

Frosts to Anglers Rest

by Jay Human and Martin Randle

This run came about after forum member Gordon Kerr ‘floated’ an idea about having a drive around Bedfordshire. This naturally lined up very nicely with the Autotest and so Gordon was asked to arrange a run to coincide with the finishing of the tests. As some members were camping, the start and end points were defined. All that was left was for Gordon to plan a route and ensure that the start point served reasonably-priced nosh!

As it was, the wet weather in the week leading to 28th August meant the cancellation of the autotest (to be held on grass), but everyone was keen to do the run. We met at lunchtime at Frosts Garden Centre, Willington, on the A603 under grey skies. Three TR7s (remarkably, all FHCs), two GT6s and one each of a Spitfire and a TR4A, all of which were different colours, made for a nice line-up in the car park. It seemed that someone had told Raider (as Martin is known as to those who use the website forum) that we were doing this in fancy dress. It was a close call whether he was dressed as the legendary TR7 rally pilot Tony Pond or whether he was in fact there as a 1970s porn star! I think, with the coveralls, we were able to give him the benefit of the doubt, but with a zip which kept getting lower the doubt was always there!

We were already one car down: after tracking down Malcolm Paris’s phone number we found out that he had experienced troubles that morning and was working on his car with a view to joining us later. Malcolm had a drive of about one hour to the general location of the route. Gordon had planned a journey of around 40 miles and the directions came complete with Tulips [see the report from Andrew Pearce and Graham Reeks for an explanation of Tulips – Ed.] – top job Gordon and it certainly sets the standard for future runs. So who was going to lead the way? With a distinct lack of hands it was down to the route’s planner in his Green FHC.

It was advised that we should set the trip mileage, so that, should we get lost we’d have a better idea of where we were... hmm, I think most of the cars lacked a serviceable trip counter on the dash, so that idea was scuppered. I (Jay) was sandwiched between Steve’s yellow Spitfire, which with its twin-exit exhaust sounded rather sweet, and Tim’s GT6. I was later to discover that the yellow paint, which I much admired, wasn’t Inca (the travesty) but instead was something like ‘Algerian ambulance yellow’! Steve works for Aston Martin and went through a truckload of yellow chips to determine the particular shade on his car! I have to say that, in watching the car in front and behind, I don’t remember much about the early run, save to say we were on some fantastic roads which, should you be on your own, would provide some fun at speeds.

The stop-off was to be Rowney Warren – a forested area beloved

of off-road cyclists. The car-park is not one huge area, instead it is split into many smaller sections which allowed us to commandeer one for ourselves. Shortly after arriving, Gordon headed off to meet Martyn (in a TR7 V8 DHC) who was late for the start but was now in the area. Meanwhile, the rest of us chatted and had a look over the cars. Soon we were joined by two keen mountain-bikers who had just completed an off-road ride of over eight miles. Both were interested in the cars and spent some considerable time chatting to us and looking over each car and did a good job in persuading me (Jay) to take my mountain bike down to the area in the future. Other interested parties came to have a look too – even if one chap mistook the TR4A for a TR6! In due course Gordon arrived with Martyn following and so after three TR7 FHCs with standard 2-litre engines we now had the other extreme – a TR7 DHC with a 3.9 litre V8!

Exiting the car park needed care with loose stones under the rear wheels – too much gas might annoy the car behind! We had now changed formation with the four TR7s to the fore. The rest of the run took us across some lovely countryside with some great views of Bedfordshire. This took us past the Cardington airship hangers; these are truly impressive buildings and are now subject to a protection order. The huge airships of the 1920s and 30s were built here – including the Vickers R101 which came down in France, killing around 50 people. One of them now houses a six storey building for Fire Research purposes and I believe the other houses new airship development. Don’t ask me which one, but one of these was used for the filming of Batman – which included the huge Batcave set.

The map included speed camera warnings but being angelic, responsible people we’d never break the speed limit, nor would anyone be as irresponsible as to pull alongside Tony Pond to take a photo while driving along a dual carriageway at 70mph (especially with a police van coming along behind!). And no one would be daft enough to take a photo of the view out of the rear window, which if it had been taken would show Martyn (TR7 3.9 V8), Doug (GT6), Steve (Spitfire) and Jim (TR4A).

Some of the villages we travelled through were very picturesque, thatched roofs and what looked to be very inviting public houses! Pavenham was certainly one such village that I may detour to if I’m nearby in the future.

All too soon and without incident we arrived at The Anglers Rest, just off the A6, where some of the guys would be camping over. With somewhat poor timing we arrived just after most of a wedding party – had it not been for a couple of horses and a rather slow moving Fiat Panda we may have got there just before them. As it



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continued...

was, it meant that we were strewn along the road rather than commandeering an area for Triumph parking. Having erected the tents and one dog kennel (Tim!) it was to the bar for a much needed bevvie. We hadn't been there long when Malcolm (remember he was working on his car when we initially set off) arrived, taking the TR7 V8 DHC count up to two. Though he got there his car was not running right and the sound was a 'rather concerning' noise coming from the engine. Hopefully the forums will help find a resolution.

The evening was spent in a very responsible manner with a few drinks and general socialising. The 'campsite' left a bit to be desired given that it was a small square of grass in between some old caravans and there were no facilities after the pub closed! Still, some people thought that things were improved slightly by the arrival of five young ladies from Liverpool who camped overnight with us. Well, I say, with us – on the same 'campsite'!

Next morning found us waking up to Doug Foreman cooking sausages and making coffee on his stove – this is the life, shame it was raining! Once we had all packed our camping gear into the cars we headed off in convoy to the Club's national day at Knebworth



which gave me (Martin) the opportunity to buy a bargain pair of Cibie driving lamps later used to great effect on the RBRR.

All in all it was a great weekend and hopefully the first of many as everyone seemed keen to do more of this sort of thing, getting the cars out there and on the road. Certainly, if the reaction at the Rowney Warren was anything to go by we can help these marques by using the cars rather than leaving them in the garage or on the drive! Hats of to Gordon!