

Report on the Levis Cup Trial and Marjorie Cottle Trophy – 30th September 2012

06:30 on a Sunday morning, black as your hat, rain hammering down – must be Levis Cup Trial day! Glad that I had loaded the car the night before (easy-up, tables, documentation, finishers' mugs, VMCC goody box), I rolled over and gave myself another 10 minutes under the duvet. Out on the road, the rain still hammering down but, miracle of miracles, it had stopped and the grass was dry by the time I reached the Lenchford Hotel. Up with the easy-up, out with the tables and we were ready when the first of the competitors came to sign on.

Entries were down on last year – not surprising considering the cost of fuel, the change of date and the hangover from last year's Levis centenary, but 48 brave souls faced the starter. Early away was Huw Parsons on his 1912 single-speed 31/2hp Ariel, the first single -speed machine on the Trial for many years and good to see as a reflection of the early 1920s Levis Cups which were for single-speed machines. He needed a little LPA (light personal assistance) on Flagstaff and Farlow, but has vowed to come back next year with a smaller engine pulley. The Levises were out again in force this year, once again blitzing the flexibility test on Whitbatch Hill where they appear to be unbeatable. Colin Blundell performed heroics in getting his 1937 600 to the line after a mad dash to Cumbria to collect a replacement K/S ratchet. He was beaten to the John Greenwood Trophy for best performance on the Flexibility Test by 0.07 ratio points by another Levis – the 1931 A2 350 of Glen Crook.

In the meantime, Richard Williams was sailing serenely round the course with splendid timing to come out winner of the Levis Cup on his 1939 Velocette MAC, followed very closely by Derek Howarth flying the Marston flag with his 1928 Model 9 Sunbeam. Derek also formed part of the winning Sunbeam team (after a recount!) along with Trevor Bull (1929 Model 5) and Bill Orchard (1927 Model 6). It was all very tight at the top with just six penalty points separating the leading eight riders, and performance on the tie-breaker Flexibility Test decided the destination of at least one trophy. Brian and Pat Empsall once again won the Best Opposite Class on their 1928 Triumph Model N De Luxe outfit, its 497ccs requiring a little LPA (see above) on Flagstaff. Sadly, for the first time I can remember, Bill Leach failed to get round, succumbing to a puncture early in the afternoon.

The Marjorie Cottle Cup, run as a separate but concurrent event for pre-1965 machines up to 200cc capacity, was won by Nigel Percy on his immaculate 1959 DKW RT600VS. Mention must be made of Paul Reybould's jewel-like Honda CB160 from 1964. This was the first time we have had a Japanese machine competing over the Levis Cup course, and it is a superb example of the genre. This event gives the opportunity for owners of small machines to experience a truly competitive Road Trial, and I have been surprised at the small entry we have had since it started. Come on, lads, give it a go!

It was with great delight that we welcomed Les Thomas to the Trial. Quite by chance his visit to relatives in the UK coincided with Levis. Les is chairman, secretary, and treasurer of the

Australasian Levis Register which lists over 200 Levises. It really puts us to shame – isn't it time we had a Levis Register in the UK?

An event like the Levis requires a lot of input from friends and family of the North Birmingham Section, while the Worcester Section made a huge contribution once again, but the true hero of this year's event was the Clerk of the Course, Bill Danks. With road closures (scheduled and unscheduled), flooded roads, and impassable fords, Bill had to re-work the route more than once (hence the increase in main-road sections), and survey it right up to the last minute. That the event went so smoothly is a great credit to him, and in consequence he has been presented with the Endeavour Award. As always, my thanks have to go to all the marshals, timekeepers and observers who give their time and petrol, and in many cases give up their rides, to ensure that the Trial runs smoothly. Thanks also to Hazel in the back-up van for stepping in at the last minute.

The first Levis Cup Trial was held on October 4th 1913 so 100 years later, almost to the day, we will be holding the Levis Cup Centenary Trial. The date will be Sunday 29th September, and the venue will once again be the Lenchford Hotel and we will be aiming for a bumper entry. Regular riders tell me it is their favourite event so they will be there. If you haven't done it before, you will be in for a treat. If you haven't done it for a while, you can remind yourself what you have been missing!

Summary of results:

The Levis Cup - Best performance – Richard Williams, 1939 Velocette MAC

The Alec Ross Cup – Runner-up – Derek Howarth, 1928 Sunbeam Model 9

The Alice Round Cup – Best opposite class – Brian Emsall, 1928 Triumph Model N De Luxe combo

The LeVack Trophy – Best performance on a vintage m/c – Peter Kent, 1929 Ariel Model B

The Calthorpe 100gns Cup – Best performance on a single-speed machine – Huw Parsons, Ariel 31/2hp TT Roadster

The Albert Mattox Trophy – Team Award – Derek Howarth, Trevor Bull, Bill Orchard

The Rolley Newton Cup – Best performance on a Sidecar – Bob Ashwin, 1936 AJS

The Omyga Trophy – Best performance on a post-vintage m/c – Chris Green, 1937 New Imperial Model 26

The Sgt H J Colley Trophy – Best performance on an ex-WD m/c – Jonathan Jinks, 1939 BSA WM20

The John Greenwood Trophy – Best Performance on the Flexibility Test – Glen Crook, 1931 Levis A2

The Timekeeper's Trophy – Best performance on time – Martyn Round, 1939 Ariel Red Hunter

The Peter Ashen Cup – Best performance by a female rider – Cathryn Barton, 1928 Norton Model 18

The Levis Tankard – Best performance on a Levis m/c – Stephen Nutt, 1935 Levis A2

The Endeavour Award – Bill Danks, Clerk of the Course

The Marjorie Cottle Cup – Nigel Percy, 1959 DKW RT200VS

Paul Hutton

12/10/12