

Ride to the Wall - 2010

Rod Harpham

This was my first ride to the wall. Unfortunately I missed last year, so I was quite unprepared for what I was about to be involved in.

Our group, made up of Fosse riders and others, set off under the direction of RAF Kev from Sainsbury's car park and headed up the M69 to the A5 for Tamworth and the Drayton Manor theme park. As we approached the surrounding area bikes were coming from all directions and it was quite obvious that something big was about to take place, this made me feel proud I was going to be part of it. We pull into the Drayton Manor quite early, about half nine, and were guided very professionally down to the main Car park, this was already filling up quite well. About a third of the car park was already filled, but bikes were constantly pouring in, each lane was three or four bike deep, and each time I looked round another lane was filled. I had not been able to register online so made my way to the sign-on tent thinking this was going to take a while, but was surprised and was through signing in as long as it took me to write my name and address and hand over my ten pounds, then it was down to the accessories tent for my badge and again within a few minutes and five pounds lighter I was walking back to the bike. On the way I met my old boss and some work colleagues. You just never know who you are going to meet at these functions do you? Back at the bike I started to look round to just see what was there, every bit of hard standing was now filled with bikes, I had been told that Fifteen thousand people had registered on line so there must have been at least ten thousand bikes and they were of all shapes and sizes, from big Rocket Threes, Harley's, Sports, Tourers to Scooters. There was even a Putt Putt from India, I was totally awe struck, I had been to many motorcycle functions but had never seen so many bikes in all my life . Some of the bikes were carrying flags from their country or of their own particular regiment or corps or branch of the forces, and they all stood there waiting patiently to move off to the Arboretum.



By about 1100 Hrs we started to move off, and as we moved up though Drayton Manor I realised that the whole of the park was filled with bikes. Eventually we moved off in packets of about two hundred each, and as we rode down the road people on the side walk and bridges waved and cheered us. Very moving!

It must have taken a while for all the riders to arrive at the Arboretum for as I walked round, bikes took every spare space. A military band was playing, and then an officer gave an address. After that there was a service, but I had left as the address was not to my liking. The whole affair was very moving and went to show that people do care even though they sometimes are not able to show it, all they need is a chance.

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