



AERODROME



1928 - 2018



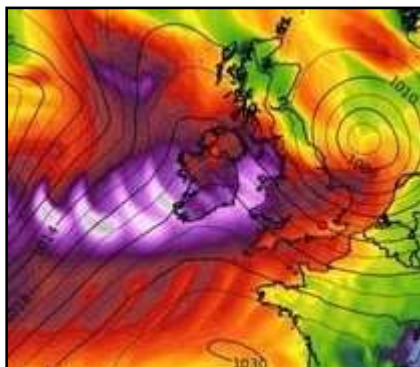
The Club - Spring Run 2019

Sywell, Northamptonshire

Organisers: Simon Hill & Stephen Burgess

26th - 28th April

What a difference a week makes! Just seven days prior to this run the UK enjoyed the hottest Easter period since records began with temperatures in excess of the Med and wall to wall sunshine persuading people, who really shouldn't, to cast their clouts well before May was out and block all roads to the coast or worse, pollute suburbia with the smoking 'al fresco' cremation of various meat products.



But by the early hours of 'Run Friday', the weather forecast was predicting that 'Storm Hannah' - weather Armageddon - would be so bad that it would blow our small island right across the North Sea to finally and permanently bind the UK to Europe for all time. Well at least the Remain supporters had something to look forward to then!

With gale force winds and heavy rain forecast for Sywell and the East Midlands it all added up to a very gloomy picture, the only question was exactly how far up the ducks would the rain actually come...

In the event, the rain thankfully didn't materialise; just as well really as with the wind gusting to 50mph and more, it would have escalated the riding conditions from quite challenging to near bloody impossible. There *were* electrical storms that affected the day for some but that is a story for later!

With the run being Midlands based and your scribe being a man of leisure, the opportunity was taken for a leisurely ride up to Northampton with fellow retiree Andrew Smith and (now movie mogul) Roy Pinto. Riding up through Aylesbury and Buckingham a coffee break was taken at the biker haunt, Jacks Hill café, before a very pleasant lunch in Crick along with Chairman Martin Lambert and my guest, Nigel Bosworth. Frank Finch would have and should have been there too but for a cock up on the communication front meant that no one told him we were going; and right past his door too!

Even with a very leisurely lunch and stopping for petrol en-route, our happy band arrived at the Aviator Hotel before co-organiser Stephen had had time to fix (with the ubiquitous BMW crate straps) the rather splendid welcoming sign pictured right.

It was quite amusing really, the Chairman was leading, and we saw Stephen up the road and waved to him cheerily as we turned into the wrong entrance and had to paddle around a U-turn in the midst of the industrial units on the airfield perimeter...



The Aviator Hotel is a shrine to the art deco movement and a favourite destination (for the £80 coffee) of private pilots. The building was opened in April 1934 as the clubhouse for the pioneering Northamptonshire Aero Club who had acquired the use of the land and opened up Sywell Aerodrome in September 1928. When it opened, it looked quite different to the modern day building which was converted to the 'Sywell Motel' in the 60s. The interior is wonderful and looks quite original, even if it isn't.

By 1935, the Air Ministry was preparing for war and so Sywell became an Elementary Flying Training School (6 EFTS) operated under contract by Brooklands Aviation Ltd. It was under their auspices that the clubhouse was extended to accommodate RAF mess rooms.



By 1942, 6 EFTS were operating 126 Tiger Moths to train over 200 students at any one time. In all 2,500 pilots were trained here during the war. The Germans had tried to bomb Sywell out of service but they never located it due to its heavy camouflage; something I struggled with too many years later (the location, not bombing it!) in a Cessna 152 whilst completing my qualifying solo cross country flight.



The art deco styling is not just superficial either; it's ingrained into the hotel's very being and extends through the artwork on the walls, the fixtures and fittings in the public rooms, right on into the bedrooms in the adjacent accommodation block. And whilst one marvels at the look and feel of the place, wartime swing music plays softly throughout the public rooms. Had Glenn Miller walked in from the air-side sporting a B52 leather jacket no-one would have been in the least surprised.

There is a tenuous motorcycle connection with Sywell too; in particular the Sywell Aviation Museum, just beside the hotel. The building was opened in 2001 by Alex Henshaw MBE; he's the one on the right of this picture by the way. Henshaw, who passed away in 2007 aged 94, was a motorcyclist, Vickers test pilot and celebrated air racer. During the war he was regularly at Sywell testing Wellingtons (aeroplanes, not rubber boots) whence they had come for repair. But it was his ditching in the Irish Sea in the September 1935 running of the Kings Cup air race that caught your scribe's eye: he was rescued by the Steam Packet ship 'Ramsey Town'. He subsequently went on, in 1937, to win the inaugural London to Isle of Man air race. And to give you a flavour for the chap, his party piece was to execute a barrel roll in a Lancaster Bomber, which he did on several occasions apparently!



Back to the present and for some lucky early arrivals, a tour of the SCH facilities across the road was organised by Simon and Stephen. Suffice to say that their operation is a massive undertaking dedicated to achieving a consistent, quality preparation of BMW motorcycles in the UK. And that's all I can tell you as the rest is top secret and internal photography was definitely a no-no. So if you want to know more, you'll have to speak with Messrs Hill and Burgess!

Amongst those early arrivals, it was great to see both Ray Bailey and Michael Evans attending their first runs for far too long. Ray would only be staying for dinner on Friday night but Mike was in 'for the duration' and was to have the perhaps dubious honour of being Maurice's chauffeur for Saturday's run. Having rekindled old friendships it is to be sincerely hoped that we will see both again on future runs.



Left: Ray Bailey and a supported rider from his AP days, Nigel Bosworth.

Right: Mike Evans on the autumn run 1991. Your scribe is indebted to Mike for many of the images in this report; they're the ones in focus!



Somewhat disconcertingly, arrival at the hotel was met by a sign on the front door, pictured right. It sort of touched a nerve with me as during the final recce the day before the autumn run in Cumbria, I had been caught by the camera van that David had mentioned in that run's briefing. With the car park here chokka with motorcycles, a casual observer may well have been convinced that the 'ton up' motorcyclist stereotype was well justified!



What time does the kitty open? This was the cry reverberating around the bar of the hotel by about 5.30 where a fair few members had begun to assemble to settle the dust. The original plan of our organisers was for a window of 7 o'clock through to 10.30. Pfffft! As if!! After being stiffed for a reasonably sizable round, Stephen conferred with Simon and the hours were suitably extended to 'right now' through to 'when the Treasurer says so'. Much better!



With a decent selection of ale on offer predictably including, given our location, Shepherd Neame's excellent 'Spitfire', a responsible amount of dust settling was enjoyed along with laughing uncontrollably at anyone trying to sit down - without chucking their drink skywards - in one of the stylish, but totally impractical, low leather armchairs dotted around the bar...

With some chaps going straight in to the bar in their riding clobber whilst others preferred to change first, there was a steady flow of club business for the bar staff up until the bugler sounded the mess call at 8 o'clock and we decamped to the Cirrus suite for dinner.

It's a Club Run not a gastronomic convention opined Simon Hill back at Tankersley in the autumn of 2017. Your scribe was chatting with him about the perennial conundrum of run organisers: menu choices or, specifically, how to try and please the majority whilst not 'offending' the few. And true to this mantra, simple, wholesome, well cooked food was served up: pate as a starter, a stuffed chicken breast with seasonal vegetables main and an apple crumble and custard for dessert, lovely! Vin de Pays d'Oc Pinot Noir or Antipodean Sauvignon Blanc were the accompanying wines.



Around half past starter, Chairman Lambert stood to deliver his first Friday evening "Chairman's Waffle". After welcoming members and guests to historic Sywell, Martin moved on to update us on the condition of our dear friend Bob Mac who had unfortunately got involved in someone else's RTC the week before the run and was rather battered and bruised. Andrew, who had visited Bob just the day before, had reported that he was in good spirits and bemoaning the fact that it was the originator of the accident, a 'white van man' and not he who got the ride in the air ambulance! All wished Bob a speedy recovery.

Martin moved on to welcome 'back to the fold' Michael Evans who was responsible, he said, for bringing the Chairman into the industry. He then made a rather odd reference to his [own] childhood and something to do with penis holding but as the waitress was standing behind him at the time, it all got a bit confusing and no one was really clear on what this was all about! Perhaps all will become clear in the Sergeant at Arms report on the morrow!

Now, either the waitress didn't hear or perhaps chose not to hear given the topic, either way, the Chairman continued, unflustered, by asking members to introduce their guests...



Left to right above these were: *Richard Burgess*, son of Stephen but introduced by Simon Hill. Richard is a key member of the SCH management team and was on his second run. Also on his second run was *Nigel Bosworth* a renowned racer in his day before moving into team management and now with a 'proper job' of managing Dainese's interests in the UK. Nigel was introduced by yours truly. And finally at Andrew Smith's invitation, *Kevin Howells*, owner and managing director of Datatag, was making his third run appearance. Following his proposal at Sunday's meeting we will welcome Kevin as a member next time.

There would be a fourth guest on the run too, *Dale Robinson* (right) of Zero Motorcycles but neither he nor his 'sponsor' David Taylor was to arrive until Saturday morning as, according to the Chairman, David couldn't start his bike! Unbeknown to those in the room was that when these two chums did turn up, they were to make club history...



With David Taylor's apology dealt with, the Chairman then covered the apologies received from David O'Neill and Hon Sec Graham Goodman both of whom had had to pull out at the last minute due to illness. Nick Jeffery would stand in as Hon Sec and cover GG's duties. The final notice of this stint was that Steve Callahan would be joining the run, arriving in the morning; mysteriously though he didn't!

It was a quarter to pudding before Martin arose again and invited Simon Hill to deliver the run briefing. "The run starts from the hotel" was Simon's opening gambit, a statement which left Norman already looking a little confused!



We would be covering around 190 miles, the planned fuel stops were at 50 and 150 miles and we would leave Northamptonshire for Leicestershire before crossing Rutland and on to the lunch stop in Lincolnshire. Of lunch Simon remarked "Lincolnshire is boring, there's a turnip museum but it doesn't open until May and so we are going to the Bubble Car Museum instead."

After reflecting on his first run as an organiser where "The cream of the Motorcycle Industry couldn't follow basic route information: Simon rounded off his briefing with "If I forget to drop a marker, feel free to stop" by the time he sat down Norman was totally befuddled!

With the briefing out of the way and Maurice having given those much younger than he a lesson in how to switch your lights on at home from your smart phone (see Sergeant at Arms later!), we drifted back to the bar for a nightcap before retiring to contemplate just how much of a dominatrix Hannah might be tomorrow...



Early morning Dew and electrical storms heralded the new day. In time for breakfast, Dave Dew arrived as did Peter Meek and Messrs Taylor and Robinson on their electrically powered Zeros. Yes chums, Club history right there, the first 'alternative fuel' motorcycles on a club run: provided of course you discount Andy Tribble who was a guest on the 1998 Presidents run and turned up on an ageing MZ powered by an ex-concrete mixer Robin diesel engine!¹



Both Team Dew and Team Zero would experience 'electrickery supply interruptions' during the day but for different reasons. It's fair to say that range, charge station availability and charge time of the Zeros was a limiting factor in David and Dale enjoying the companionship of others on the run and dinner at run's end. In Dave Dew's case, prior charging of the battery on a bike that gets far too infrequent use and using the key rather than kill switch would facilitate easier re-starts after stopping to swank about the 99,000kms the [imported?] bike had covered!

Given the historical significance of having the first electric bikes on a run, your scribe has garnered more info on the bikes from Zero Country Manager Dale who confirmed the models to be *Zero DSR ZF14.4 Black Forest* with charge tank option. Apparently the charge tank is a fast charge option as opposed to the power tank option which is an additional battery to extend range. Dale wrote thus:

"For the Black Forests, they would fully charge from flat to full in two hours but from a practical point of view we would have expected to have arrived at the charging station with approx 30/40% charge remaining which would have taken 60-80 mins. We only ever needed to leave the tea stops with 80/90% charge and we would have been fine to get to the next stop. Problem was we arrived at Boston [lunch stop] with very little having spent very little time charging at the first tea stop and after trying to find some charging options in Boston, I had 2% left. There was only one charging point at a Toyota dealership (free), so could only fast charge one bike at a time, whilst one bike was connected to the fast charger the other was connected to the mains, which takes longer."

"Met a lot of lovely people though..."

Now, where have I heard a similar strapline to that before? And look where it took that brand!!

On the topic of innovation and new bikes, two other steeds warrant a mention here.



First off, The Chairman was riding the latest incarnation of the remarkable Kawasaki H2, the world's first production supercharged model, the H2 SX SE+. With a model name that Bletchley Park would struggle to de-code, this 200PS bike is bristling with electronic wizardry: smartphone connectivity, cruise control, cornering lights, TFT screen as well as 'old hat' stuff like traction control and variable power modes. It also boasts 'Ergo-fit', a posh name for saying you can adjust the bars, pegs and seat to suit!

¹ Who can forget the gigantic cloud of black smoke as Andy wound open the throttle and set off over Hardknott Pass at a constant 1500rpm...

Secondly, and to me no less ground breaking, was that Alan Halford has waved bye-bye to his long serving, trusty Suzuki GSX650F. He has joined the adventure sport brigade and is now the proud owner of a spanking new Triumph Tiger 800XRx. We hope it gives as good service as your old Soozie did Alan!



In a counter-point to modern bikes' electronic rider aids, Norman told me that he too has acquired a 'new' bike; a 1968 Triumph Trophy 650. Sadly, he was not riding it on the run as the weather forecast was bad. Whether this was because the bike wasn't waterproof or Norman's period footing coat was unclear!

My bike showed 8.58 on the clock and 5° c ambient temperature as Simon led the group out of the Aviator car park, 2 minutes ahead of schedule. As cat-herding goes, it was a very commendable effort!



The tarmac was damp but thankfully it wasn't raining.

Over a couple of roundabouts and we were soon crossing Pitsford Reservoir where the wind was blowing strongly from the west lowering the 'feels like' temperature to 'I'm bloody glad I left the winter linings in me riding gear'.

Turning south on the A508 at Brixworth - home to a fine Anglo-Saxon church dating back to the 7th Century - it was a short ride to the outskirts of Northampton where we crossed over to the

A5199 to head north through Althorp (pronounced All-trop I was later reliably informed by Norman) country where local brown signs pointed to the Spencer family seat and, of course, the final resting place of Princess Diana. After crossing the A14 we were onto the roads of my youth where I used to tazz about on my Tiger 90: well as much as an asthmatic Tiger 90 could tazz!

Shortly after Welford (did you see Postman Pat?) we turned right in Husbands Bosworth where, back in the late 60s there was a showroom full of E-types and the like. It was the business of the late racing driver Dick Protheroe a man described by MotorSport magazine as "Scary but fair". The one-eyed war hero raced a very quick XK120 known as 'Old Egyptian'; it's the one on the left in this 1966 ad. He sadly met his end that year when he crashed his Ferrari 330P at Oulton Park's Druids right hander.



Leaving Husbands Bosworth in the mirrors and a short way up the A4304, we turned on to minor roads at the village of Lubenham, which would have surely been a much better location for the Filtrate factory than Leeds. This small excursion was all to take us around the north side of Market Harborough, which we would go through in the afternoon. I admit to a little shiver as we passed the gates of Gartree Prison...



Situated, aptly, on Gallow Field Road, Gartree opened in 1965 as a category C training establishment but was soon upgraded to maximum security. It shot to national fame in 1987 when gangland boss John Kendall and murderer Sydney Draper were sprung from the exercise yard in a hi-jacked Bell helicopter. Others who have eaten porridge there include Ian Brady, Fred West, Reggie Kray and the first and only man convicted in the UK under the War Crimes Act 1991, Anthony Sawoniuk. A scary place indeed!

On the east side of Market Harborough, we found the B664 which is a well surfaced, sinuous road where good progress could be made en-route to the morning coffee stop in the delightful Rutland town of Uppingham. I think it was somewhere along this section that Tail End Charlie Stephen came across the parked Zero of David Taylor. Concerned that he had experienced an early technical problem, a worried Stephen stopped, only to be told that our man had just stopped for a wazz. David was clearly suffering from an early attack of 'range anxiety'!

It was blowing a hoolie as we rocked up, quite literally, in the car park of the Falcon Hotel, a 16th Century coaching inn that fronts onto the market square in Uppingham.

As is customary, everyone totally ignored our reserved parking area – or was that sign just for our esteemed leader? Mind, with the cones and boards blowing around the car park like autumn leaves it was difficult to work out just where we were supposed to park! Whilst the Electrical Brothers went in search of juice, the rest of us went in search of coffee.



The comestibles were eventually located on the first floor. And like wallflowers at a school disco, we sat all around the walls of the room to chomp our custard creams.



It was during the coffee stop that your scribe approached Maurice to enquire what car Michael was chauffeuring him around in. "It's a Porsche" says he. "Oh, which model?" I enquired. "Phuqtifino!" was the response. Funny, I couldn't find that particular model on the company website...



With the coffee break over, we all trooped back out of the hotel through the residents lounge which had, by now, filled with Uppingham's great and good who were getting stuck into the Saturday Telegraph and other broadsheet publications: we got some very 'old fashioned' looks I can tell you!

Mounting up in the car park, and waving ta-ta to the Electrical Brothers who were busy trying to track down 500 PP3s and from here on would be on their own, parallel run, we left Uppingham and its famous seat of learning behind and headed for the wild and windy flatlands of Lincolnshire...

After a short stretch of the A6003 we turned off right to skirt the southern edge of Rutland Water, which the website discover-rutland.co.uk describes as 'the playground of the East Midlands'. This man-made reservoir was completed in 1975 and is the largest reservoir in England by surface area albeit not by volume, that accolade goes to the north-east's Kielder Water. I suspect that our Chairman may well have cycled the 23 mile perimeter track given its proximity to his home; I did it once back in the 90s on a Kawasaki mountain bike (I still have it, no reasonable offer refused!) and a very nice route it is too.

Riding through Edith Weston you could just about get a glimpse of the water over to your left if you risked a fine and did the GS standing up on the pegs thing. I didn't so I missed it! You may have got a glimpse of the dam at the eastern end too before we embarked on a back roads scuttle around the top-side of Stamford to pick up the A6121 which takes you into Bourne, a town with a motor racing history.

The market town of Bourne developed on an old Roman road in an area known for its natural springs. Until the coming of the railways, the economy was (and still is) very much a rural one but the coming of the iron horse opened a market for the local bottled mineral water. It was here, in 1945, that British Racing Motors (BRM) was founded by Raymond Mays who had built pre-war racing cars under the ERA brand.

BRM competed in 197 Formula 1 races from 1951 to 1977 winning 17 of them. Their cars were pretty unreliable until Tony Rudd came to the fore in 1960 after BRM drivers Graham Hill and Dan Gurney went on strike, refusing to drive them. With Rudd as Chief Development Engineer, the cars' reliability improved and Hill won his and BRM's first World Drivers' Championship in 1962 with the P57; pictured right at the Monaco Grand Prix that year.



If you click on [this here link](#) you can watch an excellent bit of Pathé News footage of the 1962 International Trophy, at a very different from today Silverstone, which Hill won in the BRM.

From Bourne the route followed the A151 east before again hitting the minor drove roads north of Spalding and whence north via Pinchbeck to the village of Donington on the A52. Way back in the early 80's one of Kawasaki's then field staff, Phil Marriott, lived here – Nick Jeffery certainly may remember him.



Shortly after Donington I had cause to think that when Simon had mentioned the turnip museum during the briefing it may not have been in jest. By the side of the road was a large board proclaiming a forthcoming Brassica Innovation Day. As you can imagine, curiosity has got the better of me, I have to know more!

B.I.D is an open day organised by a company called Seminis to introduce their Curdivex cauliflower which is apparently “White, bright and easy to harvest.”

So friends, if you are at a loose end in this part of Lincolnshire on the 9th October, there's a day of trouser bulging excitement to be had courtesy of hosts Windy Ridge Veg Ltd of Swineshead...

By now, lunchtime nosebag was calling and it was but a short ride up a very windy B1152 to the Bubble Car Museum. But just before we got there, the group was split in two when the signalman at the Hubberts Bridge level crossing climbed down from his box to manually close the gates to let the local rattler through.

This very rarely seen nowadays occurrence gave enough time for Nick Jeffery to delve into his top box for a roll of universal bracket and a couple of cable ties to re-affix the handguard to Ben's Yamaha Tracer, which had been flapping in the breeze for some miles. It was a short-lived masterpiece of speedy technical innovation which was all undone as Ben bounced across the tracks and the handguard sprung away again!

Still, it was only a couple of miles up the road before Alan Halford was waving us into Lincolnshire's finest attraction and a more permanent fix could be made.



It's said that the ploughman's lunch was an invention of J Walter Thompson, the ad agency affiliated to the Cheese Bureau back in the 1950s, to promote the sale of cheese after wartime rationing ended. However, the earliest references to a 'ploughman's meal' of beer cheese and bread date back to *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede* a lampooning poem published in the late 1390s. So the 50's ad-men had again proved there's nowt new under the sun, they just gave this ancient rural staple a posh name.



In the middle of Lincolnshire arable land, what better lunch could we have then than a ploughman's? But this wasn't just an ordinary ploughman's; paradoxically for a museum dedicated to the smallest vehicles on the road, the sheer size of this lunchtime snack would have had old Pierce dozing under the nearest hedgerow 'til teatime!

Whilst some couldn't wait to tuck in, others chose to view the museum before taking lunch. For two others, their wait was enforced...



Arriving half an hour behind the main group, the first task for the Electrical Brothers was to ask the Maître d' if they may borrow a cup of electricity, pretty please?

In an area where horses had only recently been superseded as primary transport, finding a pukka charging point on a farm was clearly not an option. The only way to access the grid was to pass an extension lead through a fanlight window out back that necessitated the movement of a fridge freezer first. David did however offer words of encouragement to the Mrs Woman as she huffed and puffed shoving it out of the way!

The museum was small but nonetheless interesting and nestled innocuously amongst the downstairs exhibits of Isettas, Bonds and Reliants was a car that was particularly significant to three of our group...

At first I thought it was a badly beaten up Datsun Cherry but then Peter Meek, who was stood next to me, said "I ran that car in." Bloody hell! You're kidding surely?

Turns out that this forlorn exhibit was one of three Suzuki 360 two-strokes that Heron Suzuki had imported for evaluation purposes and Peter had drawn the short straw of driving it to Exeter and back. Maurice and Nick Jeffery also remembered it too. Peter reminisced about the whistling noise it made whenever he got close to the Japanese speed limit whilst Maurice remembered it as being "Bloody awful."



Upstairs there were motorcycle based exhibits ranging from the conventional through to the downright weird. Have a look at the photoreel to get a flavour. In the meantime, here's some Franny Barnetts to cheer Peter Sheen and for no other reason than he was sooo excited, the new silencers on Nick H's Commando...



Fortified and enlightened we again waved bye-bye to Dave and Dale and back tracked down the road to Langrick Bridge. If anything, the wind was even stronger and the tyre sidewalls were getting a good workout just to ride in a straight line.

Langrick Bridge is a single track affair that crosses the famous in angling circles, River Witham. Just before we reached it there was an American style diner which the entrepreneurial restaurateur had taken advantage of the river's proximity and called his establishment 'Witham and Blues' and the puns didn't stop there, around the back is a fast food joint themed on American muscle cars called 'V-Ate'. Mind the latter could just as easily have had a German theme...



Turning right at the Hubberts Bridge level crossing there were a few miles of A17 to ride before returning to back road burning at Heckington. There are some quaint village names around here: Helpringham, Horbling, Folkingham and nestling between those two musical hall sound-alikes of Boothby Pagnell and Burton Coggles was Bitchfield; I swear I saw Rick slow right down through there! This small village dates back to the Domesday Book and boasts an earthwork called 'Camp Field'. Ooh, it was awful but I liked it...

Before you could say pork pie, we were west of the Great North Road and heading into Melton Mowbray, aka 'The Rural Capital of Food'. To live up to its reputation, visitors can enjoy 'ChocFest', 'PieFest' and an artisan cheese fair. On the darker side in this PC world of ours, its proximity to the Vale of Belvoir means it has a long history of fox hunting too. But we didn't stop here, oh no. We were on the way to 'CakeFest' just south of Melton at March House Farm in Great Dalby.

He's a jolly nice chap that Stephen Burgess for twas he who sponsored the confections at the tea stop. Not that I got any mind, by the time I had done my scribe duty of recording all the bikes in the car park and got to the table there were just lots of happy jam and chocolate smeared faces and empty plates!



With the seams of our riding gear bursting it was time to waddle back out to the bikes. There was a bit of bike swapping going on for the last leg to the billet: Andrew negated Kawasaki's weight saving programme by strapping himself, boosted by 2 slices of Victoria sponge, to the Chairman's H2 whilst Frank was manfully trying to manoeuvre a borrowed BMW GS on the steeply sloped car park, think Willie Carson on a recalcitrant shire horse!





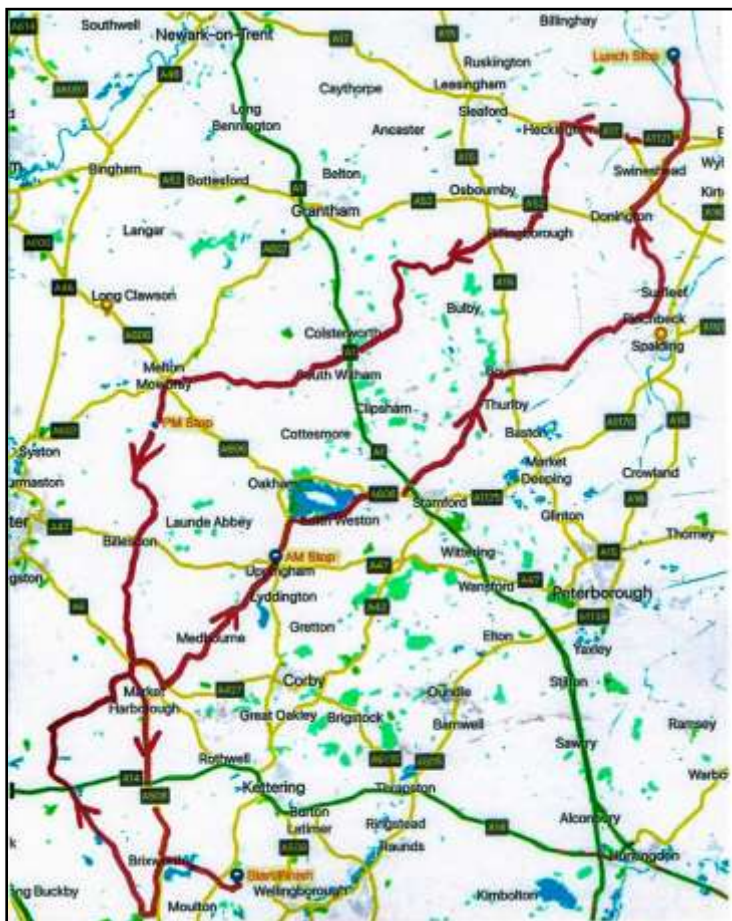
The route south, still on B roads, was through, probably, the nicest part of Leicestershire and again, my mind wandered back to my early motorcycling days as we skirted around the village of Tilton on the Hill.

Springfield Hill Farm near Tilton used to be one of the country's top scrambling venues and in the late 60s, along with my mate on his Ambassador I would wobble out there on my Bantam to watch the likes of Freddie Mayes and Tom Leadbitter race around the hillside. The (then) future Mrs Scribe's grandfather, Bert Hawkins, also won trophies there; maybe old Mike Jackson did too?

The events here and in those days, at Mallory Park too, were organised by the Leicester Query Motorcycle Club which was formed during the war when fuel was rationed and all motorsport banned, the name came about apparently because all the club could do was hold quizzes! (Ed: Was Nick Jeffery a member?)

Between the A47 and the A6, just before Market Harborough we passed through The Langtons, prime county real estate this, just east of Great Glen which is the UK home of Englebert Humperdink (remember him?) and was that of Nigel Lawson, now Lord Lawson of Blaby, Maggie Thatcher's Chancellor and whose best day's work was surely the production of Nigella. Lawson, a prominent 'Leaver', now lives in France but is selling his house having had his application for French citizenship refused – I wonder why?

The last main town on the way back to Sywell was Market Harborough, a town that pre-dates William the Conqueror and used to be a main north/south east/west crossroads, it's now largely by-passed by the A6 to the east and A14 to the south. A glance right as we passed through would have revealed the old grammar school perched atop the old butter market.



After negotiating the town centre to pick up the A508 south it was a straight dash back to re-cross Pitsford Reservoir and claim first dibs of the bath water or Spitfire ale – delete inapplicable!

Now those of us with sat-navs running probably heard the insistent clanging, warning us of the upcoming speed camera in the 40mph limit across Pitsford. Some of us obviously didn't. Did you get away with it Dave (Dew)??

And whilst on the subject of sat navs, our run leader had eschewed such modern gizmos and relied entirely on his mark 1 brain cells to remember the route. Well done Simon!

After congratulating our organisers on another great run, all that remained in the digestive gap betwixt tea and dinner, was to contemplate just where on the route were the Electrical Brothers?

The faint smell of Lifebuoy wafted around the bar as freshly scrubbed members and guests gathered for aperitifs. For some it was an opportunity for earnest conversation; for Maurice, well, he was just happy to successfully sit in one of those fiendish armchairs without spilling his drink!



Saturday dinner followed the wholesome theme, prawn cocktail followed by roast beef and a very artistic slice of tart to follow. I recall some confusion over Grace, principally the timing I think. Andrew delivered it but one or two prawns had already been consumed which cost Frank, Alan and our guest Richard dearly when the Sergeant at Arms detailed his charges later!



During the meal, Chairman Martin arose to deliver the important notices, commencing, of course, with thanking our erstwhile organisers for a splendid run. In calling for a well-deserved round of applause, he likened the Bubble Car Museum to Simon and Stephen saying “It was funny and interesting at the same time; as these two guys are!”

Following this he referred to a rather confusing message from Frank concerning Graham Matcham’s non-attendance which went something like: “Graham couldn’t make the run because he was at Snetterton, but then he thought he could, but he can’t.” I *think* we got the trick of it. He then announced that “The winner of the quiz was Dave Dew and the answer was 12 volts”, which, obviously, was met with much mirth!

Thanking members who had made donations, the Chairman especially thanked Steve Callahan who had paid handsomely to come on the run but then didn’t show and Stephen Burgess for his outstanding sponsorship of the afternoon tea stop. He rounded off by asking Nick Jeffery to propose the loyal toast, which he duly did.

With coffee being dispensed the Chairman introduced Andrew as the Sergeant at Arms, preceded by an update on the progress of the hapless Dave and Dale by saying “I’ve had a message and they are currently in Kettering, in the queue at Argos, buying a 17 mile extension lead.”



Sergeant Andrew opened by saying that as this was his first Sergeant at Arms appointment “I’m not sure of the protocol; who I can fine and who I can’t, so I’ve included everybody!” And being the super-efficient manager that he is, he had split the report into Friday night, clothing and riding. With Corporal Frank carrying the can, he launched into a list of well over 30 misdemeanours, which your scribe has tried to rank together with some ‘nearly made its’ thrown in...



And so pot kickers, here is the top 15 chart, in reverse order, for 27th April 2019; not ‘arf!

In at number **15** is ex-Met Policeman **Ian Kerr** who was one of a few ‘indicator transgressors’; in his case he made it into the chart for serial offences that he then tried to blame onto his borrowed Yamaha.

At **14** was the usually immaculate **Dan Sager**, ex-Chairman and the Club’s Anton du Beke who had said to room-mate Ben, “If I should collapse tonight, loosen my tie, this shirt’s a bit tight.”

At **13** and in the first of two entries in this week’s chart, comes **Simon Hill** who was cited as generally being late signalling at roundabouts and junctions but had excelled himself in the centre of Bourne where at the traffic lights, the Sergeant who was behind him had gestured ‘which way’ which Simon replied, also in gesture, no idea. When the lights changed, he indicated right, then left ... and went straight on!

A welcome return to the chart in **12** was **Michael Evans**, for using an I-phone app to check the provenance of the chosen wines and was overheard saying to Simon “This wine has a good reputation and it’s £20 a bottle!” Welcome back Michael!





A non-mover at **11** was **Martyn Roberts** for a re-mix of an old hit. The Sergeant claimed that the share price of *Bet 365* had taken a big hit after members, on seeing the real ale selection on arrival, had bet heavily that our chum wouldn't make the main meal. But at a time when Martyn would usually be asleep in his soup, the Sergeant had espied him, impressively, drinking coffee!

And now we're into the top 10, hang about!

At **10** was **Nigel Bosworth** who came out on Saturday morning clothed head to toe in spanking new Dainese riding gear. He told the Sergeant that it was all prototype stuff and that if it fit him, he could have it - at which point Simon suggested it may fit him better...

Number **9** was a duet with both **Ben Matthews** and **Nick Jeffery** being fined; Ben for allowing a technically perfect Yamaha to develop a handlebar fault and Nick for a repair that failed within one gear change.

At **8** was another re-mix, this time by **Norman Hyde**. Not normally prone to indicating his overtaking intentions, on this run he did; by indicating left then then under-taking, in a lay-by!

Number **7** and climbing, every time I read this, comes **Kevin Howells**. Sporting shiny new Alpinestars riding pants to replace his previously fined jeans, the Sergeant had considered them a tad long and suggested he tied them up at the bottom, "Can't" replied the vertically challenged Kevin, "They're already tucked in at the knees!" Seems that 'over-square' riding gear is hard to come by...

A second chart entry at **6** for **Simon Hill** and this time it's an EP. With the Sergeant saying "You can see the meticulous planning that Simon has put into this run" before continuing with "His run briefing was written on an envelope post-marked Friday." The supporting 'bar time adjustment' was also included before the rousing finale "We had only gone a few miles up the road before Simon went around a roundabout 3 times to check the route."

At **5** came **Tony Dawson**, immaculate as ever in perfectly preserved period leathers with highly polished boots. What caught Tony out however, was raising his boot to the Sergeant and saying: "See that? Gorilla Glue, they'll do another 10 years now!"

A trio holds the number **4** spot: **Dave Dew**, **Stephen Burgess** and **Tim the SCH support driver**. This was, of course, for when Dave had stopped by Martin to show off the mileage on his bike. As Stephen rode up, Martin rode off – as did Stephen and Tim. Dave hit the starter button and ... nothing!



And so we come to this run's top 3, but just before that, some that were just bubbling under the chart...

Martyn Roberts' newly released Ariel t-shirt gag, "When I wear it I get a much better reception."

Craig Carey-Clinch for his re-release of 'I wear my sunglasses from breakfast 'til dark.'

Geoff Selvidge and his double A side: 'How long is that cable in your top box' and 'War and Peace' with an exceptionally long intro featuring Nigel Bosworth.

Roy Pinto and his two dressers, 'Got to get me into my pants.'

But wait no longer chums, here's the top 3!

At **3** comes **Michael Evans** who was asked by the Sergeant if he had ever heard of GDPR, the General Data Protection regs. Michael had turned up in the car park on Saturday morning taking pictures, without authorisation, of people, not all of whom had signed release documents and topped it off by being spotted going into the loo, camera in hand!

And just off the top spot at **2** was **Maurice Knight** for responding to the question of his Friday I-Phone use with: "I'm not making a call, I'm turning my lights on at home. I've been burgled 3 f*cking times!"

And now for this run's 'Top of the Cops': hang about, flip the disc...

Of course, straight in at **number one**, was **Martin Lambert**, for being the first Chairman in the Sergeant's memory to use the word penis in his opening address, which had caused the puzzled waitress and her chum to return to the kitchen and enquire of the chef, "Are you sure it's a motorcycle club? One of them was just talking about a penis!"



As you can imagine chums, this chart would obviously have been much different had the Electrical Brothers arrived in time. At the Sergeant's suggestion that he would send David an invoice post run, the Chairman said "Yes, charge him..."

And so, shortly before old fashioned chucking-out time we drifted back to the bar for nightcaps, bar stool racing and to reflect on a great day's riding with pals and perhaps, to ponder the future for alternate fuel vehicles: and then they arrived!



At seven minutes past bed-time, David and Dale arrived in the bar in their riding gear, remarkably still smiling, to tell the tale of their alternate run. I think the words of Charles Dickens sum it up admirably:

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,
It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness,
It was the epoch of belief,
It was the epoch of incredulity...*

Truly, this was a Tale of Two Runs!

In compiling this report, your scribe is indebted to everyone who supplied tit-bits, inspiration and photographs, notably, Craig Carey-Clinch and especially Michael Evans. This was a run rich in material not all of which, regrettably, made the final edit. See more pictures, in clearer detail, in the photoreel.

To all our friends not on the run, you were missed but certainly not forgotten, see you next time we hope.

And in closing, I must make a very special mention of the Club's 'John Wayne'. In a story of 'True Grit' and determination to overcome, Peter Meek, against a particularly shitty weather forecast, chimed up his trusty Norton Commando at double-oh-crack, rode up to Sywell, did the run and then set off from the tea stop to ride home again. Peter, we salute you!



PS: Sorry about defacing your work Mike!

PPS: Attendee list overleaf.

The Pilots and their Machines...

Martin Lambert (Chairman)	Kawasaki H2 SX SE+	Ian Kerr MBE	Yamaha MT09 Tracer
Nick Jeffery (Deputy Hon Sec)	BMW K75	Maurice Knight	With Michael Evans
Rick Parish (Hon Treasurer)	Triumph Trophy 1200	Ben Matthews	Yamaha MT09 Tracer
Simon Hill (Organiser)	BMW R1200GS	Peter Meek (run only)	Norton Commando 850
Stephen Burgess (Organiser)	BMW R1250GS	Roy Pinto	Yamaha MT09 Tracer
Andrew Smith (Sergeant at Arms)	Yamaha Tracer 900 GT	Martyn Roberts	Honda NC750X DCT
<i>Ray Bailey</i>	<i>Friday evening dinner</i>	Dan Sager	TriumphTiger 800 XRx
Craig Carey-Clinch	Triumph Bonneville T120	Geoff Selvidge (Scribe)	Kawasaki Versys 1000 GT
Tony Dawson	Yamaha MT07 Tracer	David Taylor	<i>Zero DSR ZF14.4 Black Forest</i>
David Dew	Honda Crosstourer	Neil Tuxworth	Honda X-Adv
Michael Evans	Porsche Macan	GUESTS	
Frank Finch	Ducati Multistrada 1200	<i>Nigel Bosworth</i>	<i>Ducati Diavel Carbon</i>
Alan Halford	Triumph Tiger 800 XRx	<i>Richard Burgess</i>	<i>BMW R1250GS Exclusive</i>
Nick Hopkins	Norton Commando Fastback	<i>Kevin Howells</i>	<i>Yamaha MT10SP</i>
Norman Hyde	Triumph Bonneville T120	<i>Dale Robinson</i>	<i>Zero DSR ZF14.4 Black Forest</i>

There were no menu cards produced but our meals are detailed in the report.



An excellent, A4, double sided, laminated route card was provided, see page 11. However, Norman decided that as the run was divided into four parts his route card should be too.

On road support was provided courtesy of 'Rapid Tim' in the obviously souped-up SCH Transit. With grateful thanks to our organisers!

DON'T FORGET!

Next Run: 13th – 15th September 2019

Organisers: Norman Hyde and Martyn Roberts

Venue: The Glebe Hotel, Barford, Warks, CV35 8BS