

2017 Annual Spring Mystery Run – Southern NH Area

By Joe Howard

With the crazy spring weather in April that provided enough rain to end a 3-year drought, Sunday May 7th turned out to be partly sunny and a good day for this year's Spring Dust-Off Mystery Run.

The starting point for the Run was the Sleep Inn parking lot in Londonderry, NH. On Saturday, there was an optional dinner at the nearby Yard Restaurant which is about 3 miles from the Sleep Inn. Twelve met at the hotel Saturday afternoon and evening and enjoyed snacks at the hotel and a relaxing dinner. It was a great time.

Sunday morning everyone gathered in the parking lot at 9:30 AM for registration and rules review. Eight cars and 16 people participated in the Run which started at 9:50 AM.

The clues took the participants through scenic Southern NH while answering trivia questions and finding answers to an information scavenger hunt. Along the run we were instructed to count the number of log houses we saw. Only the ones with crossed log (Lincoln Log) corners.



After some turns and road changes the first stop was at a bakery to buy a muffin and bring to the end to show they stopped. The next stop was at a cemetery (there is always a cemetery) to get information from a marker for "a man of the cloth" and one for war veterans.

After the cemetery, the next stop was at the Robert Frost Farm State Historic Site in Derry NH. He lived there for 11 years while he taught at nearby Pinkerton Academy and wrote one of his Pulitzer Prize winning poems. Leaving the Frost Farm one of the questions was to name another former Derry NH resident that was one of the original Mercury Seven Astronauts and the first American in space. Do you know?

The next part of the run took us past a vineyard (and 2 log houses) to get to the next stop at the Taylor Mill State Historic Site. Taylor Mill is a restored water powered Up and Down Sawmill and an example of how Pit Sawing was mechanized driven by water. The caretaker opened the site for the group and took us inside to show how it operated. He also provided insights on timber construction back in the 1800s.



After the mill was a scenic drive through Hampstead, NH often described as a picture postcard town with an elegant historic Main Street, characterized by antique Colonial homes. The instructions had us looking for two homes with markers dating them back almost 300 years. One used to be a Tavern.

The drive brought us to the next stop at a garden center where we had to find and count the large Black Bears in the store. The next leg took us to the final stop at America's Stonehenge to explore the maze of man-made chambers, walls and ceremonial meeting places. We departed America's Stonehenge as a group for lunch at Atkinson Resort & Country Club.



Per the planners; the distance of the run was 22.2 miles and should have taken 1 hour and 40 minutes with all the stops. Also, there were 42 questions to answer along the run and at stops. There were 6 log cabins to be found. Recognition was given for:

Best Mileage: Tony and Mary Cucchi

Worst Mileage: Bruce and Janet Clarkson

Best Time: Jim and Donna Peloquin

Worst Time: Joe and Janet Wilcox

Most Correct Answers: Bill, Michelle, and Matt Thomas

Thanks again to Joe & Peggy Howard and Brad & Sandy Busque for planning this successful event. And thanks to all that participated.

