

North Birmingham News

NEWSLETTER

Specialist roles for the motorcycle !



A Harley Davidson Model FUS fitted with a special ammunition sidecar during world war I. Unusually the rider is a military policeman

The majority of the motorcycles deployed by the Allies and the Central Powers in World War 1 were of civilian origin. In the case of despatch riders and messengers these motorcycles were used in the same way that they would have been used in civvy street, but there also evolved specialized roles which had no civilian equivalent.

The combat role is a good case in point. Back in those early days there must have been a tendency to view the motorcycle and rider as a mechanized cavalryman and this suggested that the motorcycle could be assigned a front-line role.

Conversely, the role of evacuating the wounded, was almost certainly forced on to the motorcycle by virtue of the condition of the ground around the front line, where it was simply impossible to make any progress in a conventional motor ambulance.

Motorcycle-mounted machine-guns

The machine-gun was the “weapon of mass destruction” of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Maxim gun was the first machine-gun to use the recoil energy to eject each spent cartridge and insert the next, making it far more efficient than previous hand-cranked multi-barrel weapons. It was first used by Britain’s colonial forces in the First Matabele War (1893-94) where, in one engagement, 50 soldiers are said to have fought off 5,000 warriors with just four Maxim guns. With a high rate of cyclical fire, a single machine-gun could cover a broad sweep of territory, indiscriminately cutting down any soldier foolish enough to venture into the field of fire and, by the first year of World War 1,



Below: Although there were specialist pigeon loft carriers, these men have strapped the pigeon basket to their backs and are riding solo machines.

Below left: A special driven sidecar was developed for the Belgian Army and was used with FN, Gillet-Herstal and Sarolea motorcycles



Supplied machine-gun sidecars from 1916.

During World War 1, British machine-gun motorcycles

operated in teams of three, in support of infantry advances or attacking isolated enemy positions. Although the fun was mounted in such a way that it could be fired on the move, it must have become obvious almost immediately that this was a non-starter. Trying to control a machine-gun from a bucking sidecar would, in many cases, have presented what these days we would describe as a "friendly-fire" incident, with equal hazards experienced by both sides. However, one contemporary popular source described the result as an "efficient little engine of war, large numbers of which are used on active service (where) they are in great demand for scouting and reconnoitring purposes where rapidity of movement is so essential".

Warfare, the toll of dead and wounded was on a scale that hitherto would have been unbelievable. The Allies lost more than 5 million men in action, with a further 12.88 million wounded; the armies of the Central Powers lost more than 3.38 million men, with 9 million wounded.

On the Allied side, this represents an injury rate of 8,241 men a day and the task of evacuating these men from the front line, assessing their injuries and assigning them for further treatment was formidable. While there was often no alternative to carrying the wounded from the trenches to a relatively safe rear area, equally, the motorcycle was often the only practicable means of getting the man to the next link in the chain which might eventually see him repatriated to the UK.

All of the combatants used motorcycles in this role, sometimes, as in the case of the British Sunbeam, using a purpose-made sidecar, at other times simply making do with strapping the stretcher to the sidecar chassis.

Other roles

During the early days, motorcycle sidecar outfits were also used to carry pigeon lofts and baskets and, when pigeons gave way to up-to-date wireless equipment. Sidecars were also used to accommodate the relatively bulky accumulators, chargers, aerial masts, and transmitters and receivers.

Both sides were deploying improved machine-guns with terrifying rates of fire.

The Imperial German Army had integrated the weapon fully into its organization structure and in the first year of the war, had something like 12,000 machine-guns; by 1916, motorcycles were attached to all machine-gun sections. Although the standard German Maxim-derived gun weighed 19kg/43lb and was too heavy to be manhandled or used by an individual, it was sufficiently compact to mount on a motorcycle sidecar, sometimes with a simple armoured shield, three mobile machine-gun teams could quickly move from one location to another, carrying guns, crews, ammunition and spares on their motorcycles. The Germans even mounted machine-guns on solo motorcycles.

In Britain, too, the War Department had been thinking of mounting machine-guns on sidecars since the turn of the century, and in the USA, Harley-Davidson

operated in teams of three, in support of infantry advances or attacking isolated enemy positions. Although the fun was mounted in such a way that it could be fired on the move, it must have become obvious almost immediately that this was a non-starter. Trying to control a machine-gun from a bucking sidecar would, in many cases, have presented what these days we would describe as a "friendly-fire" incident, with equal hazards experienced by both sides. However, one contemporary popular source described the result as an "efficient little engine of war, large numbers of which are used on active service (where) they are in great demand for scouting and reconnoitring purposes where rapidity of movement is so essential".

Motorcycle stretcher bearers

During the five years of total

Long Mynd Run - Sunday 24th June 2012

After a run of dreadful weather during May and with June heading to be the wettest for a century according to press reports, Colin Lloyd managed to arrange some respite on the day of his Run and we had an unexpectedly pleasant day. Colin had planned a 60 mile route along country roads and lanes, with some splendid views and beautiful countryside. 21 riders signed on at Tony's Diner and soon after 10.30 we were away.



Bikes and riders at Tony's Diner for the start



Dave Williams, apparently making a somewhat extravagant claim

We left Bridgnorth along the Ludlow Road before turning right for Criddon and going up to Ditton Priors, from where we zig-zagged up and around Brown Clee, the highest hill in Shropshire with tremendous views, and down the other side, heading off across Corvedale through Broncroft and crossing the B4368 at Beambridge. We then climbed up onto Wenlock Edge, passing through Rushbury, Wall under Heywood and Soudley to emerge onto the B4371 at Hope Bowdler. The route then took us into Church Stretton for a halfway coffee stop at the Flamingo Café where 19 machines lined up. We had lost Ian Harris at Tony's when his 250 BSA sprang a petrol leak and Eric Greenfield, whose machine had developed an electrical problem soon after the start, rendering him into the hands of the AA. The sun was out allowing some of us to sit outside enjoying the coffee, maybe a light snack, or just enjoying the company. There was some comment about

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Bikes lined up at the Flamingo Café coffee stop in Church Stretton

Colin's sense of humour taking us along so many muddy lanes just 3 days before our Ride a Bike night and concours evening, for which it may be no coincidence that he was to be one of the judges. Serious polishers were going to struggle to be ready in time. After coffee we headed off up The Burway and onto the Long Mynd, which we crossed to descend past the Glider Club down to Asterton. This is always a good test of vintage brakes and the ability of painted brake drums to remain that way while getting very hot. Plenty of engine braking and alternating brakes to let them cool a bit generally does the trick. The route then took us through Wentnor and Norbury to the West Onny River Valley, skirting Black Rhadley Hill and emerging at The Bog, just on the west side of The Stiperstones.

Martyn Round on his Ariel leads a line of riders up The Burway out of Church Stretton. Caer Caradoc and The Lawley can be seen across the valley and The Wrekin in the far distance.



We then rode over past The Stiperstones and down into the valley at Bridges, along to Ratlinghope (pronounced Ratchup by the locals) and over the Long Mynd again to descend to Woolstaston. We emerged briefly onto the A49 at Leebotwood before turning left and wending our way through Lawley and Plaish to Longville in the Dale. It was then a short ride along the B4371 to finish at The Wenlock Edge Inn, where we found Ian Harris and Eric Greenfield waiting for us. Ian had gone home and swapped the leaking BSA for his 65cc Moto Guzzi Cardelino. Eric meanwhile had been properly rescued by the AA man, who had detected a piece of insulation rubbed through on the horn wire, leading to a short. The fault had been fixed and Eric was most impressed.

Everyone arrived safely, including finally a small group led by Paul Harris and Maurice Trupp who had apparently become distracted by the pub in Longville. There followed a most sociable gathering in the sunshine outside The Wenlock Edge Inn, rounding off an excellent day. The weather had stayed dry and mostly sunny and it seemed that everyone had enjoyed themselves. Many thanks to Colin for the considerable amount of time he must have put into finding such an excellent route and planning the day.

Dave Spencer



Breakfast Run. Sunday 5th Aug. 2012.

Barr Beacon's Sunday Morning dog walkers and Paper Readers were probably a little surprised to be joined by a collection of some fourteen or so motorcyclists as our section members gathered for the summer Breakfast Run. As usual, the pre-run social gave every one the opportunity to put the world-to-rights and look over the assembled machinery whilst Tracy Pell, camera in hand, meandered in and out of the line-up looking for that elusive picture.

As nine o'clock approached, Pete, John and Josie lead us off the Beacon and down to the Chester Road, where a short 'blast', cameras permitting, took us to Gravelley Lane and the village of Stonnall. The tail-enders of Jonathan (M20) and Keith (KH twin) and 'Yours Truly' (NH) were delayed by Keith's prop-stand spring being detached by the sleeping policeman on the exit drive from the Beacon; however, with the spring retrieved and the stand clipped into place we were soon following after the group. The route through Hammerwich, Burntwood and Chase Terrace brought us to Hednesford where an impromptu stop by Martyn, Colin, Dave and Julian allowed some regrouping. Free of the Midlands urban sprawl, we crossed the edge of the Chase and headed for Penkridge where Julian's AJS despatched a clutch cable nipple. A brief stop allowed Martyn Griffiths & Co to fit a screw-on nipple (15amp junction box component!), and we were once more on the road



Julian supervises while a team of experts perform first aid following his impromptu self inflicted nippectomy.

The screwdriver is being wielded by Ron, who is wearing full protective equipment so as to avoid similar.

Writing now, October, I can't remember what the weather forecast was for the day, but the morning remained fine as we crossed the A5 at Brewood and rode on through Bishops Wood and Tong to Albrighton. The climb through The Hobbins from Worfield lead us into a patch of inclement weather but thankfully it was a local shower which we rode out of; and so, we arrived at Tony's where the 'Full English' was heartily recommended by the early arrivals.

After Breakfast the route took us up through Claverley before looping round south, skirting Kinver and heading for Trimley, where the plan had been to go to the Steam and Vintage Rally, had it not been rained off like so many other events this year. So instead we continued on and finished in Bewdley, where riders had a wander round before heading for home.

And then it rained, and not a gentle shower either, it absolutely chucked it down.

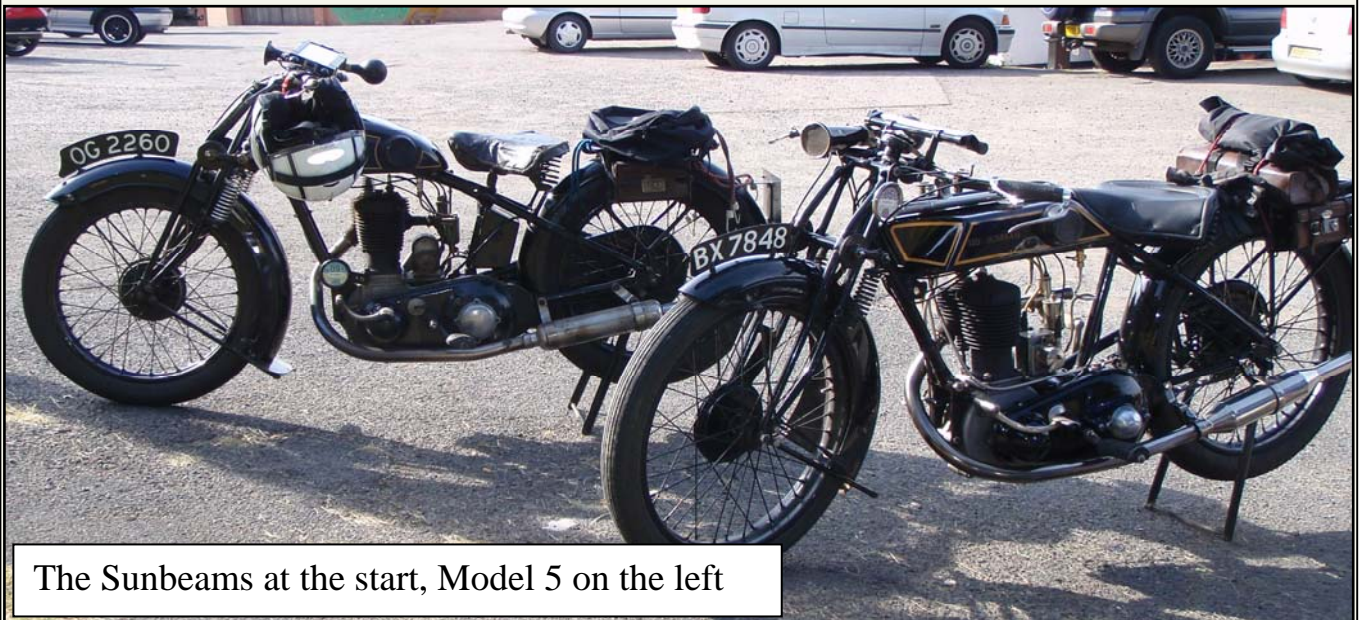
What a year, what a 'summer'!

Flight of Fantasy Run - Sunday 9th August 2012

September 9th 2012 was the rearranged date so as to avoid clashing with rearranged Founder's Day. This was because of the terrible summer weather and subsequent flooding.

No such problems today, the weather was beautifully warm and sunny for our ride through lovely rolling Shropshire countryside. The start at Tony's Diner seems popular and about 25 bikes appeared for the start, and there was plenty of interest centred on Bill Haley's newly restored Triumph Tiger 100, not so much because it looked so fine but because it would not start. With much scratching of heads and fiddling, all was well with a good push across the car park.

Some 21 signed on, including 4 girder-fork machines. Brian and Pat Empsall on the vin-



The Sunbeams at the start, Model 5 on the left

tage Triumph outfit, Bill Danks on 350 Royal Enfield, Bill Orchard on the delectable flat tank Sunbeam and me on the ex Harold Badham long-stroke Sunbeam Model 5.

At the last club night I had not decided on a finish for the run and Bill Danks mentioned the Classic Bike Show at Lacon Childe School, Cleobury Mortimer and then it all seemed to fall into place.

Staying mainly on quiet lanes we meandered around Brown Clee Hill and Titterstone Clee Hill. I had hoped that the hedges would have been cut in time for our run, but many still showed the luxuriant growth afforded by the wet summer.

This did impede the views somewhat but there were opportunities to enjoy views of the beautiful countryside. As usual there were hazards to be avoided, gravel, grass and moss, horse muck but thankfully no horses, tractors and a couple of nutters in 4x4's who simply cannot believe that there could possibly anything around a blind corner! The sights, sounds and smells of the countryside were all around us, some sweet, some

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ripe!

Sadly, Brian's Triumph expired after a few miles and most unusually, he could not fix it roadside, not surprising as the autopsy he carried out later on confirmed his initial diagnosis that the piston crown had become detached from the lower part (Piston Broke indeed). He did trailer it to the lunch stop where the voting took place for the Flight of Fantasy, an award for the bike that most takes your fancy. It need not be concours or even a recognised classic, just a bike that you would like to take home.



A selection of bikes at the finish

It sees that no-one wants to take my Sunbeam home, but voting was divided, at one stage it was a three-way tie, in which case the organiser has the deciding vote. However this was not needed as enough people thought that they would like to take home Bill Harley's beautifully presented Triumph Tiger 100, leaving the flat tank Sunbeam and the BSA A50 in joint second.

Some of us then continued on to the Classic Bike Show. I received a few comments on the run and these seemed favourable, so thanks to everyone who turned up and helped make it a success.

Trevor Bull.



Autumn Run. Sunday 7th October 2012.

What a day. After the 'summer' we've had, a run on 7th October felt as big a gamble as the Spring Run had done on March 11th. Well our luck was in and, just like the March day it dawned with wall to wall blue sky and no sign of the fog the forecasters had warned me of at bedtime. Brilliant. So it was a pleasure to head on down to Tony's Diner and sign 21 riders on for the run.

After the usual socialising we got away at about 10.45, taking a meandering route to Much Wenlock via Willey and on through Homer and Wig Wig (I'm not making this up!). Just after Wig Wig there was a ford, in which Bill Orchard managed to extinguish the sparks of his very nice 1951 Ariel Red Hunter. A number of us stopped to help but to no avail and Bill sent us on while he allowed it to dry out.



Bill Orchard being assisted in his quest for sparks by John Shaw at the Wig Wig ford. To the uninitiated the ford may not look sufficiently impressive to cause problems, but on Bill's behalf can I assure you that the camera doesn't do it justice and it was in fact a raging torrent

The route then took us on through Harley, Harnage, Conover, across the A49 and up into the hills for a coffee stop at Pulverbatch, some 10 miles south of Shrewsbury. The proprietors and staff at the White Horse made us very welcome with tea, coffee and biscuits. Hot drinks were continually filled up, some riders had baguettes, and I began to wonder if we'd get them out of there again.

After coffee I introduced an innovation (always risky on VMCC runs), and we had an optional green lane, or ByWay Open to All Traffic as the modern bureaucrat knows them. This was a mostly stone bottomed unmade road, so not the mud bath we may have expected and about half the riders went that way, while the remainder took the slightly shorter tarmac detour before the routes rejoined about 3 miles later. The lane was a mile or so long with some great views, well worth the expedition.

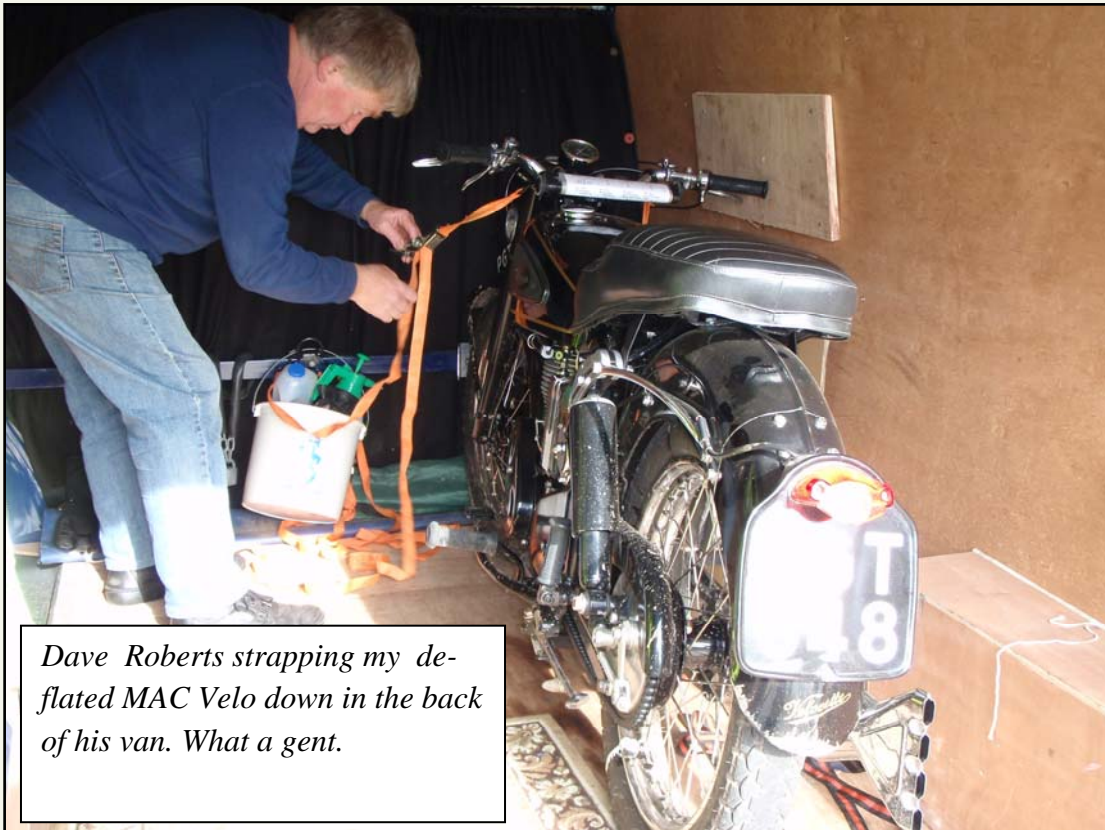
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Then it was on through Plealey and Atcham, past the Roman remains at Wroxeter and looping round through Eyton before ascending the shoulder of the Wrekin to Little Wenlock before descending into Ironbridge Gorge past the museum of Iron in Coalbrookdale to another stop by the Ironbridge.

Sadly I didn't make it quite that far as I had a queasy back end. No, not what you're thinking, I mean that wobbly uncertainty at the back end of your motorbike that tells you that you may have a puncture. Of course I tried to ignore it and pretend it was some gravel on the road, but that only lasted a few hundred yards, and then I knew. B@**@*ks! Colin Lloyd had told me a few weeks earlier that the tyre was getting a bit thin and may be vulnerable to thorns, so I thought I probably wouldn't get much sympathy.

I pushed the bike down to the next junction which I thought would be easier for a recovery truck to find me. There Jonathan Jinks was waiting to see what had happened to me, and we tried a can of tyre inflator that he offered. No good. Meanwhile Martyn Round and John Shaw had also come back, and a chap had stopped in a VW van. That chap turned out to be a fellow enthusiast, Dave Roberts, from Great Barr, by pure coincidence out for a ride round. His van was fully equipped for carrying bikes, ratchet tie downs and all. He insisted on taking me home to Bridgnorth and within 15 minutes we were on our way. Unbelievable.



Dave Roberts strapping my deflated MAC Velo down in the back of his van. What a gent.

Meanwhile most of the others had gathered by the Ironbridge for an ice cream in the sunshine. I sent Colin Lloyd a text to let him know what had happened to me, thinking he would tell anyone who was interested, though I was told later that they couldn't get much sense out of him as he was laughing so much!

All things considered it was an excellent day out in splendid weather and it seems that members enjoyed it.

Thanks to everyone who came for turning out and making it worthwhile.

Dave Spencer

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 Empsall, 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

Winter Wander. - November 18th 2012

The Winter Wander, in effect the last run of the season, followed its now established format of a two-start event with The Lock at Wolverley being the south western start point and Halfords at Cannock the northern one.

Northern Report

A still clear morning with bright sunshine and melting frost greeted us, perfect for Vintage and Classic motorcycling! The gathering at Cannock steadily grew to total 15 with AJS, Ariel, BMW, Matchless, Suzuki, Velocette and Triking machines taking an airing. It was good to meet Trevor Jackson (Triumph 3TA) from Nuneaton and Rodney Leaper (BMW R80RT) from Eccleshall who were joining us for the first time.

Leaving Cannock we were quickly into gentle country lanes and enjoying the wonderful late Autumn colours. Our route skirted Penkrige to Wheaton Aston then meandered over to Shifnal before plunging down Sutton Bank to cross over the River Seven and climb up to Broseley. The crisp day meant superb views across open country as we dropped down into Much Wenlock then onto Monkhopton before turning to go over the hills and valleys to Bridgnorth.



Riders from the northern start enjoying the sunshine

No mechanical hold ups were reported but patches of late to melt frost and wet leaves kept your mind on the job, the side ways sliding with leg trailing style of Keith Little being mentioned by several.

Our arrival at Tony's coincided with the south western starters where all our machines made an interesting, excellent display in the lower car park. Sound bite of the day – The steady thump of Maurice Trupp's 1929 Ariel as it rested at the finish – brilliant! So now its roll on New Years Day the next outing for North Birmingham Section.

Southern Report

The clear skies of Saturday night ensured a crisp start for the fourteen riders who gathered at ten o'clock, amongst whom was Bill Danks in characteristic good humour with his 'barn find' 50cc Honda Camino, intent on showing us all that some tiddlers are perfectly capable of keeping up with the big boys.



“Bit parky this morning, don't you think Martyn?”



The technical merits of the diminutive little Honda were overwhelming. Bill just had to get some pictures!

Colin, Ron and Russell, all BSA mounted, closely followed by Bill led the group away at just after half-ten on route for Shatterford and the left turn for Trimpley. With a little pushing assistance from Ray Salisbury, Dave Williams' C15 started and the rest of us were on our way, though Dave decided that discretion was the better part of valour and took BSA home.

After Bewdley, the ford through Gladder Brook at the back of Ribbesford Woods presented no problems though further on, the glare of bright morning sunshine on a particular bit of wet road rendered the following right-hander a bit of a surprise – even for 'yours truly', and I planned the route!

Having arrived late at the start and borrowing Ray's route sheet, Jonathan Clarke (BSA A50) caught up with us as we crossed Pensax Common heading for Stockton on Teme. Frost lingered in some of the hedgerows as we made our way to Stanford Bridge, over the Teme and back into the lanes towards Eastham where the residual frost was more evident in those areas sheltered from the weak November sunshine.



Colin, Ron and Russell negotiate the Ribbesford water splash.

Back across the Teme the 'Wanderers' climbed Doddenhill and joined the main road towards Clows Top. By now the second group, led by Robin Parker had caught up with 'Comino Bill' who led us through Mamble and into the lanes towards Bayton. Harvest time brings out the heavy agricultural plant – and with it the mud, which along with fallen leaves makes an interesting riding surface - which is what we found over Ninevah Ridge and down into the Rea Valley. Once in Cleobury Mortimer and free of the mud, the open road to Kinlet beckoned and so the chance to 'stretch our legs' before the Borle Brook water splash at Billingsley and the road through Chelmarsh to Tony's Diner.

By chance both the Cannock and Wolverley contingents arrived at Tony's for lunch in a co-ordinated stream of some twenty seven riders where, waiting for us was Ray Salisbury, in Morganeering mode with his splendid Flat Rad Drop-Head-Coupe and Dave Williams who had exchanged the BSA for his 'R1'.

All that is left to say is thank you to all who turned out in support on what turned out to be a 'bostin' day. Safe riding and happy tinkering during the winter months, we hope to see you on New Years day!

Thanks to Paul Harris for the northern route and Martyn Round the south western one, and to both of them for the above reports and photographs.