

Stratford (not), 27 November 2005

James Coombs, Ride Leader

A bit damp and fresh, 1000 - 1300 hrs, distance 50 miles.

Pilot	Bike
Tim Cutmore	BMW R1150RT
Ian Hudson	Honda Deauville
Geoff Pollard	Honda Hornet
Alastair Lord	Honda VFR
James Coombs	BMW DakarName Bike

SAM's last of 2005! - Run to Stratford (A.K.A a bacon butty and a brew at Greasy Joe's in Cirencester!).

I rolled up to the club at 10am on the dot, to see four bikes in a row, but five riders. Now

normally I would have deduced that somebody would be riding pillion, but on closer inspection I notice the attire of our Chairman Graham Bailey (and lead for



Graham looking rough; no more than usual...

the run to Stratford) was not what I would have expected for a chilly November morning. Unfortunately Graham was not well enough to take us on the ride out. But, he had dragged himself out of his sickbed, against Doctor's orders (okay, I may

be pushing it a bit now) and driven over to tell us that the run was cancelled.

As a group we decided that we would forge a route to somewhere new and after at least 3 or 4 minutes of deliberation we settled on a run over to Greasy Joe's in Cirencester for a brew. I was lucky enough to be volunteered as the lead for the run and following a

quick discussion with Graham on an interesting route he had found we set off for Cirencester.

Our route saw us climb Birdlip Hill and then onto fairly decent B roads through The Camp and Bisley. A quick navigational exercise between

our group, a car, horse, pony and a massive Irish wolfhound.

Then came the interesting "road" between Oakridge and Frampton Mansell, which Graham had told me about. This was not for the fainthearted! It was basically a long windy extremely narrow downhill stretch, which was then followed by an equally windy uphill route. I think our associates (and to be honest the full



James demonstrates Advanced Hand Waving worthy of his Ride Leader status

members too) wished that they had another gear below 1st to help control their bikes. Personally I was extremely pleased to be on a GS, but everybody made it through and we duly found the A419 for the remainder of the run in to Cirencester.

After a warming brew and a filling bacon butty at Greasy Joe's, we decided to remain as a group and ride back towards Gloucester. Unfortunately that meant a rather boring whiz along the A419 towards Stroud (that's if a 40 limit can be described as a whiz), and then it was

entertaining climb up on to Selsey Common where the Kamikaze roaming cows lined the edge of the road, but it's worth it for the views along the top overlooking the Stroud valley. We then dropped down through the multiple bends of

Frocester Hill (are you seeing a recurring theme yet?) and then onto the A38 and back up to Gloucester.

The small group enjoyed the run and I enjoyed being the lead for the

first time, but I must say it's harder than it looks. Unfortunately I didn't keep the ride out to the same format as Graham in that we only travelled over a single stretch of road once and had no U-turns!

I will have to try harder next time! ♦