

Spring Trailride 2014 – Meet 'Bryn Diesel'

A 6.30am start and a forecast of heavy rain all weekend didn't damp the enthusiasm of 11 riders eager for a dirty weekend in Macy. The regulars were joined by Onky Roberts on a pristine Six days 250 2T plus a friend of Richard Smiths, Joe Ledbury – not quite sure if that was his surname or where he lived - was on a nice leccy start XR250. Andy Morgan turned up on his '02 KTM450 which looked more like a showroom example from 2012. Craig Owens (Bryn) also showed up for a rare outing on a newly bought and very tidy 1998 Suzuki RMX 250.

Big Nige led the way across the top towards Blaina in thick fog where a herd of wild horses couldn't stop us from meeting Barry in Brynmawr. We doubled back to Ebbw vale and over to Rassau and a lane over the mountain to Trefil. The conditions were wet and slippery with plenty of puddles and the boys with worn out tyres were soon wishing they'd fitted something decent. A brief stop on the mountain and Nige asked why we were so slow – must have been because we were enjoying the view, the view of thick fog reducing visibility to about 3 feet.

Brecon was our first destination and remarkably we reached the garage without so much as a wobble. All 11 riders intact and bikes running sweetly although Onky had decided his KTM was for sale already. Petrol and Coffee got us going again towards Halfway and on towards a loop around Llandovery. A loose stoney climb saw several riders fail and need to go around on the road. Onky gave the six days a bit too much throttle and flipped it , definitely up for sale!

Heading north we used the Eppynt ranges to reach Tirabad, by now the fog had lifted but the rain had arrived. The sunken road puddles were full but rideable and we came across a few groups of riders enjoying the same lanes, some had found the deepest puddles and were busy trying to fix drowned bikes.

We picked up several tricky lanes on the way to Beulah garage, arriving in the pouring rain and sheltered under the canopy with the fruit and veg. Still flowing nicely and with barely any mechanical problems we took the road through the Irfon Forest and onto the Abergwesyn pass and the Devils staircase before dropping down onto Strata Florida. The road is rough with deep puddles although the river hadn't risen too high and we all completed the several river crossings without incident. Joe Ledbury opted for the 'long way round' on the road using his GPS.

Heading out of Pontrhydfendigaid we used the road and some green lanes to Devils Bridge and on to Ponterwyd Petrol station. Making remarkable time despite the pouring rain we were all surprised at the progress we'd made – it couldn't last.

Onky and Bryn were left waiting for fuel at the pumps because all had been used and until paid for they couldn't be used again. Within 10 minutes we were all fuelled up. More coffee and in between heavy showers, we were off again. Bryn decided he wanted to go on ahead but we were only five minutes behind and rode up the road and through Nant-Yr-Arian to the Byeway. Bryns bike was puffing blue smoke as we went through the gate onto the mountain, Bryn telling Nige that the RMX would only run on full choke. Paul Morgan expressed his concern at the need to cross the river at the end of the byeway, wondering if the recent rain may have swelled the river to become impassable, nothing to do with him having drowned his bike in it last time out! We reached the gate at the end of the byeway in clouds of blue smoke and slipped down the rocky path past the farm to the river

crossing. Bryn nursed the RMX through but decided it needed a bit of tinkering – Big Nige suggested he wait till we got to the road, or just until someone drowns their bike in the river. Cue Paul Morgan on the Husky, feet up confidently into the river then sideways and straight under, bike and rider full dip! Nice. Bryn started stripping his carb while everyone else, after they stopped laughing, helped Paul to strip the Husky. Paul was dripping and swearing at 'Spread' for keeping the Husky plug spanner in his garage. Luckily someone had a spanner long enough to reach the plug and after about 20 minutes we were off again. Bryn led the way in a puff of blue smoke as we took the road to the Dam at Nant-Y-Moch. Bryn stopped again, the RMX was barely running by now, Bryn reckoned it was a blocked main jet, another carb strip seemed to improve things and we set off into the forest. At this point we got split up and due to a fallen tree a few riders got stuck in the woods. Andy, as last man stuck at the back with Bryn, still shrouded in Blue smoke, started asking some awkward questions like – “are you sure you didn't put diesel in Bryn?”. Bryn checks his wallet and his receipt and sure enough, 3.5 Litres of Diesel! No wonder the bloody plug was soiled! Fair play, it had kept running for about 15 miles off road. By 8pm Bryn had a new nickname, Mr Bryn Diesel.

A couple of litres of petrol from the four stroke boys and a spare plug from Rob Strinati got the RMX going again but by now we were running late and the rain and fog was back in anger. Through the forest and onto the mountain the dense fog forced the riders to stay close together. The bald tyres struggled on some of the slick climbs, Barry, after 3 attempts at one big climb, needed to let all the air out of his rear tube so that he could get to the top – only for Big Nige and everyone else to ride back down.

We reached the mountain outside Macy as the rain eased and the sun went down. Bryn Diesel knew an alternative route off the mountain which led us to town and on to the Pink House B&B and our bed for the night.

Spot on accommodation, friendly hosts, nice rooms, garage for the bikes and a cracking Welsh cooked breakfast. Highly recommended for a stay in Macy whether you're on a bike or not. By 8pm we were on our way to the White Lion for a steak and chips and a few well earned beers.

Sunday morning it was raining, again. Brekky was at 9am, by 10 we were kitted up and ready for the off. Onky decided he needed petrol for the Six Days, still for sale, so we all waited patiently outside the B&B for him to go to the garage at the bottom of town. Five minutes later, Onky could be seen pushing the KTM back towards us up the high street. A couple of the boys rode down to him while the rest waited. Turns out the plug had fouled – his spare was on the bench in his shed. Bryn Diesel was sent to the petrol station to try to buy a replacement. In the mean time, Rob Strinati decided his rear mousse was history and set about replacing it with a tube, donated to him by Onky who, by now, was ready to give the KTM away!

Both bikes fixed, we left Macy before midday knowing we were a couple of hours late already. We hit the mountain road in heavy rain and strong winds and rode fast across Plynlimon. Into the forest and Rob's new tube gave up the ghost forcing another layup, in the middle of nowhere we took shelter from the horizontal rain in a fallen down sheep shed. Somebody else's spare tube fitted and a blast over the mountain for a stop at Ponterwyd Petrol station. Bryn filled up with petrol this time and some road work took us to Rhayader and onto the A470 to Builth and after a couple of gentle lanes we stopped at the Esso garage for more coffee and unleaded. By now we'd made up time so

could enjoy some of the lanes between Builth and Brecon. The conditions were soft and slippery with plenty of water although the rain did hold off at times.

Some more stoney lanes and some rutted climbs sapped the stamina and we reached Talgarth by around 5pm. With the dark clouds gathering over the Black Mountains some of the boys opted for the road home at this point. Big Nige and the remainder soldiered on over the mountain to Llangorse and Llangynidr before dropping into Beaufort and heading South to home. The rain and wind was as bad as it had been all day so a hot bath was all that was needed to top a great weekend.

Many thanks to Big Nige yet again, superb. A great ride despite the weather.

Lessons learned – fit decent tyres, carry a spare plug, carry a plug spanner, don't fill your bike up with diesel!

FOR SALE: 2014 KTM 250EXC Six Days, one careful owner. Part ex considered. Contact Onky Roberts.

Ride Report: Ian Craig.