

A day out with The VMCC at the Southsea Saunter. 1st January 2009.



My colleagues decided that they could do without me for the night shift and a leave chit was duly signed.

Gone are the days when I have to apply for such things from Mrs D who is in the process of becoming the former Mrs D. Mike and Renate Hele had kindly offered me a bed for the night which saved me taking the camper and we saw the New Year in over a glass of wine.

We met in the car park of the Toby Carvery and soon machines were being warmed up for the off, which was more than you could say for the riders on such a bitterly cold morning.

Ian McGregor's Raleigh-mounted Itom made encouraging noises and managed a few yards of forward progress before succumbing to carburation problems. Mike's JLO-powered Eysinck Renate tandem had problems with perished rubber in the tyre valves but he managed to persuade enough air to remain in the tube to make the journey viable.

By this time we were the Last Men (and Woman) standing so took a short cut to the car park on Southsea sea front where Ken Marsland and his team were waiting for us with ginger wine and shortbread, a welcome warmer.



My Poirier invalid trike with the Sachs engine proved popular again with everyone returning from their test drive with a grin on their faces and a determination to own one. I sense a business opportunity here but have no plans to sell it - unless Mrs D's legal team have other ideas, of course!

Ken is an authorised guide for Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and had wangled a group entry to the HMS Victory compound where we lined up for a photo shoot. The ship is in a fine state of preservation and I hope to be back later in the year for a proper visit to the Dockyard.

We left the Dockyard for the journey back to the Carvery for lunch where verbal sparring with hostile and stressed bar staff was on the "specials" board. Makes a change from the usual over-priced eat all you can fare, I suppose.

Thanks to Ken for organising a superb day out and to Mike and Renate for their hospitality.



Nice to see friends from far and wide doing what we do best - coaxing madcap machinery into life in freezing cold conditions!

Regards

Nick Devonport

Key to photos:

1. Victory line-up
2. Brian Sun's Norton autocycle
3. Freezing cylemotorists
4. Mike's Renate tandem
5. Ian McGregor's dead Itom



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