

## **Bottesford Toy Run - November 2012**

### **Mike Fairhead**

After an incredibly wet Friday and Saturday resulting in flood warnings in and around Leicestershire, then throw in some winds strong enough to bring down trees, and you have ideal motorcycling weather. All set for Sunday's Toy Run then! As it turned out the weather on Sunday morning was not as bad as predicted. The sun was shining and the wind, albeit gusty, was manageable. Mandy (my pillion for the day) lives in Anstey and I agreed to pick her up at 0915 in order to get to the Durham Ox (ok Kev - so it's now called the Six Hills Hotel) by 0945. All going well until I get to the Pack Horse bridge just before the Anstey Nook. The cars in front were turning round as the road was flooded. Water was running from one field, across the road and into the other field. The problem was that I didn't know of another way to get to the Nook and Mandy so it was a case of middle of the road and take it slowly keeping the engine revs high and slipping the clutch. Phew ... made it. After picking Mandy up I had to take the same road out of Anstey, as other routes, like Cossington, had already been mentioned on local radio as being flooded. We got to the Durham Ox on time and to my surprise there was already 4 bikes parked up. After a short wait Drew and Tracy turned up so RAF Kev headed us north along the A46 to Bottesford. A cup of coffee and a bacon buttie in the Red Lion (the meeting place in Bottesford for the start of the Toy Run) went down well and we also met up with another two club members, Ian Frost and Pauline. This made our numbers up to 10. At 11am we set off two abreast in glorious sunshine heading for Grantham. I'm not sure if Tracy likes children or not. Reason I say this is because she was on the back of Drew's bike and chucking sweets. Due to her damaged arm (this is Tracy's reason) some of the sweets fell short and so kids were running into the road to pick them up. As far as I know they all managed to survive the experience!!! Having done this Toy Run for many years I can honestly say that the number of bikers who turned out was fantastic and the convoy must have stretched well over half a mile. Having said that the people who lined the streets were also fantastic with people of all ages waving and smiling. The police and marshals manned the traffic and traffic lights so that there was no break in the parade and that made it all worth while. We arrived at the Leisure centre in Grantham with our carrier bags full of toys shaking hands with the Mayor and Mayoress as we entered the building. Free drinks and eats were available inside and the tables were overflowing with donated presents. We chatted, ate and drank and took several photos before we left to go our separate ways back to Leicester. Four of us headed back via Melton Mowbray along the A607 and by now the wind had died down but the sun was still shining. Mustn't complain but heading into a bright sun isn't my favorite type of riding and I never thought I would need my sun visor this weekend. I had to call in for petrol at Melton before making my way to Anstey to drop Mandy off. But which route??? Eventually we ended up going via Cossington, Sileby, Barrow, Quorn, Mountsorrel, Rothley, Cropston and into Anstey the back way. Just as

well I did as I was told later that the Nook route was blocked. Got back home by 3pm and apart from the odd bit of spray it was a completely dry run and a most enjoyable day with excellent company. The added bonus was that I got to watch the last Formula 1 GP live from Brazil and what an exciting race that was.