

THE SAD OLD GITS RIDE OUT.

"10 for 10.30 start" said the event notice. I rolled into the car park at the rear of the Tadcaster Leisure Centre at about 09.40 hrs. to find almost everyone else already there, the Copmanthorpe Complimentary Catering Company busy serving hot drinks and bacon butties out of the back of two vans, the redoubtable Marion checking everyone in, and Sherwood handing out route sheets which looked suspiciously like those from two years ago! Not that it would matter since no one took any notice then, and were not likely to today. A case of "follow anyone who looks like a local"! A quick look round the car park, and chat to friends old and new, and out with the camera for a picture of each of the machines showed the Bernardi Buzz to be the machine of the day - with three examples, followed by two Quicklys, two Cyclomasters (or at least one, plus one pimped-up example - mid-engine, 14 speed, etc., etc., - you know the script), plus a Puch Maxi S, a Raynal Autocycle, plus an Italjet Class, - but the manufacturer's prize goes to Honda, with a PC50, a Melody, a Camino, a Dream 50, and Sherwood's Stepthrough the size of which I did not note, but at least this one was of pure parentage! There were visitors from Lancashire, Suffolk, Tyne/Tees, and a Scottish exile - and all were made welcome. The Copmanthorpe Cyclomotor Company even provided the Italjet for me to ride - generosity indeed. After faffing about with camera, helmet, and a quick lesson in control layout and starting procedure, I look up to find the car park empty - but on riding round to the front of the building, there are the others, motors running waiting for someone, anyone, to take the lead. We set off, almost all together, and ride up the road to Boston Spa where we make the first right turn, and it is probably here that we lost the two Bernardi mountain bikes. They arrive at the Shoulder of Mutton lunch stop in Appleton Roebuck about half an hour after the rest of us, having had some "technical problems" with the cycle side of one of the machines - but they had followed Sherwood's official route, in their own time. They had looked over the hedgerows, admired the countryside, the villages, and noted the unmistakable smell of money! As for the rest of us, there was no peleton, more two or three groups who would separate, and reform and only loosely follow the intended route leaving Dave Casper and Sherwood with plenty to do riding back and forth looking for lost sheep and guarding junctions. It seemed to me that you couldn't go far wrong if you visited every village with two names - Boston Spa, Thorp Arch, Acaster Malbis, Acaster Selby, Appleton Roebuck, Bolton Percy. What is it with these Yorkshire people? Sherwood's route kept us mainly on minor roads, with plenty of opportunity to take in the glorious Spring countryside, - and the sun shone. Someone had even been out in the night and built a nice new bridge to carry us serenely over the murderous A64. I spend some time following the Grumpy pilot of a Cyclomaster with a whiff of castor oil, having previously been passed by Grumpy Junior on the flying Rudge Cyclomaster Special, his Lycra leggings flapping as the wind rushes in through the torn knees - evidence of exuberant cornering on his many Wharfedale test runs, perhaps. I catch him up later as he has stopped at the roadside. "Problem?", I ask. "No. Waiting for Grumpy" he replies. "Do you ever call him Dad, or Philip, even if only on a Sunday?" I ask. "No!" he replies "Even the kids call him Grumpy Grandad!" And shortly, Grumpy arrives, all stubble and smiles with not a cross word to be heard - just to confuse me! So - to lunch. Everyone piles into the pub for steak and ale pie, I hang around outside taking photos and having a look over my ride for the day, and, of course, talk to strangers! Three men wander up, having a weekend together, plus wives, having first met 37 years ago. "Whoa, two Quicklys - unbelievable! I had a Phillips Gadabout too. Are you a Club? Are you on a rally?" I give them my copy of April's Buzzing and point them toward the website. Three new members, - or just a passing rekindling of enthusiasm? Time will tell. Into the pub for a hurried meal and a shandy, plus an update on the last Granadaland meeting. I should have been there - it sounded interesting! Outside again to find everyone fidgetting to be off - and then we are away for the short run back to Tadcaster. It doesn't matter how many times you go out for a quiet ride on your own, or how fervently you determine not to race on a Group Run, the temptation is overwhelming! I bend the elbows, drop my head, and wind open the Italjet's twistgrip and storm past the Raleigh Cyclomaster and the Puch Maxi S, but as the Rudge Cyclomaster Special swarms past me, its rider flicking the stubby clutch lever and changing gear after gear to keep the 25cc motor singing in a 500 rpm rev band, letting the tortured clutch take up the drive, I call out "How fast?". (The Italjet speedo gives up around 40 kph). He glances at his digital readout, factors in the cross wind, does a quick mental vector calculation, and calls out "25.7!" into his backdraught. And then we're back at the Leisure Centre, loading up and disbanding just before a shower cloud arrives.

A Good Day, and well worth the effort by Sherwood, Dave, and The Team. Marion's Official Record gives the Runners and Riders as follows:- Raynal Autocycle-Tom Norman; Rudge Multi 14 sp Cyclomaster-Peter Crowder (featuring multiple chain trouser eating feature); Raleigh Cyclomaster- Philip Crowder; Union Bernardi (with trick bits!)-David Bell; MTB Bernardi-David Hitch; Multicolour MTB Bernardi-C Gowton(sorry Christine, Caroline??); Italjet Class-Peter Moore; NSU Quickly-Ron Bond; NSU Quickly-Ray Parkin; Puch Maxi S-Alan Green; Honda Camino-Colin Cook; Honda Melody-Peter Gosling; Honda PC50-Carl Squirrel; Honda CB50V-Dave Casper; Honda C50(?) -Sherwood Grimshaw.

Moving off to go home, I spy Alan Green getting changed in his Fiesta. It looks as though he's been camping out in it- but one doesn't like to pry into domestic circumstances! Driving up the road to Boston Spa, I see Tom Norman stopped at the roadside, leaning on a fence, and apparently gazing (with a faraway look in his eyes?) at the sheep in the field beyond. What was he thinking, I wonder?









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