

## Headcorn Airfield Run 2010

**A** less than encouraging weather forecast did little to deter the regulars and some new faces at this year's Headcorn run. Four campers of various shapes and sizes were on site when I arrived on the Saturday and we were joined by a steady stream of day visitors and overnighters throughout the day. The wind made life interesting for the parachutists and the light aircraft taking off and landing seemed to be enjoying the challenge, too. Hot air ballooning was a casualty of the weather, though, a pity as the sight of them never fails to draw a crowd.

Another casualty was Durham John's Puch Maxi which broke a newly-fitted freewheel and his Batavus which seemed to be in need of a replacement condenser. Field engineering involving car parts and tape got it going satisfactorily again.

I parked the Mitsubago camper with the pop top facing the wind and prepared the Poirier for the short run to Jean Hammond's micro car collection at Hawkenbury. I thought I ought to keep the Saturday run short - after all, you never know when someone's going to turn up with an Ariel Three! Jean was happy to allow us free rein in the Bubble Shed and asks me to pass on her thanks for the generosity of the visitors towards the upkeep of the museum.

Following a gentle wander up Headcorn high street it was back to the airfield for supper, drinks and a showing of the DVD of last year's event in the mobile canteen of the Gill Brothers which had been converted into a cinema for the evening. A pint in the Wings Bar was washed down with the speciality of the Gill canteen, a strong Irish coffee. Few of us had trouble sleeping that night despite the wind tearing across the open airfield.

Sunday morning brought more riders out to defy the elements for a ride through the Kentish countryside to The Chequers at Goudhurst where the host made us very welcome in his very pleasantly refurbished pub. Continuing on a bit of A road to Cranbrook, we were given a fascinating tour of the Union Mill, one of the last operational windmills in the area and run towards the end of its' life by a co-operative of creditors when the last sole owner and miller found that he couldn't make ends meet. The Mill still grinds corn for sale in the on-site shop but has scaled down milling as this is now the end of the visitor season. The guide made full use of Blake Yeomans who was set to gainful employment in the demonstrations of milling practices of years gone by.

The heavens opened as we left Cranbrook for the homeward leg but our spirits were less dampened than our clothing. The rain got in through my storm suit, leaving a very embarrassing patch down my leg - it's where the water seeps in through the zip, honestly - and sitting in a puddle of what I hope was more rain, although it's difficult to tell at my age.

A brief prize-giving ended the day with Durham John picking up the award for the furthest travelled and for not bringing an Ariel Three, a cup to the Brothers Gill for their regular attendance and consistent provision of apple pie and Irish coffee,

Hero of the Day was Steve Watkin who rode down from Bromley on his AV89 with all his gear and faced a very wet trip home - all on a bike that I'd sold him - and medals went to Blake, the youngest participant on the pillion of his Dad's nicely turned-out Lambretta and to Chris Mercer who struggled with poor starting on his Solex - one of several to join us this year - but made it back to base.

Runners & riders: Dave Arnott - Mobylette 51V, Luke Booth - BSA Beagle, Dave Casper - Italjet, John Dainty - Batavus, Terry Day - AJW, Nick Devonport - Poirier MS6, Clive & Ann Fletcher - Piaggio Runner, Michael Gill - Pashley bicycle, Robert Gill - Puch Mini Maxi, William Gill - Raleigh Runabout, Geoff Hills - Raleigh Runabout, Peter Jones - Velosolex, Mike Hele - Honda Dream 50, Dick Layton - Yamaha Townmate, Chris Mercer - Velosolex, Ian McGregor - Honda PC50, John Redding - Puch VS50, Keith Rutledge - Trojan Mini Motor combination, Paul Ryan - Norman Nippy, Carl Squirrel - Honda Novio, Ken Standen - La Française Diamant, Ian Trelease - Velosolex 3800, Steve Watkin - Mobylette AV89, David Wickens - Puch Maxi, Martin Wickner - Deryn, Sharon Wickner - Phillips Panda, Robert & Blake Yeomans - Lambretta LD.



John checks Brenda's exhaust



John Redding prepares for his dotage



Keith Rutledge's Mini Motor combination



Michael Gill on bicycle



Not sure what's going on here!



Still going then!



Terry Day's AJW



Where does the spark plug go



Windmill model



Winnowing machine

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