

Julian's Excursion – 9th April

Back in October last year Dave Spencer said that the date of run for 2017 had been changed as I had been so disappointed with the run in June, which started with twelve signing on but only six actually finishing due a variety of reasons. So this year I had the April run, which has always been well attended. So I thought we would try a new area heading north east out of Wolverhampton. Purely by chance I caught an article in our local paper where a group of enthusiasts had visited the Tettenhall Heritage Centre on the former site of the Great Western Railway depot at the old Tettenhall station.

Tettenhall Station is the only GWR-built station in Wolverhampton's boundaries, begun in 1913 as part of the Wolverhampton to Bridgnorth Railway, which opened in 1925 but the spur was never completed all the way through to Bridgnorth. Passenger services ran for seven years, but it then reverted to a goods-only line, a useful by-pass to the Black Country, though specials did take passengers from Tettenhall on occasions. An OO gauge layout of Tettenhall Station is being constructed inside the centre. Running right by the station is the old London to Holyhead road, replaced by Thomas Telford's upgraded route down the Rock, which is the other side of Meadow View Terrace, a row of houses, three of which were knocked down to let the railway through. Only 60 yards away is the work of another of the great British transport engineers, James Brindley, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, the first east-west bulk transport link in Great Britain. Work on that started 250 years ago, only half a mile from the centre at Compton Lock.



On the day of the run we were greeted by blue skies at Tettenhall. As riders arrived the volunteers from the centre called us over to park up outside the centre to look round whilst we signed on. People kept arriving in the car park, and I thought to myself I hope I have printed enough route sheets, in fact we ran out of room on the signing on sheet, and fortunately Dave Spencer had a spare copy.

We were made most welcome to look at the exhibits some of which were moved outside to make it easier to look inside.

Eventually we set off in the direction of Codsall. On turning right I was greeted by Peter Brind, stuck right on the traffic light with the engine of his 1955 Triumph T100 flooded, he turned round back to the car park to sort out the problem. After clearing the outskirts of Codsall we headed north up to Brewood. Whilst waiting at one of the junctions Peter Gray pulled up alongside, I enquired "where have you come from, you left at least 10-15 minutes before I set off" the reply was Alan Bromwich had a problem with oil pouring out from underneath the engine. Two breakdowns in under three miles, this was not turning out to be a good day.

The route took us to the east of Brewood where we came across a road closed sign, in tradition NBS style we were about to press on past the barrier when a local resident advised that a lorry was checking the power cables was right across the road and suggested a way to get on the A449 which we followed. Some riders made it through the 'closed' road OK, but when one group arrived a Police car was in attendance. It seemed that the lorry driver had called them out and, for once, closed really did mean closed! At Gailey we turned onto the A5 and first right back on the route towards Penkridge. This section of the road was shocking, the potholes were very dangerous to motorcyclists. At Cuttlestone we headed west over the river Penk through the picturesque villages of Whiston, Mitton, then heading north towards Bradley. At Aston we turned alongside the M6 towards Seighford. Passing through Seighford we turned towards Great Bridgeford via the ford, where we were greeted by around twelve riders who had all stopped, perhaps they fancied a break. Maurice Trupp was busy in amongst the B33 engine drying out the magneto after a not quite successful crossing. Whilst we were stopped a 4x4 car arrived and decided he did not like the sat nav instructions and turned round, then a quad bike came through the ford, closely followed by a Tesco delivery driver who proceeded to walk right into the centre of the ford to check the depth, get back in the van and drive through at quite a speed.

After this Maurice announced he was going to have another go at crossing the ford, he really doesn't like to be beaten. This time he got halfway before stopping and being given a push out, after which the magneto had to be dried again and the wellingtons emptied! Apparently Stuart Munroe had got through OK earlier on his Triumph T100C.



Once all the excitement has subsided we all pressed on towards Yarlet for the lunch stop at the Greyhound. With the warm weather everyone seemed most happy to enjoy the food/drink and company for the next hour.

After lunch we pressed on into the Trent Valley through more small pretty villages along the way such as Sandon and Milwich. Heading north now up to Mossgate where we turned north towards rough close on a fast B road. Then west towards Barlaston, due to some major roadworks we diverted south towards Stone joining the A34 for a short distance then turning right to Yarnfield on the quieter roads.



We then turned south on towards Sturbridge, then turning past the outskirts of Eccleshall and onto Ellenhall. The scenery along this stretch of road was beautiful at this time of year with all the wild spring flowers.

The final section back to rejoin the first part of the route took us through Ranton, Haughton and Church Eaton. The road then joined the Roman Road onto Stretton Hall, a fast stretch of road passing close by to the Shropshire Union canal, then onto Brewood and rejoining the morning section back to the start.

The day brought us two girder fork machines from Maurice Hardy (1933 BSA) and Jonathan Jinks (1939 BSA)



I think the pictures speak for themselves showing riders had been busy preparing their machines for the season ahead and the prettiest machine of the day from Paul Harris (1957 Moto Guzzi Lodola)

My thanks go to the 24 riders who signed on and 23 finished, the sun was out all day. I make that a resounding success and hope everyone enjoyed the day. Now where shall we go next year?

Julian Edwards