

VMCC North Birmingham Section Clun Run – 7th July, 2013.

What a day this was, unbroken blue sky, temperatures reaching 80 and above, men's Wimbledon final to come in the afternoon and a good turn out of riders at Tony's for Ian Harris' Clun Run. 21 signed on, but Maurice Trupp had to retire from the start with a rear wheel binding on his Triumph. We had a number of visitors, one of whom had brought along a simply gorgeous BSA Rocket 3, looking as though a proud owner had just collected it from the dealership in 1969. I guess there might be a better one but it's hard to imagine. Other visitors included Ken Hayes from the Shropshire Section on his Velocette Viper and Kevin Egan on a 1966 175cc BSA Bantam.



Soon after 10.30 we were off before it got any hotter, taking one of our usual routes out of Bridgnorth along the Ludlow road and then right by the YELLOW cottage up the lane through Criddon to Ditton Priors. At least that was the plan but the first group met a tar and chipping gang along the lane but they hadn't yet started work and let them through. Later riders were not so lucky and had to detour onto the main road to Craven Arms. Not long after escaping the road menders, Colin Lloyd in the lead had a 'moment' on rounding a sharp right hand corner and finding a quadbike coming towards him on the wrong side of the road. A bit of nifty ziz-zagging and dicing with the verge averted disaster while doing nothing for Colin's heart rate. Colin's excitement wasn't over yet though, soon after he came across a pick-up abandoned in the middle of a lane with driver's door open and engine running. Then a huge tractor caused him to again take to the verge, the driver being occupied on his mobile phone. He next faced a car on his side of the road on a left hand bend in Diddlebury, caused by the driver having to go round a car parked on the bend on a corner on yellow hatch marking in order to have a chat with a bystander, and just yards from a car park. Colin offered some advice on parking through his crash helmet, but perhaps

fortunately couldn't hear the reply. Surely that was enough excitement for one morning, but no. Soon after on the main road down into Craven Arms we came behind a group of cyclists who, at the last minute and without looking turned right into a lane just as Colin was about to pass them. Another scare and it was with some wry amusement we learned from riders behind that one of the cyclists, having made it into the lane then fell off on some gravel.

It was with some relief that we reached the coffee stop at Harry Tuffins in Craven Arms, where Colin decided that he had had enough of leading on the road and he fell back into the peloton for the next stage.



The coffee stop
in Craven Arms

After coffee the route took us north out of Craven Arms and then left along a lovely lane up a hill through Round Oak towards Lydbury North and into Bishops Castle, where the plan was to skirt the southern edge of the town and take the lane out towards Bishops Moat. That was the plan, but Ian hadn't anticipated the Bishops Castle carnival and the road into town being closed. Officials were there to give advice, but that amounted to telling us to turn right and second left into town. They were divided about whether the lane we wanted was accessible; one said it wasn't, the other that it was. I spotted Ken Hayes riding purposefully into Bishops castle and

looking as though he knew what he was doing so, with a wave to the others to follow, we pursued him, picking up Keith Little on our way through town and just making it to the Bishops Moat turn before it was closed off. Later riders were not so fortunate and had to find a more extensive detour. After Bishops Moat we followed lanes down towards Mellington and then had a short section of more main roads into Sarn, where we turned left into the hills again. Sarn proved a useful landmark for Jonathan Jinks and Julian Edwards, who had been disrupted by the carnival, and they were able to get back on the route. The climb out of Sarn went on and on, eventually taking us up on to the Kerry Ridgway. The next



At the top of the climb out of Sarn

section of the route was stunning, taking us along lanes across hilltops and ridges with glorious views down into valleys in seemingly every direction. There was even an optional green lane (gravel really), which gave Kevin a chance to bound along on the Bantam and show us how it's done. The Bantam had kept up perfectly well all day and generally impressed with its ability. Soon after the green lane we came across Ian, whose BSA C11 had (again!) run out of sparks. He waved us on, saying that he had a dead short and would wire the coil direct from the battery and would be ok. Much later he arrived at the finish at The Sun Inn in Clun on the end of Martyn Round's tow rope, this having not worked as the electrical short was by then suspected to be in the condenser.

After lunch at the Sun we made our way home, and after such an eventful day I hope that everyone else had as safe and problem free journey as my small group did. Thanks Ian for a simply terrific route. There was general agreement that nobody does it better than Ian Harris, Routemaster!



Martyn and Ian arriving at The Sun Inn

Dave Spencer