

Bob Denman Commemorative Ride

28 June 2023

Bob Denman was a stalwart of the Club and, following his passing, has been sadly missed by his many friends. But his was also a family affair with his sister, Trish Evans, and her husband, Richard, still both pillars of the Southern Section. It was entirely fitting then, that when Trish proposed a mid-week commemorative ride-out for her brother, the Section responded with such a magnificent turnout.



The initial group of 12 bikes gathered at the south-bound Ripley services on the A3 before setting off into the busy traffic of the 3-lane arterial road. With Roger Jackaman leading, as instructed, we managed to maintain some semblance of order, riding two abreast, staggered, in 'echelon' formation keeping the party together despite prevailing traffic conditions.

The weather, while overcast and humid, was far from the scorching temperatures of the previous few days. In fact, quite pleasant for riding.

With Roger and Trish maintaining the lead, we rounded Farnham's notorious Shepherd and Flock roundabout safely soon finding ourselves riding on narrow, single carriageway roads, whilst still maintaining close grouping and a well-ordered drop-off system.

Progressing onward, the suburban landscape of Farnham's hinterland soon gave way to more rural scenery, passing through the villages of Odiham and Upton Grey, before veering towards the outskirts of Basingstoke. Roger had cleverly planned the route to avoid entanglement with the various M3 junctions resulting in an unexpected but pleasurable ride through a new housing development at Kempshott Park. Sarcastic as this may sound, the road through this extensive estate, whether designed with traffic calming in mind or just aesthetics, with its series of open bends it could prove quite tempting for the 'keener' riders amongst our community on another occasion!

As the humidity gave way to light, misty rain, we arrived at our first refreshment break, Popham Airfield, where we were joined by Mike



& Lesley and Adrian. Suitably recharged, the final leg of the run proved as enjoyable as the first, passing through the Hampshire countryside to Sutton Scotney, descending into the Test Valley at Stockbridge, before climbing back to the periphery of Salisbury plain with its delightful, sweeping views across the timeless agricultural landscape.



The sun was now breaking through as we rode the final few miles to our destination of the Army Flying Museum, Middle Wallop. On arrival, we were greeted by Greg & Eve Smith together with several other members, past and present, joining us for a convivial lunch in the now very warm sunshine, overlooking the far-reaching grasslands of the operational airfield.



This Memorial Ride-out was everything it should have been for Bob: A gathering of good friends, enjoying a varied and interesting route, with largely favourable weather. I am sure he would have thoroughly enjoyed his day.

