmark as to where they were, then Wychbold, Chaddesley Corbett, past Noel Clarke's and back to Kinver.

By the time we got back to The Vine the only food available was Sunday lunches, no snacks, but after the snacks at the museum that was too much. There were some pints of beer had in the sunshine instead and a sociable wind down from the day before making our way home.

Thanks to everyone who came, and a particular thank you to the Transport Museum. I'm already wondering where we should go next year.

David Spencer



Adrian (Skippy) Lockrey and his 1919 Triumph.