

## 7<sup>th</sup> October – Autumn Run

For the last 3 years, for my Autumn Run, I've taken us to small museums of one sort and another but this year, after Julian's excellent Excursion in April to the Claymills Pumping Station, it felt time to ring the changes again. But not too radically different mind, I took us back to the White Horse Inn at Pulverbatch, south of Shrewsbury, where we went in 2012 and 2013. You know how it is with rural pubs these days, will the pub still be in business? Will Steve and Vicki still be there? I phoned up and was answered by a lady "is that Vicki?" I enquired, "No, Vicki doesn't live here anymore". Oh heck, size 10's in it again, but no, it turned out that the place is still owned by Steve and Vicki, but they are now running their chateau in France as a wedding venue, with gites for rent as well, and Vicki, a long term member of staff at Pulverbatch is now running it for them as manager. Phew, we're on! So, I got a route planned and Ron Higgins rode round to check the instructions and suggest improvements and clarifications. This third party check is an essential part of route planning, it's almost impossible to check your own route properly because you know where you are going. Even then, I had to do a last minute alteration because a sign sprang up in Bridgnorth saying that St. John's Street would be closed 'from the 7<sup>th</sup> Oct until 7<sup>th</sup> Oct'. Guess what the date of our run was.

All we needed now was some decent weather and sure enough the day before was properly foul, wet and horrible enough for one member to send me a text enquiring if I'd 'ordered better weather for tomorrow' (I think he's got some butterfly genes in him: reluctant to fly if it's raining). I assured him that all would be well on Sunday, and it was, albeit jolly cold. Enough so for me to dig out the merino wool thermal cat suit, now there's an image you could have done without.

I made my way to Tony's early so as to have some breakfast, and had arranged to meet John Williams there, a man who likes his breakfast. But he didn't arrive until it was too late to eat, his Triumph having shed a clutch cable nipple and he'd had to go back and get the Plan B Kawasaki. No breakfast, John was distraught, I gave him a hug but am not sure it helped, at lunchtime his lip was still quivering over the missed breakfast.



What John missed out on. And no, this wasn't mine! Tact inhibits me from saying whose it was, and I wouldn't want to embarrass my route checker.

In due course 19 people signed on for the run, which was pretty good, taking into account that a few had been lured away by a cylemotor event. We had four BSAs, making it a BSA day using the Danks calibration method, 3 Triumphs (though I think there may have been another one who didn't sign on), 3 Morinis, 2 each of Velocettes and BMWs, a Moto Guzzi, Honda, Harley, CZ and John's Kwacker.





Or was it an Italian Day? Three Moto Morinis, one Moto Guzzi and, err, my Velocette.



Brian and Pat Empsall, 1928 Triumph 500 N Deluxe, preparing for departure. The Atlantic convoy smokescreen facility wasn't used throughout, it cleared once they got going.

The route took us over the river and then along the Highley Road thorough Eardington and Chelmarsh, before turning right and heading for Stottesdon and then Ditton Priors. We briefly joined the Craven Arms road, before turning off and going through Rushbury to Wall, then joining the Church Stretton Road, again briefly before turning off to go through stone Acton to Cardington. This little use lane took us close to Caer Caradoc hill and gave some nice views. We then dropped down to the A49 at Leebotwood before turning off to go through Walkmills and Picklescott and, finally, to Pulverbatch where we gathered at The White Horse and found that Martyn and Elaine Griffiths had had a ride out in the car to come and join us for lunch. The morning route had been 44 miles.





Lunches at the White Horse were as good as on previous visits, a good choice of sandwiches, soup, full Sunday lunch and so on. As far as I could tell, people were pleased with what they had and an area had been set aside for us to sit together, making it a sociable gathering.



After lunch we headed down off the Shropshire Hills, making more or less straight towards The Wrekin, views of which were to be seen for much of the journey. We crossed the A49 in Dorrington and then headed for Acton Burnell and Cressage, on the approach to which I had a close encounter with a wasp, which appeared just in front of my left eye walking up the visor. On the inside! I put the visor up, which took the wasp with it and shortly stopped to take the helmet off and have a look. It was still there, between visor and helmet but it hadn't stung me so I let it out to go and scare someone else. Meanwhile up ahead Alan Bromwich and Peter Gray suffered what a pilot would call a 'Bird Strike'. As Alan describes: "I was following Peter Gray when two fully feathered Male pheasants appeared over the hedge in front of him from the right and it looked as though they were going up and over the hedge to the left narrowly missing Peter. When the second bird decided to abort and flew back heading straight for my helmet. Anyway the upshot was that I headed the said pheasant to my right and carried on with just the birds snot all over my visor!"



The route then took us over the River Severn at Cressage and along through Leighton and Buildwas to Ironbridge, where I gather some may have stopped for an ice cream before going through Coalport, up to Sutton Maddock and then homewards. Thanks to those who came for your company and for making it a good day out.

David Spencer