

Afghan Heroes Ride, Wootton Bassett March 14th

A sunny start to the day brought forth promise of a great days ride ahead. Meeting friends at wisely we headed through the badlands of Berkshire (myself and Berkshire do not get on well) to Hurlingham Airfield in Wiltshire for the Start of the Afghan Heroes Ride.

This ride was a charity ride for the Afghan Heroes Charity, which was to raise money and awareness for the wounded and fallen soldiers currently in Afghanistan. The ride was to go through the Town of Wootton Bassett, a town now synonymous with their quiet reverence during the repatriation of soldiers. Originally planned as a small ride by a 18 year old girl and friends who posted the idea on Facebook it soon gained momentum to become a nationwide run. We all arrived for our 11.00-12.00 slot and having paid our donation for a wristband were parked up in one of the rows with several hundred other bikes.

It didn't matter where you looked there were bikes, lots and lots of bikes of all makes sizes shapes and ages. It was estimated there were over 10,000 bikes and another 5000 pillions which joined the run. There were several VSOC Centres represented I noted Roadrunners, Scrumpies and Smugglers there.

In 30 years of riding I have never seen so many bikes in one place. With the marshals and police only allowing 500 bikes at a time to leave it was going to be some time until it was our time to leave (3 hours in fact) There were still as many bikes to leave the airfield as when we first arrived as we left. Once on the run, which was at a nice steady pace we were cheered on by lots of locals, Mayors of several towns and town criers. It was great to see people standing with banners saying "welcome bikers" And all who rode through did so with dignity, no wheelies or burnouts.

After riding through the town of Wootton Bassett we were dispersed onto the motorways home. Current estimates range between £75,000 raised and £100,000 raised for the charity. Almost a letdown when riding back on your own, but by Monday there was a real feeling of having been at something special. A brilliant day out

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