



News - Rideout to Burford Jan 15

"Shouldn't be more than an hour" I call as I wheel my bike out into rain that makes a monsoon look like a brief shower. Such was my confidence that nobody in their right mind would voluntarily expose themselves to the foul conditions; I didn't even bother to top up the fuel tank. I was in fact looking forward to spending the latter part of the morning sitting at the kitchen table with a mug of coffee and the crossword.

Imagine my utter dismay when I saw a lonely silver FJR sitting in a rapidly deepening puddle outside the Long Itch Diner. Hoping it was some hapless traveller seeking temporary shelter I was devastated to see Phil Hatch's cheery face through the café window. Graham Ball and Patrick Lyons, dripping puddles onto the diner floor, joined us shortly before 10 and perversely everyone seemed very keen to go to Burford, putting paid to all hopes of my cosy kitchen, so off we went.



The forecast was a 90% probability of heavy rain right through to 2pm so I was quite surprised when it eased in Banbury and stopped before Chipping Norton. Although we kept to A roads they were hardly clogged with traffic and swept across some fine countryside (had we been able to see it) interspersed with not unattractive villages. The Hill in Burford is always a minor treat and the café in the garden centre was ridiculously busy for a wet Sunday in January. Instead of being served hot chocolate in Royal Worcester china by a livered footman, which was my not unrealistic expectation having inspected the prices, we had to queue!

Phil tried to coax a nearby toddler into his impressively orange helmet but the poor little chap was oddly reluctant to make friends with a strangely black clad giant. Time to go.



Embarrassingly I had to stop for fuel in Stow on the Wold otherwise we made good time along the Fosse. We were back into heavy rain around Halford and Chesterton Windmill looked decidedly bleak but we were dry under the cover of the Long Itch canopy a couple of minutes after 1pm.

The ride turned out to be infinitely more enjoyable than sitting in my kitchen and not a terrible way to celebrate the Chinese New Year. I am indebted to Phil, Graham and Patrick for their enthusiasm and obliging me to do something I wouldn't necessarily have chosen to do.

Thanks to Graham for press ganging a little old man into taking our picture