

The Levis Cup Trial and Marjorie Cottle Trophy Trial – 29th September

By Martyn Round with photographs by Ian Goodhall.

The annual Levis Cup Trial and Marjorie Cottle Trophy Trial took place on Sunday 29th September from its usual starting venue, The Lenchford Inn, Shrawley. The signing-on tent and other signage is put up early on Sunday which means a 7.00am start, to say that the journey from home was through some heavy rain is an understatement and does nothing to describe the previous forty eight hours of route assessment, alteration and amendment and near constant referral to the BBC's weather bulletins. However, as they predicted, the clouds cleared from the west and by 8.15am we stood in the paddock and saw a glimmer of blue.



Hampshire man Nigel Percy – 1959 200cc DKW contemplates the route in the car-park at Shrawley

Of the seventy-one potential competitors fifty-seven set out led by John Beddis astride his 1934 247cc Levis with the remaining field departing afterward at one-minute intervals. As Jim and Bill Martin – Triumph Tiger 70 and Levis A1 were preparing to set-out so the Observer Team of Messrs Elliot, Porter and Bennett were recording the effort of riders on the climb up Flagstaff at Abberley. With a little bit of main road to soften the blow riders entered the Teme valley via the twisty and “interesting” Camp

Lane. Two miles later the River Teme was crossed and the route climbed out of the valley to Clifton-on-Teme and so the road to Harpley.

Back at the Lenchford Mike Walker – 1934 Moto Guzzi was being waved away just as the early riders enjoyed some clear road toward Tenbury Wells. Bill Danks folded his starter-flag at 11.10am just as Pete and Jan Howells were marking Time Cards on Bockleton Common.

Lunch was taken at The Squirrel after which the 2.00 pm restart was taken just below Whitbatch Hill. Andy Ashen and his team oversaw the ascent by all and the absolutely stunning performance by Norman



Alan Yeomans with his BSA sidecar outfit in the start paddock.

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Blakemore with a climb ratio of 2.89. The journey to the time-check on the side of Brown Clew Hill is at times twisty but generally clean and offers some wonderful views over Corvedale toward Wenlock Edge before climbing up toward Abdon with its occasional reminders of the stone quarry workings.



Chris Thomas's Morgan with national motif proudly displayed.

I like to include a ford in the event and depending upon the route there is a possibility of six, three of which have steep descents in and steep climbs out that present significant challenges to the belt-drive and single-speed brigade and three which have an easy approach.....but can be tricky. The one in this year's event was the Neen Savage ford which is wide but can rise quickly and has a significant drop on its

down-stream side where the water is potentially deep. Though the ford was passable at 5.00 pm on the Friday evening a by-pass route was written and issued. The amount of water that fell over the next thirty-six hours was pretty impressive as Chris Thomas would demonstrate by paddling into the middle to check, but what no one managed to photograph were the two riders who waded in to pull out an unfortunate rider and his machine which was whisked from

under him and washed toward the drop. Not only did they all get wet feet but they got the machine started and completed the route!



The timed route for the day was forty- nine miles - morning and forty-five miles - afternoon on roads that at times offered challenging surfaces, mud and gravel wash-out and standing water but without significant or prolonged rainfall. For those interested in numbers we had one veteran, twenty-four vintage, twenty-two post-vintage, of which four were Ex WD ('39-'45), sixteen 500cc Classic Class and seven Marjorie Cottle

entrants.

Steve Sumner's passenger waits whilst his driver takes lunch!

With regards to thanks, I should like to express my thanks and those of many of the competitors who have asked me to pass on theirs to all who have contributed in staging the event. Firstly, to Ian and Wendy and their staff at The Lenchford, and to Rachel and Andy and their staff at The Squirrel. To members of the Ashen and Danks families & friends, the VMCC's Worcester Section and of course our North Birmingham Section. All-in-all the event required some twenty-two marshals or assistants – their help and time is gratefully acknowledged.



Jonathan Jinks, dry and with hardly any time faults arriving at the lunch stop, unaware of the heroic act awaiting him at Neen Savage.



Without the marshals who turn-up at some spot defined by a map reference and stand waiting for the first rider, then do their bit for the next hour, before waiting for the course closing vehicle, we wouldn't be able to put on this type of event.

Left: The Worcester Section Team of: Dave Elliot, John Porter & Les Bennett. [...not forgetting Pete and Jan Howells who covered checks at Bockleton and after Neen Savage but whose photo I didn't get.

No Yellow Vests – Alan, Brian and Steve awaiting riders (Right). Alan & Brian's afternoon duty on Farlow Bank left no time for lunch and the Section marker lines and signs were placed as the second rider made the climb. Steve, with camera, was attending his second event and so I thought his perspective on the day would be worth recording. It follows below.



The Levis Cup Trial – Steve Clarke

The forecast for The Levis Cup Sunday was not good; still around 60 motorcycles turned up for the event to keep the tradition alive. The Severn River also turned up in force next to The Lenchford Inn and we did notice a beer barrel floating down in the torrent, many a tear was shed, not helping traction at the start line.



That being said Levis No 1 was out of the blocks at 10am like Linford Christie getting the proceedings underway, followed by 60ish motorcycle riders (and some passengers) willing to torture their motorcycles around a difficult course.

The River Severn was rather high – and rising as we watched and ate bacon butties from The Lenchford.

I had a chat to Jenny Hart at The Lenchford who had a dog with her, maybe a new navigator I thought? But no, the BSA Three-Wheeler has a broken gearbox so it was down to Jenny's daughter, Susie, to uphold the family tradition by taking part on a small two stroke machine.

The lunch stop was at The Squirrel and I met Keith and his men who were marking out the car park with wooden blocks for the first 20 riders and doing a splendid job of putting down 'splash mats' under the old ladies when they arrived.



Bill Danks flags John Beddis away on his 1935 Levis 247cc Levis whilst Number 2, John Robinson KOB1,



Manning the timing station were Brian and Alan who I hadn't met before, recording the timings becomes more difficult when more than a couple of riders turn up at once, we had five turn up one time and it is a bit rushed to write the times down and shout out the times for the individual cards. Some cards were a bit damp so there had been rain during the morning but spirits were still high.

Included in the route is a ford (which can be avoided by a narrow footbridge for solo machines) but Martyn had added a bypass for this year as the flow was so high. One intrepid rider did successfully navigate the ford but the possibility of being dismounted by a fast flow and slippery cobbled stones saw almost everyone else take an alternative, and one rescue of someone who didn't!

Is it really fair to torture these old ladies around the roads of Worcester? Well it seems to be OK by the number of people congratulating Martyn on a great day at the finish





Results:

Award		Penalty Pts	Entrant.
Premier Award	The Levis Cup	12	David Spencer
Runner-Up	The Alec Ross Cup	13	Bobby Robinson KOB
Best Op Class	The Alice Round Cup	30	Chris Thomas
Best Veteran	The George Yeomans Trophy	21	John Robinson KOB
Best Vintage	The Bert LeVack Cup	20	Andy Gedden
Best Post Vintage	The Omyga Trophy	15	Andrew MacDougall
Best Classic(500cc)	The Classic Cup	14	Ian Cole
Best Lightweight (46-66)	The Marjorie Cottle Trophy	18	Bob Sherras
Best Levis	The Levis Tankard	28	Jon Smith
Best WD	The Sgt H.J.Colley V.C. M.M. Trophy	39	Jonathan Jinks
Best Side-Car Outfit	The Rolley Newton Cup	38	Brian & Pat Empsall
Best Under 250cc	The Calthorpe 100gns Cup	21	Norman Blakemore
Best Worcs / N-B'ham Sec. member	The Trevor Bull Timekeepers Award.	17	Ron Higgins
Flexibility Test	The John Greenwood Salver	(ratio)2.89	Norman Blakemore
C o t C's award	The Endeavour Award	68	Geoff Harris
Team Award	The Albert Mattox Trophy.	22 15 23 (60)	Morgan Thomas Andrew MacDougall David Jones "Trwrchtrwyth"



Dave Spencer hiding behind the Avon Fairing of his MAC Velocette on his way to winning the Levis Cup, having chickened out of bringing the BSA Sloper on such a foul day!