

Trent Valley Run - 10th July 2016

or

“The tale of an uneventful run on oldish motorcycles along lesser known lanes in Staffordshire and Derbyshire”

The weather the week before the Trent Valley Run exhibited what had become the norm for 2016; too many showers and not enough sunshine. So it was a joy to wake up on the day to dry roads and a promisingly light sky. Pat and I arrived at the start at Wall Island just before 10.00am to find half a dozen bikes and riders already there, a very full car park by the fitness centre (well it takes all sorts!) and a constant stream of car drivers buying



breakfast at the 24 hour drive through McDonalds (*indeed it does!*). By 10.30 ten motorcycles, one with a pillion, had assembled and were ready for the off.

The route skirted around Lichfield by passing through Wall (formerly know by the Romans as Letocetum) and then through back lanes to Chorley, Longdon Green and Kings Bromley. A brief canter along the main road before returning to country lanes through Hadley End, Newborough and Hanbury (site of one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history when an RAF munitions store blew up in 1944) and on to the coffee stop at the Boar's Head. Pat and I were surprised to arrive to just before 12.00 to find an empty car park, as we had left the start last and had not overtaken anybody! However it was not long before the other riders arrived having explored parts of Staffordshire the route had missed. While we indulged in coffee the empty car park became very full; it seems the Boar's Head is extremely popular for Sunday carvery prompt at 12.00.

The second part of the morning run took us across the River Dove (a tributary of the Trent), past Sudbury Hall (NT Museum of Childhood) and along more back lanes through Somersal Herbert, Marston Montgomery and Osmaston before finishing for lunch at Carsington Reservoir. (9th largest reservoir in the country, holding 7,800 million gallons when full).

After pies, chips, cake, tea and coffee (*Blimey, I'm surprised you could walk after having all that for lunch! Ed.*) we turned south through Hulland Ward to Longford. A couple of awkward junctions demanded careful route reading; a feat not managed by everyone and causing a few unplanned u-turns.

A few miles of open road led to the busyness of Hatton and Tutbury (over the river Dove again), a repeat visit to Hanbury and on through Tatenhill to Barton Under Needwood. From Barton it was on to Walton where we crossed the river Trent and then followed it south for several miles through the parklands of Catton Hall before re-crossing the Trent by the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas to finish at the cafe at Fradley Junction. There are now two cafes here and needless to say we ended up with half the riders in one and half in the other, which goes to show how easily vintage motorcyclists are led astray!

Brian Empsall



Above: Jonathan Jinks cunningly conceals a plate of chips behind a pile of riding gear....