

## 21<sup>st</sup> August - Mike's Mid-Week Run

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August dawned bright and sunny. The start at Halfpenny Green Airport was from a parking area near to the Navigator Cafe, where a cordoned off area had been reserved for us and the barrier raised to let us through. A short walk along The Blue Line led across a taxiway to the Cafe itself, in the old control tower, and to the loo. 25 riders turned up including one visitor, a prospective VMCC member, who had ridden from Stratford upon Avon. Bikes ranged in size from Ian Harris's 50cc Kriedler to Norton Commandos, and a Hinkley Triumph. There was a good collection of girder fork examples, all looking splendid in the sunshine.



Left: Martyn Griffiths cadged a lift from the car park with Jeff Stirrop.  
Right: Bill Danks & Tiger Cub.

A short 11 mile first part run to the coffee stop took us north of the airport and onto the Bridgnorth bypass and then the Ludlow road to Millington Racing Engines, where we parked in front of an open hangar which houses a Hawker Harrier jump jet. We were met by Mr Roy Millington who told us a little about the aircraft and how it had arrived. It was transported partly dismantled and re- assembled on site. It was reconditioned into working order but does not have an airworthiness certificate.



Mr Millington then took us into the factory building where we had a full and very interesting guided tour of the production facility where they make rally and sprint car racing engines mainly for Mark 2 Ford Escorts. These are state of the art engines producing 350hp from 2 litres.

Machining is carried out on modern CNC machines including a 5 axis machining centre which machines a cylinder block complete in only two operations. We were then shown an engine running on the Dynamometer, including running up to full power at 8500rpm. That made a few ears ring! Finally, on returning to the bikes, Mr Millington climbed into the Harrier and ran its starter engine, but not the main engine, he told us that would have blown the back of the shed out!! The sound was very impressive in the confined space of the hangar.





Before leaving, Mr Millington insisted on taking a group photo, the result featuring a lot of smiling faces. Unfortunately these did not include Ian Harris, whose Kreidler had run out of sparks before Bridgnorth. To avoid bothering anyone else, Ian thoughtfully stayed out of sight until all had passed, before making his way home, eventually.

Because the time we would spend at Millington's was unknown, two routes were available to the lunch stop at Coalport China Works YHA café. A short one went through Morville, which joined the longer route at Much Wenlock. The longer route passing Cleobury North to Ditton Priors then to Stanton Long. There was a mixture of surfaces, some rough and potholed, then a stretch of new tarmac which was probably welcome to the riders of bikes with Rigid frames. The route continued on through Broadstone and Rushbury to join the B4371 to Much Wenlock. From Much Wenlock both routes followed the B4375 to Benthall, where there was tricky left turn and steep downhill into Ironbridge, passing the famous bridge on our left. That was followed by a short distance alongside the river Severn, to cross the river before turning right and on to Coalport for lunch at the China Museum YHA Cafe.

After lunch there was a short 15 mile run, through Badger and Claverley, back to the airport.

Thanks to all who came and the weather Fairy, who slipped in a little rain as well as sunshine. Thanks also to my Wife Sue, who dispensed the drinks and biscuits at the coffee stop. Sincere thanks to Mr Millington and all his staff for their hospitality, and to the staff at Halfpenny Green Airport for making us welcome. And not least to Ron Higgins, who checked the route and corrected my diagrams and spellin.

Mike Cutler