

# The Levis Cup Trial and Marjorie Cottle Trophy Trial. 2018

By Martyn Round with photographs by Ian Goodhall.

The annual Levis Cup Trial and Marjorie Cottle Trophy Trial took place on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September from its usual starting venue, The Lenchford Inn, Shrawley. Though the event date had been set in October of the previous year some concern remained regarding the date for the Birmingham Velo – the cycle run which had forced a date change for the 2017 event. However, all was settled when the organisers opted to stage the next event in the Spring of 2019. With dates for the Ludlow Triathlon and the Brown Clee 10K Run settled route planning could be undertaken in earnest and so the authorisation process began in April.



John Robinson K.O.B.I. with the Levis Cup which he won last year. John was the first man away riding the only veteran machine entered.

Ralph Taylor – BSA WM20, one of the six ex WD machines competing amongst themselves for the Sgt Colley VC Trophy, was flagged away at 10:27 just as Keith Sams cleared the top of Flagstaff Hill, his 398cc ABC burbling softly on his way to the first time-check whilst Keith Wakelin – 500cc Rudge Multi was observed by Dave Elliot’s team making its way up the observed section with more than a little bit of assistance. For those who don’t know it, Flagstaff – or Abberley Hill – is approached by a 400-yard climb to a sharp right bend and a further 800 yards of ‘hard work’. The

Fifty-five riders – and driver – were led away from the Slater and Danks starters table at 10:01 am by John Robinson K.O.B.I. astride his 1914 BSA model H and with the starter’s flag dropping at one-minute intervals Steve Sumner had to pack away his New Imperial mounted gramophone and join the field of twenty-two vintage machines that would set out to challenge each other for the Bert LeVack Cup presented to the rider with the best performance on a vintage machine, not to mention the premier award – The Levis Cup.



Steve Sumner’s Gramophone.  
No broken 78’s!

observed section of fifty yards is on a slight 'conk' some seventy yards after the bend and is followed by a slightly less-steep tree-lined climb on a single-track lane with moss and mud on the centre line. Quite pretty really!



Ralph Taylor with the Sgt Colley VC MM Memorial Trophy which he won in the 2017 trial and probably hoping to retain this year

With half of the entry field now out on the road the riders headed towards the village of Rock and so to Pound Bank and the descent down the now metalled 1920's trial hill of Buckridge, whilst back at the Lenchford John Shaw's Velocette MDD was leading Mike Stephenson's 'Black' Ariel and Jonathan Jinks' WM20 out toward Astley and brothers Jim and Bill Martin - BSA L27 and Levis A1 where waiting for Mr Danks' flag to fall. Ten minutes later three generations of the Morris family ( ISDT DMW and two Sunbeams) led the final group of riders away as the first were getting their time cards marked at the Baveney Lane Time-Check.

The second Observed Section – Farlow Bank provided a chance for Keith to demonstrate some 'LPA' with his Rudge

and also gave one or two others a few penalty points though most cleared the hill without trouble and followed the route across the back of Titterstone Clee Hill to the final check-point on Angel Bank, a point chosen to permit the use of the next road junction as part of the afternoon route and be able to tick the MSA's box which says the route does not cross itself. Route planning!

Peter Grey and Keith Little where waiting at The Squirrel with the red, brown, green, buff and mottled carpet treatment (you have to be there to know!). Then after a lunch break of about one and a half hours riders departed to start the afternoon route by ascending Whitbatch Hill, observed as usual by members of the Ashen family but un-timed this year due to a nearby



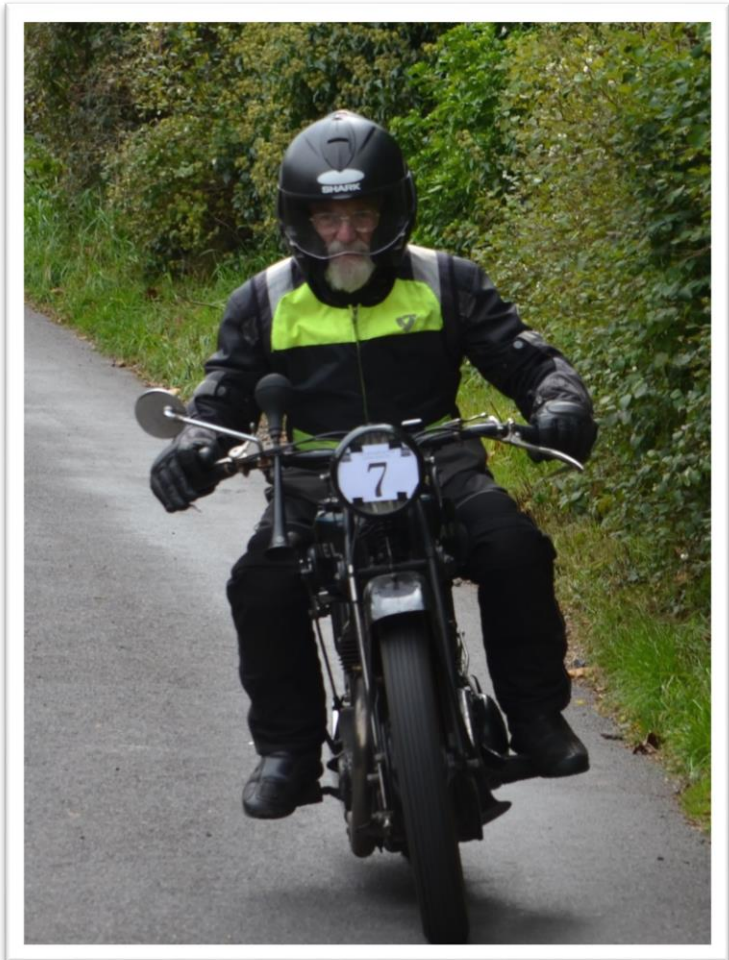
Kevin Gilbert [BSA] being flagged away by Bill Danks.



Keith Sams 1920 398cc ABC at the lunch stop.

road closure and potentially more traffic on our 'patch'. As an aside, I'm not sure how long brothers Andy and Ben Ashen have been involved with the event – but probably over forty years beginning as passengers in their Father's Sunbeam outfit – yes, the one now in the Black Country Museum.

Derbyshire boys Rod and John Phillips-Blue Star and B31 – approached the starters flag as Jon Smith with his 1937 Levis Special, one of the thirteen post vintage entries, cleared the top of Whitbatch and Cotswold man Peter Kent on another 'Black' Ariel approached the long ford at Clee St Margaret. For those not wishing to get wet a by-pass was included which allowed them the option to re-join the route on the road through Stoke St Milborough and so on, via minor roads, running parallel with the A49 to emerge just to the west of Burford. As Bill's flag fell for the last time at Whitbatch so the first of the riders crossed the river and headed out of Tenbury following the Teme valley, sometimes high up and sometimes low down all the way to the Shelsley's, over the bridge leading up through the village and out of the valley to Hillside and thence Holt Heath and so to The Lenchford. First man home was Norman Blakemore – Francis-Barnett Falcon which at 250cc was one of the twelve Classic (500cc) class machines entered, ten minutes later came the next man and so started the steady stream of returnees.



Peter Kent – 1929 Ariel Model B on his way up Whitbatch Hill after the afternoon restart,

The timed route for the day was fifty miles - morning and forty-three miles - afternoon on roads that at times offered challenging surfaces but in generally dry conditions – thank you to the Rain Gods! For those interested in numbers we had one veteran, twenty-two vintage, nineteen post-vintage, of which six were Ex WD ('39-'45), twelve 500cc Classic Class and four Marjorie Cottle entrants.



Bill Bubb – Ariel Red Hunter on his way up Whitbatch.

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, Andrew Darler for software support, members of The Velocette Owner's Club, The Sunbeam Register, 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.



The Black Ariels Team bikes of Rusty Hart and Jeremy Main. The third member was Peter Kent.

Results:

Award		Penalty Pts	Entrant.
Premier Award	The Levis Cup	7	Keith Sams
Runner-Up	The Alec Ross Cup	13	Peter Kent
Best Op Class	The Alice Round Cup	25	Jenny Hart
Best Veteran	The George Yeomans Trophy	53	John Robinson KOB
Best Vintage	The Bert LeVack Cup	13	Ian Cole
Best Post Vintage	The Omyga Trophy	18	Richard Williams
Best Classic(500cc)	The Classic Cup	22	Robert Rendell
Best Lightweight (46-66)	The Marjorie Cottle Trophy	22	Bob Sherras
Best Levis	The Levis Tankard	39	Jon Smith
Best WD	The Sgt H.J.Colley V.C. M.M. Trophy	20	Jonathan Jinks
Best Under 250cc	The Calthorpe 100gns Cup	20	Mary Roberts
Best Worcs / N-B'ham Sec. member	The Trevor Bull Timekeepers Award.	23	John Shaw
C o t C's award	The Endeavour Award	92	Keith Wakelin
Team Award	The Albert Mattox Trophy.	13 19 17 (49)	Peter Kent Jeremy Main Rusty Hart





Bob Ashwin with the AJS Commercial.

Unfortunately a shortage of sparks prevented him from getting to Ludlow.



One of our army of observers – dressed for the part sitting astride John Shaw's MDD Velocette. His own Velo is still in the rebuild stage.



Dennis Beale astride the Ex Lawrence Haddock BSA L25 which in turn was his Father's – Roger's 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday present from Dad - John Greenwood.



Jenny Hart explaining the intricacies of the Hotchkiss-derived BSA V-Twin engine and Alvis type front-wheel-drive to an interested by-stander.

Jenny, checking her name on last year's Trophy. Could it be there again this year?



Three generations of the Morris Family – John (ISDT DMW), Stephen with India (Sunbeam Lion) and Henry (Sunbeam Light Solo).



At the lunch stop. Dick Hobart's Ariel and Norman Blakemore's Francis-Barnett.

Spotted the disc brake? In years to come someone may restore this back to 'original' but why? Do you remember Titch Allen's 'Causerie' of many years back when he bemoaned the loss of period and post-period modifications and argued that when done well they represented genuine independent development – something to be valued.



Above: Bob Sherras' 197cc Francis-Barnett .

Right: Robert Rendell – BSA C15 on his way up Whitbatch.



Ian Goodhall & Martyn Round. Oct 2018