



*High the vanes of Shrewsbury gleam
Islanded in Severn stream
The bridges from the steepled crest
Cross the water east and west...*

A E Housman: 'A Shropshire Lad' - XXVIII

THE CLUB - SPRING RUN 2018

April 13th to 15th - West from Shrewsbury

Organisers: Andrew Smith & Martin Lambert

'A Shropshire Lad', the book written by Alfred Edward Housman in 1896, is a collection of 63 poems, almost all of which are about lost loves and death. Your scribe felt duty bound, having been alerted to its existence by a Learned Member of The Club, to research the work for suitable quotes for the run report. I have, and conclude that a bigger collection of misery I have yet to read...

It seems old A E (*right*) was a morose sort of chap whose mother died when he was twelve. Alfred was as gay as the village maypole, as was his brother Laurence and his sister was a lesbian. His father was a country solicitor who took to drink – understandable with such a family in those less enlightened times. Whether AE's work contributed to his downfall is unknown!



However Housman was, in your scribe's humble opinion, a bit of a fraud. 'A Shropshire Lad' was actually written in Highgate, North London and he wasn't even a real Salopian having been born in Fockbury (!), Worcestershire. Apparently he could though, if standing tippy-toed on the seat, see the Shropshire Hills from his upstairs cludgy window.

An indisputable fact though is that our co-organiser Andrew Smith is, most definitely, a Shropshire Lad and along with his partner in crime, Martin Lambert, he was waiting on the car park of the Albrighton Hall Hotel to greet arriving members with his renowned and customary enthusiasm...

A Welcome in the Shropshire Hills...

They say 'You never get a second chance to make a first impression' and with two such erstwhile organisers, that was certainly true for this run. From the moment we turned off the A528, it was obvious that the experience gained in marketing motorcycles at the highest European level had raised the presentation levels of this run to new highs. Anyway, enough of this anal smoke blowing, let me show you...



Nothing left to chance here, from the main gate to parking we knew which way to go. Reception too was clear, once we had found the hotel front door that is. There were many fruitless attempts to get in via the locked French windows of the restaurant!

Some of our rooms were in the main hotel, some in the 'School Masters House' and some in the 'Stable Wing'.

Of course with many of us approaching our dotage, confusion reigned as we tried to find the Stable Block (as opposed to the Wing) or to manage the vagaries of opening the locked door to the School Masters House whilst balancing helmet, panniers and various other motorcycling paraphernalia.

Still, it's all part of the fun and there was a reward awaiting those who cracked the Albrighton's opposite take on an Escape Room and gained entry to their billet...



Right: Please enjoy irresponsibly.



So what I can I tell you of this stately pile we were to call home? Well, the village of Albrighton was bought from the Crown by the Ireland family sometime after the Battle of Shrewsbury in 1403 and if my 'old money' conversion is correct, they reportedly paid £292.13.11d for it; slightly less than 2 brand new Fizzies back in the day!

The Hall claims to have been built in 1630 by David Ireland (the first man to settle in Shrewsbury apparently) and his son Thomas. The family then owned Albrighton Hall for five generations before they ran out of heirs to pass it on to and it reverted to the Crown. The hall then had more owners than a dodgy used bike before eventually becoming the

Royal National College for the Blind in 1953. In this guise, one of its best known boarders was the Rt Hon David Blunkett. It eventually became an hotel in the late 1990s.

We arrived on a grey and murky day and most of us had ridden through some mizzly rain en-route to the digs. It was just like most of the days so far this year, apart from those when it was hissing down or snowing that is! Whilst planning and reccyng the run, our intrepid organisers had experienced everything the weather could chuck at them, except for sun and dry roads. Oh for the heady days of 2012 when Shropshire was declared a drought zone with the worst water shortage since 1976!

Right: An arriving Martyn sports 'appropriate' seasonal garb!



Club Ale and Dodgy Shoes...

Now your scribe is always banging on about the importance of decent ale to the perceived success of run planning and the Wood's Brewery Shropshire Ale certainly hit the mark here; we even got to see how it's made but more of that later. And just to be sure that our members knew what to quaff, we even had our own pump clip! That's attention to detail that is, right there.

Similar attention to detail was paid by some members in packing their gear for Friday's 'casual dinner' and some, well, less so...



Left to Right: Shirt? Check! Shoes? Chiselled, if you must, but conversely (see what I did there?), the pair on the right are like farting in a lift: wrong on so many levels!

With an hour and quarter allocated to catch up in the bar with old friends, members (and guests) we hadn't seen for a while and to give the newly issued members' Privilege Card a test run, we were all looking forward to the scran when the dinner gong sounded at a quarter to eight...



Guests Introduced and Norman's History Lesson...

It was great to see Tony Dawson back on this run after his enforced absence of last autumn and looking fit as a flea too. The Chairman duly called upon him to deliver Grace before we tucked into the Cream of Shropshire Soup, Roast Loin of Pork and Vanilla Cheesecake that were to make up Friday's supper.

Before the feeding frenzy started however, the Chairman invited members to introduce their guests who were:



Mark Davies, introduced by Bob McMillan.

Mark has been on other runs during and just after his time at Honda Europe, the last one being autumn '13 at Pembroke Dock. Now making a considerable name for himself in the management of Welsh Rugby, he has added the job of Chief Executive at Pro Rugby Wales to his day job carrying out the same role for Llanelli Scarlets.

His mugshot left is shamelessly lifted from the Sunday Times and credited to Ben Evans.



Tony Campbell, introduced by Norman Hyde.

This was Tony's first run. Recently appointed to the role of Chief Executive of the MCIE, a post of course held in the past by two other club members - Peter Sheen and David Taylor - Tony was previously the 'Ead Lad at Piaggio Group and responsible for the fortunes of the Vespa, Aprilia, Moto Guzzi and Gilera brands. Tony is pictured right with a new found chum.

Stephen Burgess (L) and Steve Bellars (R), introduced by Simon Hill.



Stephen Burgess has been on numerous runs and this was his third successive appearance before his nomination for membership.

Stephen's company performs invaluable service to Simon's second guest's employers, BMW.

A new face to the club, Steve Bellars is BMW's Service Operations Manager (Motorcycle) and a thoroughly good egg he is too! Hopefully, we will see more of him on future runs.

As Mr Burgess rarely removed his baseball cap during the weekend, his smiling face was taken on the Thetford Run last spring.



Kevin Howells, introduced by Andrew Smith.

Kevin is now doing very nicely thank you as the owner of Datatag which as well as being the security marking system of choice for the motorcycle industry, is also a key player in the plant hire and construction equipment businesses too.

A local lad, Kevin agreed to sponsor the cheese and port for this run although your scribe suspects that as an ex-Yamaha employee before he took over Datatag from them, he may well have been 'persuaded' by Mr Smith in this act of selfless generosity!

Tim Albone, introduced by Dave Martin.

Another familiar face, Tim is always described by Dave as an expert 'metal mangler' but a little research on his company,

Maysmith, reveals a specialist precision engineering company supplying quality work across a diverse range of industries of which the motorcycle industry is just one!

Tim is pictured right, alongside daft Frank, fiddling with his loose change...



And so with the guests introduced we were treated to an account of the Battle of Shrewsbury by the club history buff, Norman.

As previously mentioned, this action took place nearby in 1403 between the seemingly duplicitous Henry IV and his previously supportive Henry 'Harry Hotspur' Percy whom the former had double-crossed. It was, we were told, the first time English Archers ranged against each other on English soil. The battle ended when Hotspur was shot in the face and died when he

opened his visor to see where he was going; no Pinlocks in them days. Owing to confusion as to whether it was Henry IV or Hotspur who had been mortally wounded (and thus forfeited the match) the battle fizzled out with many unsure as to who had won!

Your scribe confesses to not quite keeping up with Norman's account of the battle, interesting though it was, especially when reference was made to John Bradmore at Kenilworth Castle to whom he credited (quite rightly) with patching up King Henry's son Prince Henry, later Henry V, who had also taken an arrow in the face during the scrap.

Anyway, it was a ripping tale and if you would like the full lowdown on the encounter, click on this here [wikilink](#).

After the history lesson (a day without learning is a day wasted) we were finally allowed to tuck in to the soup!

Poacher Turned Gamekeeper and Wither We Go...

With the soup duly despatched, Chairman Dan again stood to introduce the quiz, this time authored by Nick Jeffery presumably as a thinly disguised ploy to stop him winning (again). Papers were distributed in exchange for the now customary £1 donation to the beer fund and during the main course we cogitated the questions, and how we would answer them with only 2 pens between 40 of us!

Sometime later in the evening, Nick was to battle manfully through a cacophony of noise that would have drowned out a Velocette Roarer at full chat to give the answers; there was much tapping of glasses with cutlery and cries of "Gentlemen please!" before we found out that Norman had won with a score of 18 points from a possible 36. There was no prize, just glory. Runner up was Ben Matthews with 16 points. Ben later admitted that his was a joint effort with Graham Matcham who, for the first time in a club quiz, correctly answered the tyre question!

With all that settled and a return to general background noise, Run Leader Andrew was called upon to deliver the run briefing. But this was not until after a rather surprising announcement from the Chairman that Steve Callahan was again to act as Sergeant At Arms. Now we pretty much guessed this but part of the fun is not knowing *precisely* until it's too late! Time would tell if affected anyone's behaviour...

Right: Andrew briefs the wider audience, Blakey's clearly unimpressed.

Below: The wider audience!



Andrew began, by thanking the members and guests for an excellent turnout to "God's County" so called (by him) because that was where he was born and bred. Apparently, the folk hereabouts are "Thick in the arm and weak in the 'ead". And, he continued, "The men wear wellingtons and sheep run fast..."

Norman was then thanked for stealing the first part of Andrew's brief by his recounting of the Battle of Shrewsbury earlier and Nick Jeffery and Martyn Roberts were also thanked for staying awake this long!

Anyway, Andrew reminded us that Shropshire is famous in off-road circles for having "The best motocross track in the country, Hawkestone Park", and being the largest inland county in England by area. With the tourist information nailed, he moved on to an overview of the timings and route explaining how he had 'leveraged' his personal and family connections to organise a pretty special afternoon tea stop.

With the overview fixed in our minds, Martin then took over to detail the specifics of the route.

Referring us to the excellent full colour A3 sized map provided in our welcome packs, he told us of the road types and surface conditions and suggested that with no known sites of Mr Gatso's infernal cameras en-route, we should "Let our consciences be our guide" on the quicker sections of the run. With some sections of gravelly single track road to be tackled, he also urged patience ["Frank"] as better riding conditions would soon re-appear!

It was, as you would expect given the expert organisation thus far, a comprehensive brief but your scribe was left musing: if Shropshire is so good, why will we be spending the best part of 80% of the day in Wales? Perhaps someone in the bar would enlighten me before the kitty closed...

The Weather Fairy Comes Good and It's Only Flat at the Bottom...



I don't know how they had done it or who had been paid off to 'make it happen' but the early morning weather forecast on Auntie Beeb was excellent; our organisers had 'ticked another box' in the Boys Own Guide to run organisation. It was going to be dull early on improving to flag-cracking sunshine by lunchtime. No rain!

Off to breakfast then with a spring in our step for a good old load up of fatty, can't-have-at-home comestibles. Actually, most of our group ate very healthily, but that's hardly Rock 'n' Roll is it?

There was a slight delay before the scheduled 07.30 call to breakfast arms but as can be seen *right*, there was a very comfortable reading room next to the dining area. It was just like a fusty old gentleman's club: full of fusty old gentlemen!



So, to the steeds, ready for the prompt 08.45 start demanded by Mr Smith last night. Everyone was happy, well bar one that was. Frank had a puncture in the rear wheel of his Doo-katty...

Fortunately, we had not one but two RAC chappies with us on this run, only one van but two 'very, very nice men' (or was that the AA, I forget) in Chris and Paul. With two tyre gurus also in attendance, Alan Blake and Graham Matcham, ready to lend a hand with the tyre levers, surely Frank's problem would be no more than a slight inconvenience?



And so it proved; before you could say "What's that funny hissing noise?" Chris and Paul had located the puncture, plugged it and re-inflated the tyre. What amused everyone in earshot though was the RAC recommendation to Frank to "Take it easy" on the repair. Frank? Take it easy? Did they not know who he thought he was?

Whilst looking initially worried (left) Frank's fiendish grin (right) says 'I'll soon have that high spot worn off!'



With that minor repair sorted, there was the usual titting about behind our run leader ahead of departure. However a slightly stressed looking Tail End Charlie, Martin, did a grand job of fussing around and chivvying everyone up with his usual wit and repartee, the best of which was saved for Mark Davies who only awoke five minutes before the off!

When the wheels finally rolled, we pulled on to the A528 only four minutes behind schedule, remarkable!

Strange Names and the Most Disappointing Shop in the World...

The first few miles heading north were to be virtually the only ones on 'A class' roads until well after coffee, by which time we would be deep into the Welsh Badlands. Seemingly, in just the blink of an eye, at Myddle, we turned on to a link road leading to the B4397 which would see us heading almost due west to Lake Vyrnwy or as the Taffs call it, to confuse the English of course, Llyn Efyrnwy.

Noticeable on the route map after joining the B4397 (but not from the road) was something called 'The Berth' which is just north of the road and very close to the village of Baschurch. A bit of rootling around has led to the discovery that The Berth is, or more correctly was, an Iron Age hillfort on private farmland. Other than academic speculation, nothing is known about it and there are apparently no archaeological plans to put that right. So, the only thing I can tell you is that it is the only hillfort in Shropshire that's not actually on a hill. Bit of an anti-climax really, sorry!

Just after crossing the railway line in Baschurch is a small Chinese Takeaway with a name that just made me chuckle. Looking on Google maps reveals an image, taken in 2009, showing two oriental eateries side by side. As only the one on the left remains these days I wonder if there was a Chinese turf war or whether the China Garden was just Wong Lee sited next door. (Ed: Put at least a couple of quid in the Sergeant's kitty for that one come autumn...)



Next up after Baschurch was Ruyton-XI-Towns, a curious name as I think you'll agree. A settlement built up here before the Norman Conquest and the village was given its strange moniker in the 12th Century. Unlike the nearby Welsh who have a penchant for stringing together unpronounceable names - think Llanfairporgogyllstoppg - the abbreviation 'XI' was used to encompass Coton, Eardiston, Felton, Haughton, Rednal, Ruyton, Shelvock, Shotatton, Sutton, Tedsmore, and Wykey. A much more sensible way to go about things I think.



In addition to these aforementioned oddities, this short stretch of road either side of the A5, was to throw up one more giggle: no, not that much missed Yamaha moped of the same name, this was the village of Knockin which has a Post Office come trading post which proudly proclaims to be 'The most disappointing shop in the World'.

Left: It's all about expectation and delivery. Apparently their TripAdvisor reviews are none too good either!

Beyond Knockin and within 30 minutes of leaving basecamp, we were out of Shropshire and into Wales; the border runs for a short distance down the A483 right where we crossed it. From there

on to the Lake Vyrnwy Hotel there was nothing but a twisty B-road, a short section of the A490 and the glorious Welsh scenery to occupy our minds.

Right: Arrival at Lake Vyrnwy. Can you guess what Dave's was?



A Home From Home and an Hour of My Life I'll Not Get Back...

Relax and sigh, aaaah!



The view from the terrace of the Lake Vyrnwy hotel, captured above by David O'Neill's panoramic thingamabob, is as wonderful as it is familiar, to our senior members at least, the Club having been here before in 1976, 1979 and 1984.

The last of these visits was organised by Peter Sheen to mark the Club's 21st Anniversary and included no less a guest than John Surtees. Mike Jackson was the then Chairman and he penned an excellent report to which I have referred before when we passed close by on Bob McMillan's Snowdonia run of 2013. It's on the Club website so have a read.



Some things have changed since '84 and some remain the same. Back then, Peter's proposed route was recced and committed to memory just the day before, and by the Committee. Members were broken into two groups for the ride, each with a leader and tail end charlie. And apparently, the Guinness flowed freely at the lunch stop! What hasn't changed though is the amazing camaraderie enjoyed within the Club and, regrettably, that we don't meet all the members on each run.

Arriving at the hotel we parked where we could and made a bee-line for that terrace and the coffee and biscuits. This somewhat haphazard approach was to bite one member on the bum soon...

Suitably refreshed, we set off again, initially along the lake's north shore before the road became a single track at Rhiwargor. It was a challenging piste, initially bordered by woods then open valley as we headed towards Bala. Of course there was mud, gravel, potholes and sheep thrown in to make it interesting.

Later, an excited Nick Hopkins, told me how BSA had used this stretch of road to secure the Maudes Trophy in 1938, with an M21 Combination and an Empire Star locked in top gear, something he later corrected by explaining the top gear bit was across London, in traffic.

And so dear reader, bowing to Nick's greater classic knowledge, your scribe duly researched, *in depth*, this epic event: 20 climbs over Bwlch y Groes followed by acceleration, speed and braking tests at Brooklands. 20 more climbs and finally, that traverse of London. I found links to the Club via Founder Member Bert Perrigo, who masterminded BSA's Maudes Trophy attempts in the late 30s. I had it all worked out in my head how I would describe all this to you. Then I looked at the map...

Right: Our route was the red one, the Maudes Trophy route is marked in yellow gleaned from Wiki's list of [Welsh Mountain Passes](#).



I mentioned it before, I'll say it again, a day without learning is a day wasted. Still we *had* ridden part of this famous test 'hill', the bit from Dinas Mawddwy up to just before the summit of Bwlch y Groes: it was on the aforementioned spring run of Bob's in 2013, and I had referred to it in the report! So, what did I learn today? Two things; my memory is not what it was and Nick's Motor Cyclists Annual of 1939, which listed the road as running from Lake Vyrnwy to Bala, was a complete waste of two and a tanner!

Frequently Passing Water and Where's Arthur?

When Andrew had delivered his brief of Friday evening he had thanked Bob Mac for letting us ride 'his roads'. Anyone following Bob on Facebook knows he is riding this area virtually every week in his quest to wear out motorcycles faster than Honda can build them! Betwixt Bala and lunch we would retrace some of that spring '13 route, initially the A4212 that loops north around the controversial Llyn Celyn.

Back in the 1950s it was decided that the village of Capel Celyn and its surrounding 800 acres, 12 farms, the Post Office, school chapel and adjoining cemetery would be flooded to create Tryweryn Reservoir (Llyn Celyn) to supply the good folk of Liverpool with water.

As you can imagine, the locals were none too chuffed about this and so marched around Liverpool in protest where they were met with insults, rotten tomatoes and shouts of 'Calm down, ay, ay, calm down'. Returning home disillusioned, a more direct sabotage campaign was mounted including blowing up an electrical transformer on the building site. It all sadly failed and the valley was flooded in 1965.



Blissfully unaware of all this history of understandable Welsh Nationalism, we just enjoyed the road which was fast and smooth, with sweeping bends that would surely test the efficacy of Frank's puncture repair.

After looping around the top of the lake it was a brisk ride following the course of the picturesque river Prysor, to the fuel stop just by another man-made reservoir that we would only catch the briefest of glimpses of as we turned and headed south on the A470. This one, Llyn Trawsfynydd, was flooded in the 1920s to provide water for the Hydro-Electric plant just up the road, there was little protest here which I guess goes to show that in Capel Celyn's case it was, primarily, the fact that the water was going to England that was sticking in the Welsh craw!

The A470 down to Dolgellau is a quick old bit of road, on our route maps it is virtually arrow straight until kinking right just north of the town. To our left and right, although not often in view, streams and rivers were flowing the same way as us and merging to form the River Mawddach which meets the sea at Barmouth.



Dolgellau was in past times, a centre for the woollen industry and the Welsh Gold Rush. Nowadays it relies mainly on adventure tourism and in particular, walkers and climbers of Cadair Idris an impressive stack of some 892 metres which we skirted south of the town. We didn't see much of Dolgellau itself though as it is effectively hidden from the main road that by-passes it to the north. However, 'Idris's Chair' looked splendid as we branched off down the B4405 for the straight run down to the sea and lunch at Tywyn.

Now if you recall, I mentioned that the parking arrangements at Lake Vyrnwy would catch one of our number out: twas Arthur MacDonald who found himself Nobby No-Mates as he exited his well camouflaged parking space to find everyone else long gone. Travelling without his map (hold that thought for later), he was not seen again until dinner time!

Left: All parked up - bar one - outside the 'Victorian Slipway' lunch stop.

Hold the Front Page, Dave Martin Eats Green Stuff!

By the time we rocked up at the Victorian Slipway pub on the seafront at Tywyn, the sun was cracking the flags and there wasn't a cloud in the sky, if you discounted the odd puff of smoke rising from the exhaust of Nick J's gracefully ageing Beemer that is.

Cones had been laid out to allow parking out front as Martin wanted a group shot with the owners, who were to receive a memento of our visit. With bikes duly parked, some made straight for the bar, some for the sun terrace and some to say hello to Andrew's parents who were parked up opposite the pub.

The fayre was to be fish, chips and, tipping their hat to nouvelle cuisine, a pea and mint puree. There were also plates of salad and bread and butter already laid out for us. The food was excellent - when it finally arrived! It seems our hosts had accepted a booking for 41 whilst neglecting to inform our organisers that their fryer could only process three portions at a time!



Now, Dave Martin likes his food and in an effort to get served first, he sat with Andrew and Martin, clearly expecting them to get priority; but no, it wasn't to be. By the time their meals arrived, Dave had already scoffed the bread and a whole plate of salad; yep, you heard me right, salad, with *green* stuff!

Whilst DM was learning about vitamins and minerals, Martin Lambert was becoming ever so slightly tetchy at the delay to service and when the luckless lady host asked him if he would like another drink whilst he waited he barked "Yes, a pint of fish and chips..."



With the meal finally finished, the cats were herded into a line for the group shot and to make up for Arthur's absence, some passing buffoons were strategically placed on the terrace.

Nick's Norton Con-Fuses and Another One Bites the Dust...

Waving cheerio to the Victorian Quay and Mr and Mrs Smith Senior, we headed out of town on the A493 towards Aberdovey and then alongside the River Dovey estuary towards Machynlleth where we would pick up a wonderful road across the Cambrian Mountains to meet up with the B4518 down to Llanidloes.



Machynlleth is a symbolic place in Wales, it being the place where Owain Glyndwr was crowned Prince of Wales in 1404 and where he based his parliament. It is also the nearest town to the cottage where Jimmy Page and Robert Plant wrote the album Led Zeppelin III and more recently, is the closest civilisation to the world's maddest two wheel explorer, Nick Sanders' adventure centre. As a town though, it is a grey, nondescript T junction of two A roads that we soon left behind in the mirrors.

Left: Blink and you missed it, Owain Glyndwr's Parliament building on Heol Maengwyn, the main drag through town.

The road from Machynlleth to Llanidloes is described by Wikipedia as a 'scenic mountain road' and one cannot argue with that. Initially little more than single track, it opens out just before the old mining settlement of Dylife and shortly afterwards, the T junction with the B4518. Well surfaced and quick for the most part, the views were as extensive as they were spectacular.

Llanidloes is the first town down from the source of the River Severn, which rises in the hills about 12 miles to the northwest. We crossed it via a little bridge just on the north side of the town before getting back on to A roads for the blast up and around Newtown and on to the tea stop, back in England, at Wistansow close to the Long Mynd and Craven Arms, another popular Club Run base.

With the first really good weather of the year there were bikes everywhere and one is faced with the dilemma: should I give everyone a friendly wave, a less personal nod of the head or just ignore them? With so many riders coming the other way I find a combination of all three is usually the way it pans out!

However, this section of the run was to claim two more 'casualties'. First Nick H's much travelled Norton expired before Machynlleth with a blown main fuse that had Nick scratching his head as to why, and then Keith Davies who, on seeing Dave Martin on point duty, stopped to tell him that he would have a long wait whilst the Norton was sorted. Having relayed this vital information Keith then roared off; in the wrong direction as Dave forgot to tell him to turn!

Now, remember that thought you have been holding since page 8? Like Arthur, Keith had left his map at the hotel and so he missed the tea stop and the fun of riding the rest of the route with his chums as he returned to base for an early bath having almost reached Aberystwyth!

It's a Family Affair and Toddies on the Terrace...

The misuse of apostrophes is the bane of English Language scholars and a daily trial for those with an obsession, bordering on OCD, to see everything correct and tickety-boo. So let's be clear from the off, the afternoon tea stop was at the brewery founded by Edward Wood in 1980 and the ales produced there are Wood's Shropshire Beers. BUT, as the brewery was started by Edward, his brother and father, should it more correctly be billed as Woods' Shropshire Beers?

And you have no idea how many times I have re-written this paragraph...



So, what is the connection between Andrew and the Wood Brewery? Well, the Plough Inn is a long standing hostelry and his family, notably his Great Grandparents and then Grandparents ran it for quite some years. His Mum and two Aunts were born there and I think that Mr Smith Senior was also involved, albeit sometime later, in the logistical movement of brewery product.



Edward and his kith and kin bought the Plough from the Wrekin Brewery in 1968 and, being fed up with the keg beers of the time (*Ed: weren't we all*), established their brew house in the outbuildings. The Woods were in the vanguard of the 1980s burgeoning real ale movement.

And that friends, is why we were so warmly welcomed, even though the pub was closed for renovation. You see, it's not what you know...

Left: Tea and biscuits and a brewery tour but first, a game of hide and seek.

Although the brewery has recently been sold, it is still a cottage industry as our guides, Nick and James, explained as they split us into two groups for a tour of the compact production plant. They also told us that they are still using the original yeast they started with in 1980 and when quizzed if that was normal, they explained that Timothy Taylors have been using the same yeast to produce their excellent 'Landlord' ale for over 100 years! What price 'use by' dates eh?



L to R: It's tea, honest! Tony Campbell finds it all too much. Learning about and tasting the malts.

Suitably refreshed, enlightened and in some cases, thoroughly rested, it was back on the bikes for the shortish dash back up the A49, through Craven Arms and around the Shrewsbury ring road to the Albrighton Hall where Keith and Arthur were surely wondering where we had all got to.



And as we rolled into the car park, the hotel staff rolled out to meet us with trays of what turned out to be a summery twist on the traditional hot toddie, disguised as afternoon tea. In their meticulous planning, our organisers had been convinced we would arrive back cold and very wet!



Above and right: The perfect end to a perfect ride, our organisers quite rightly congratulate each other on a job well done.

Norman in a Flat Spin and Old Friends we see too Rarely...

The toddies were delicious, despite their being more suited to a cold winter's day rather than a warm spring one. Nick Jeffery however cocked a snook at the hospitality and refused to stop riding until he had tried virtually every bike in the car park. This is of course entirely normal because for some reason, whilst on the run, chaps seem reluctant to swap with him...

Anyway, showered and suited we began drifting back to the terrace for pre-dinner drinks. Making my way towards the bar, I encountered a somewhat flustered Norman, mobile in hand, trying to track down Hon Treash Rick. It seems that despite waving his newly acquired privilege card, the bar staff had had the temerity to refuse our man a drink on the kitty until someone in authority officially re-opened it!

It was but a short wait for this to be resolved and with glasses charged we gathered in the evening sun where our group had been joined by Mike Jackson and an even rarer attendee, Steve Male. It was a delight indeed to see them both.

Right: Mike shares something of interest with Maurice and Tom and below Steve chats with Andrew and Martin.



Saturday's dinner was one of those that you can't go wrong with: Prawn Cocktail, Roast Beef and Profiteroles, supplemented by Kevin Howell's generous sponsorship of the port and cheese, including Wrekin Blue which was especially highlighted on the menu card. So popular is this combination in automotive circles it is often called a Motor Trade Dinner.

After the musical chairs concluded, Norman was invited to say Grace and with that duly done, Chairman Dan officially welcomed Mike and Steve to the proceedings before going on to thank Adam Kelley for organising the RAC cover and, of course, Andrew and Martin for their very thorough organisation of a very enjoyable run. It was then heads down, cutlery to the fore as we devoured the meal.

The Queen duly Toasted, the Members get Roasted!

With the meal cleared away and our loyalty to the crown re-affirmed, It was time for our Sergeant at Arms, Steve Callahan, to report on the members' latest misdemeanours. He was assisted in this act of highway robbery by Corporal Adam Kelley.

And wasting no time at all, guest **Mark Davies** and **Ben Matthews** were relieved of a pound each for removing their jackets before the loyal toast. How very dare they!

Now before we go any further I need to correct a mistake in the reporting of last autumn's run. I wrote that Dave Martin (that run's Sergeant) had fined Rob Smith in the support van for "Being in the warm and dry all day" and then paid it himself for the support rendered to his Guzzi. I wrongly said that Dave hadn't coughed up because he had no change, which was wrong, Dave put in a fiver. My apologies Dave! And chums, if in future you do put folding money in the pot, please simultaneously hit it with something hard and heavy, just so I know! So to continue, as accountants and insurance men say – errors and omissions excluded!!



Looking back to past runs, it seems that organisers always get a bad rap from the Sergeant at Arms and this run was to be no exception. In the first of many cash calls, **Martin Lambert** was to pay for putting two different spellings in the correspondence preceding the run. Some weak mitigation was offered but this only succeeded in doubling the fine for calling the Sergeant "Mate"!

Arthur Macdonald needs to be a little more guarded as he had told the Sergeant, unprompted, that he had brought his bike in the van and it was a "Bloody Bonneville!"

Likewise, **Martyn Roberts and Tom Waterer** were overheard discussing the merits of Honda's DCT system as their left legs didn't work anymore. They were both fined for thinking Honda had them in mind when designing it.

Referring to crises of identity, **Simon Hill** was made to pay (yet again) for thinking he was on horseback and wearing cowboy boots whilst **Kevin Howells** (right) clearly thought he was coming on a skateboard run and sported jeans and trainers!

Greg Elson, being a little, erm, vertically challenged had put smaller wheels on his motorcycle in an effort to overcome dangling legs when any sane person would have adjusted the seat. (*Ed: A little harsh, he was riding a 'classic' Honda where options such as adjustable seats were mere pipedreams!*)

"The Legend" that is **Andrew Smith** was next up. "Those who have organised a run with him will know he does bugger all but turn up." Whereas this time, he took over and did the lot thus stealing Martin's glory! At this point, an old £1 coin was found in the pot, whether it was Mr Smith's payment is unclear...



Sartorial taste was next under scrutiny and to prove that the Sergeant does not apply the 'statute of limitations' **Dave Martin** was fined for being the specifier of the club 'kipper tie' as worn by the Sergeant and Corporal. A little unfair this as, a) ours are ¼" narrower than the minimum width for said neckwear and, b) they were ordered (and ran out) eons ago when the 'fuller' tie was fashionable. (*Ed: Good point about supply, see Nick Campolucci later!*) Dave however paid up!

Martin Lambert had his second charge for apparently imparting the first rule of PR to the Sergeant by telling him to "Not let the truth get in the way of a good story."

Don't miss too many runs or you may, like **Dave Taylor**, have to re-introduce yourself to fellow members as Dave had, to Greg Elson, by asking "So who are you?" He followed this up by saying to Ben Matthews, "I see you're follically challenged like me!" That's £1 for rudeness to each please.

The next charge was a little vague but it seems that one of the Nicks, I am guessing the Campolucci variety, had been given a Privilege card marked 'guest' when he is, in fact, a member. I think it was **Martin** who paid for this error not Andrew.

The Sergeant then cited a story he had been told that had gone on and on; it was a **Norman Hyde** story. Précised down to the basic facts it was, "The wine's crap!" £1 for your opinion Norman!

The 'should have known better' fine was levied on **Chairman Dan** for announcing Steve as the Sergeant on Friday, waaya too early.

Andrew had been spotted texting at Friday's dinner; he retorted "50p, I got your text."

Simon Hill again copped out for confusing the Sergeant by inviting two guests called Steve!

'Confusing punctuation' cost **Frank Finch and Adam Kelley** a pound each. Frank had been heard to say "Adam, my body's a temple." When what he really meant was, "Adam 'my body's a temple' [Kelley]." If you catch the drift!

The Sergeant fined himself for not doing the quiz on Friday and using a flimsy excuse in mitigation. And on the same topic, **Nick Jeffery** was fined for setting a quiz that only Norman could win!

Andrew was praised for his very interesting family history, revealed on Friday, but then penalised for building an entire run around visiting his Mum and Dad!

Ben Matthews and Graham Matcham paid the price for not only wearing matching (*Ed: should that be Matcham?*) shirts on Friday but then sitting next to each other all night.

Certain members had apparently suggested to the Sergeant that the run had been turned into a "Japanese publicity adventure" by the use of the overly large banners etc. He asked Andrew and Martin "Who is responsible?" **Martin** immediately piped up loudly and clearly, "I am!" Thus giving a perfect lesson in [self] publicity!

Bob McMillan and his guest Mark Davies were likened to the perennial 'Howard and Hilda' for being inseparable. "They have matching bikes; they ride together, stop together, have known each other for years and drink whiskey together." It was even alleged that they were getting married in the morning!

Norman was relieved of another pound for his 'fashion faux-pas' and wearing a "Hideous green jumper" on Friday. He was suitably non-plussed but paid up!



The organisers were again under scrutiny for the dissemination of false verbal information and telling everyone that Saturday breakfast would be from 06.30 instead of 07.30. This time it was **Andrew** who took the hit.

Referring to **Frank Finch** and his prowess as a rider and, presumably, mechanic, the Sergeant fined him for needing a tyre man to point out that he had a puncture.

Rick Parish was then reprimanded for asking Adam, "Is that an old shirt you're wearing or a retro one?" He of course tried to pay with an old (or should that be retro?) pound. And whilst the pot was in front of him, Rick was further fined for having lent Nick C a tie to cover up the fact that the club had run out. Wheeling on his heel, the Sergeant then fined **Nick Campolucci** for not chasing up the supply sooner!



For having misspelt the name of the morning coffee stop on the otherwise excellent map, another pound was lifted from **Martin**. Andrew tried to mitigate this by saying: a) It was spelt in English and b) nobody takes the map anyway. It fell on deaf ears, you just knew it would.

The 'loving couple' of **Bob and Mark** were fined again, this time for Mark lying in bed whilst Bob sweated over hacksawing the chain that locked their bikes together. (*Ed: Why not just use the key?*)

Ian Kerr was charged with 'reverting to a former job' and completely blocking the road to direct the traffic whilst marking a junction. This was followed by the remark "At least you did point duty!" Through the loud guffaws it was unclear whether this remark was directed at another former Bob-by or a member neglecting his duty on the run...

Tom Waterer was then charged with smutty innuendo, which cannot be repeated here, for inserting ... a long pause in an otherwise innocuous sentence.

Your scribe paid the price for saying to the Sergeant, in the loo on Friday, "I thought that cupboard was a toilet" whilst zipping up.

For passing the Run Leader not once but twice, **Bob**, who claimed innocence as he couldn't remember either instance, was relieved of £2. Andrew did say in Bob's defence, "To be fair, he apologised both times!" It cut no ice. The Sergeant was surprised, after many years of thinking that **Martin Lambert** worked for Kawasaki, to see evidence in the form of a Triumph logo on the back of his Hi-Viz vest that this wasn't the case. Martin countered, to great mirth as yet another pound went into the pot, "We don't make tabards and shit like that."

Now apparently at lunchtime, whilst stood next to the bike line at the Victorian Slipway, a passer-by had pointed to the fluorescent yellow Beemer and asked the Sergeant, "Does that rider have issues? Is he partially sighted or can he not ride properly?" **David O'Neill** now has a pound less in his personal re-spray kitty.

Whilst on the topic of Hi-Viz **Ben Matthews** paid the price for wearing an 'overly reflective' riding suit. He was told that, "It wasn't a good look."

Kevin Howells had naively asked our custodian whether he was keeping a diary after seeing him scribbling in it during the day. You'll learn Kevin, you'll learn!

For the second time in as many minutes, **David O'Neill** was back in the sights, this time for wearing an ageing Rukka suit, despite being a distributor for them for over 20 years.

With age comes arrogance opined the Sergeant whilst fining **Simon Hill** for challenging a Police Car, on full 'blues and twos', head on. The Police Car pulled over to let Simon through!

Arthur 'White Boots' Macdonald had apparently done a disappearing act, although your scribe is unsure exactly whether this was for the one on the road or a second one back at the hotel. He held his peace by paying £2.

Frank, rather confusingly, was fined for being a tad (well actually quite a lot) over a speed limit in a built up area and simultaneously overtaking, "On that BMW". It wasn't the offence that confused, that was bang to rights, but Frank's supposed BMW mount.

Greg Elson admitted, unprompted, to dereliction of duty when on point. He'd apparently got so bored with the long wait that he went back to see what the last bloke was doing. **Kevin Howells** had also left his post (and paid the price) but **Andrew** said it was probably down to his bad briefing as "I never listen to my own instructions."

Norman was again caught out by a bad attack of the grumps when, being faced with a choice of breakfasts, had apparently complained, "I wish they wouldn't do this, I don't make decisions, just bring me a bloody breakfast!"

Referring to the failure of **Nick Hopkins** Norton, not for the first time with the same problem, the Sergeant paraphrased Einstein by saying, "If you keep doing the same thing repeatedly and expect the results to change, you're an idiot." Nick actually took some finding around the table and some wag suggested, "He's in the RAC van!" Despite there being no rain during the ride, **Keith Davies** had been spotted 'paddling' his bike down the road. It was a hat trick for Keith as apparently, after going astray from the group, he had stopped for a shandy and then stopped again for a pee in a bush, because he had stopped for a shandy! (*Ed: How did Steve know all this?*)

Tom, always in the smut, had been caught in the toilet at one of the stops, polishing his helmet in the hand-basin. Choruses of, "Oi, do you mind, we've got to wash our hands in there!" rang out as did the sound of his £1 in the pot.



Now **John Wakefield**, sporting a fine set of facial hair, was fined for being too “Long Way Round, and we don’t do that anymore” with his BMW, cameras and all. I’m glad that the Sergeant brought this up because I had been puzzling all day who he reminded me of. I’m not sure if it is long way round or wrong way round; I’ll let you dear readers be the judge.

L to R: Gen George Custer, Charley Boredom, John Wakefield.

The immaculate red Honda VFR of Dave’s guest **Tim Albone** was penalised for going back cleaner than it came, an expensive jet wash that one Tim.

A wisely speechless **Jonathan Martin** paid up when he was rather rudely asked, “Why is the biggest man in the room riding the smallest bike?” Father Dave may have paid the fine: as he’s paid for everything else in Jon’s life! The confusion caused by Simon bringing two Steves was exacerbated when the one riding the red Be-em had deserted a corner post. By a process of colour elimination it was **Stephen Burgess** who paid the fine. **Simon** was also charged a quid for potentially poor briefing.

Tony Dawson had added some personalised touches to his new Yamaha which the Sergeant was none too keen on, those being the pipe wrap at the rear and the biro satnav. They cost Tony double.

Simon Hill and Dan Sager were jointly fined for, “Dressing Simon and letting himself be dressed.” Simon had forgotten his cufflinks and emergency ones had been fashioned from paperclips. With Simon not being ambidextrous enough to fit both, Dan had assisted.

Tony Campbell was hit with a triple whammy. His 17 plate Aprilia Pegaso was actually manufactured in 2006 (*Ed: That’s a great spot!*) and his helmet had a dark visor, with him Chief Exec of the MCIA! Tony did claim that he had told everyone that Aprilia sales had been tough! The final £1 was for the tea stop sunbathing episode on the garden wall of the Plough – see page 11.

For his final huzzah, the Sergeant fined **Mike Jackson, Steve Male, Bob Trigg, Maurice Knight and Alan Blake** for not having a bike at the run. Mike brought the house down by saying, “I brought a raffle prize and they told me stick it, brought a contribution to the kitty; tell me, has the Club gone decimal?” He then tried to pay with a half crown and asked for a receipt!



And with the laughter still reverberating around the room, Sergeant Steve closed his book, chucked a last pound in the pot for taking so long over his report and sat down to the clap he so richly deserved!

Thanking Steve for another sterling fund raising effort and Kevin Howells for his sponsorship of the cheese and port, Chairman Dan then dealt with the business of announcing the following mornings meeting before wheeling in the embarrassed hotel staff so that we could show our appreciation of their efforts during our stay.



And with that, the curtain came down on yet another outstanding run: good weather, great roads and old friends enjoying motorcycles. What could be better!

PS: Don’t forget, the next run is in Cumbria 7/8/9 September. See you there!

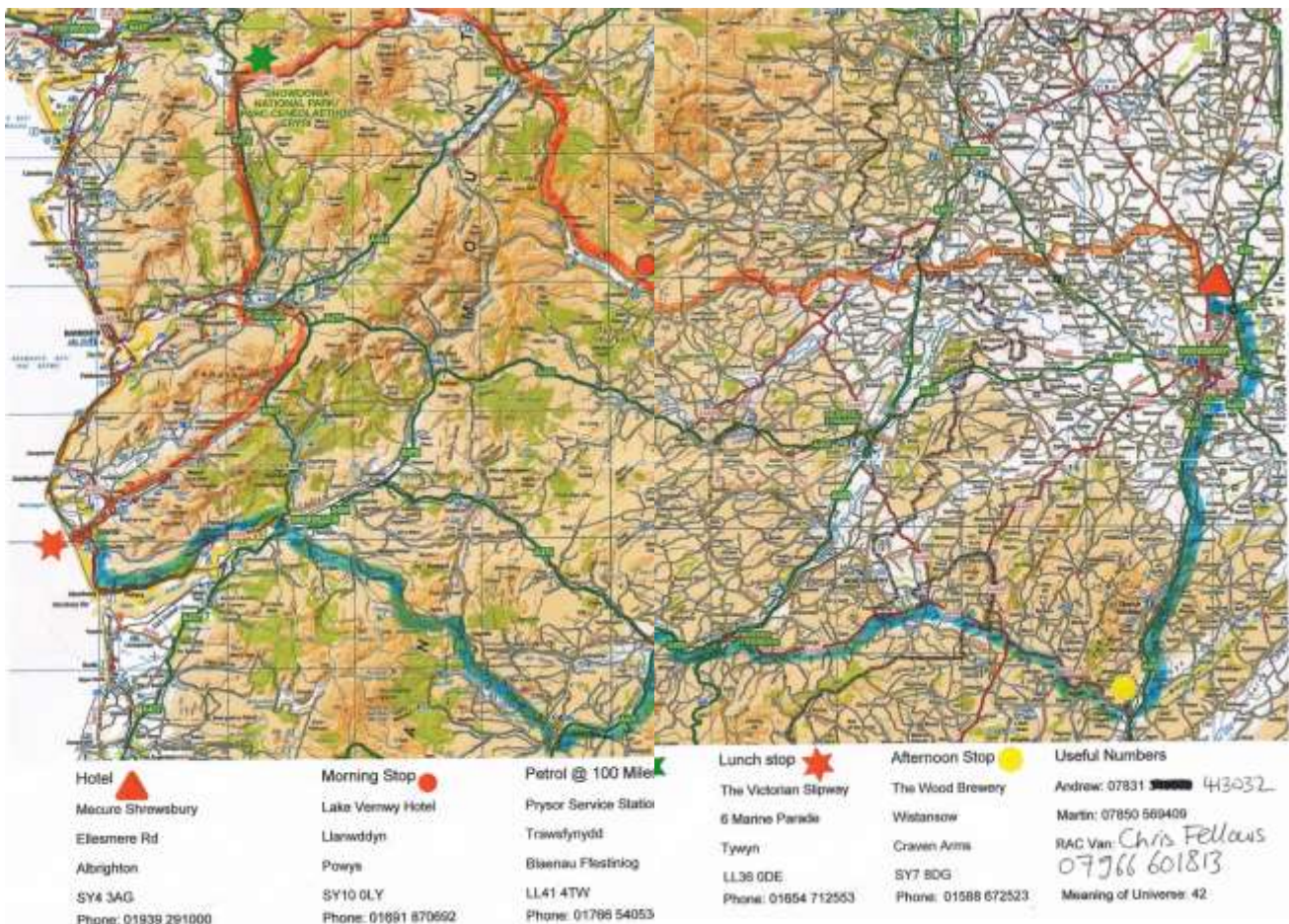
PPS: Also don’t forget (Nick C!) the new club tie is available to purchase via the website.

What we Rode (or Drove)...

Keith Davies (President)	Triumph Tiger 800 xRT	Arthur Macdonald	Triumph Bonneville T100
Dan Sager (Chairman)	Triumph Tiger 800 XRx	Bob McMillan	Honda Africa Twin 1000
Graham Goodman (Hon Sec)	Suzuki V-Strom 650	David Martin	Moto Guzzi Stelvio 1200
Rick Parish (Hon Treasurer)	Triumph Trophy 1200	Jonathan Martin	Suzuki V-Strom 250
Martin Lambert (Organiser)	Kawasaki Versys 1000 GT	Graham Matcham	KTM 1090 Adventure R
Andrew Smith (Organiser)	Yamaha Super Tenere 1200	Ben Matthews	Yamaha MT09 Tracer
Alan Blake	With Bob Trigg	David O'Neill	BMW R1200GS Adventure
Steve Callahan (Sergeant at Arms)	KTM 990SM	Martyn Roberts	Honda NC750X DCT
Nick Campolucci	Honda Africa Twin 1000	Geoff Selvidge (Scribe)	Kawasaki Versys 1000 GT
Craig Carey-Clinch	BMW R1200GSA	David Taylor	BMW R1200GS
Tony Dawson	Yamaha MT07 Tracer	Bob Trigg	Jaguar X Type
Greg Elson	Honda Transalp 650	John Wakefield	BMW R1200GS
Frank Finch	Ducati Multistrada 1200	Tom Waterer	Honda NC750 DCT
Alan Halford	Suzuki GSX650F		
Simon Hill	BMW R1200GS	GUESTS	
Nick Hopkins	Norton Commando Fastback	<i>Tim Albone</i>	<i>Honda VFR 800</i>
Norman Hyde	Triumph Bonneville T120	<i>Mark Davies</i>	<i>Honda Africa Twin 1000</i>
Nick Jeffery	BMW K75	<i>Steve Bellars</i>	<i>BMW S1000 XR</i>
Adam Kelley	Yamaha Super Tenere 1200	<i>Stephen Burgess</i>	<i>BMW K1600</i>
Ian Kerr MBE	Yamaha MT09 Tracer	<i>Tony Campbell</i>	<i>Aprilia Pegaso Strada 650</i>
Maurice Knight	With Bob Trigg	<i>Kevin Howells</i>	<i>Yamaha MT10SP</i>

Joining us for Saturday dinner only: Mike Jackson and Steve Male.

Where we Rode...



What we Ate...



The Fiendish Quiz...

NAME _____

THE CLUB QUIZ – SPRING RUN 2018

1 Picture round

Name the manufacturer that made each of these scooters (2 points each)

Score



1a _____



1b _____



1c _____



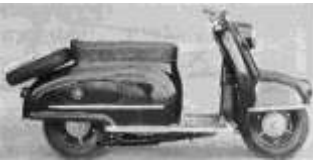
1d _____



1e _____



1f _____



1g _____

(Hint: All manufacturers are currently still active!)

Total carried over

=====

2 Kings and Queens

Score

To which English king do these statements refer and in which century did they reign:

2a Burnt the cakes _____ in _____ century

2b Ordered the tide not to come in _____ in _____ century

2c Found under a car park _____ in _____ century

3 Veteran and Vintage

Name the two constituents needed to produce acetylene gas for early lighting:

3a _____ and _____

What are clincher tires normally called in the UK?

3b _____

4 World War 1

What motorcycle make used by the British forces was called the 'Trusty' _____

5 World War 2

What configuration do the following aero engines have (number of cylinders and layout)?

- 5a Napier Sabre _____ cylinders in _____ layout -----
5b Rolls-Royce Merlin _____ cylinders in _____ layout -----
5c Wright R-3350 _____ cylinders in _____ layout -----

6 Racing

For the first 10 finishers in the 2018 Dakar, name the two makes that were **NOT** KTM/Husqvarna or Honda

6a _____ and _____ -----

To the nearest mile per hour and in what year were they achieved:

6b the current Isle of Man TT Mountain circuit lap record _____ mph in _____ year -----

6c the Brooklands Outer Circuit solo motorcycle lap record _____ mph in _____ year -----

Total this page =====

Add from over page -----

GRAND TOTAL =====

The Answers...

1a DUCATI Cruiser, only produced for about 2 years starting in 1952. A very sophisticated specification with 175cc 4-stroke ohv engine, hydraulic torque converter and three speed automatic transmission and electric starter. Styling was by Ghia.

1b ROYAL ENFIELD Fantabulus (note spelling) C.1962. Electric-start Villiers 150cc fan-cooled engine, 3-speed gearbox.

1c YAMAHA SC1 c.1960. Electric-start 175cc 2-stroke with hydraulic torque converter and 2-speed transmission.

1d HARLEY-DAVIDSON Topper c.1960. 165cc 2-stroke engine based on the DKW RT125 'war reparations engine' various manufacturers used, including BSA and Yamaha. Centrifugal clutch/expanding-pulley belt transmission. Rope (lawn mower-type) starting.

1e HONDA Juno M80 c1961. Swash plate hydrostatic transmission based on Badalini patents. Flat-twin ohv engine, originally 125cc, later 170cc in M85 version.

1f KTM Mirabell c1955. Named after the Mirabell Palace in Salzburg. Electric-start 125cc (later 150cc) Sachs-Rotax 2-stroke engine with 3-speed gearbox.

1g BMW R10 c1950. Only manufactured as prototypes with 175/198 cc engines.

2a ALFRED 9th century (871-899)

5a 24 cylinders in H layout

2b CANUTE 11th century (1016-1035)

5b 12 cylinders in V layout

2c RICHARD III 15th century (1483-1485)

5c 18 cylinders in Radial layout

3a CALCIUM CARBIDE and **WATER**

6a HERO and **GAS GAS**

3b BEADED EDGE TYRES

6b 134 mph in 2016 (133.93)

4 TRIUMPH

6c 125 mph in 1939 (124.51)