

## The Not the Levis Social Run April 17<sup>th</sup>

Entries to the Levis Trial, held in late September each year have for some years been restricted to Post Vintage (before 1946) and earlier machines, partly on safety grounds during some of the special tests, and partly to preserve the unique character of the event. This has, however, left an increasing number of members with Club eligible machines over 25 years old unable to take part. A gap in the calendar allowed the Committee to implement a long discussed idea to hold a social run in the spring over the previous year's Levis route. This would enable a well-planned, long and scenic route to be offered to everyone, enable the Levis route to be enjoyed, and with less planning than making a new route from scratch. The normal Levis start is from The Lenchford Hotel at Shrawley north of Worcester, but to avoid North Birmingham members being asked to go all the way there to start and finish, we realised that the social run could start from Tony's Diner at Bridgnorth and get onto the afternoon Levis route after about 5 miles. We could then follow the route to the Lenchford for coffee, then the morning Levis route to the lunch stop at the Squirrel in Ludlow, before returning back to where we had joined the route and turning off back to Tony's. This would be a total of about 107 miles. Martyn Round's well planned route was checked a couple of weeks before the run, the only concern being that the ford at Neen Savage looked too full and fast (Savage even) for safety, so in case it was still the same on the day a diversion was prepared for anyone for whom the adjacent footbridge would be unsuitable.

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April dawned cold but with a blue sky, a lovely day, and this no doubt helped encourage a large number of members and some visitors to gather at Tony's Diner. In due course 30 people signed on for the run, the largest gathering we've



had for a few years, and it was very pleasing to have some new faces among them, including David Chapman (left, with his 1954 BSA B31). Before setting off we had a very pleasant period of socialising while people caught up with each other



after the winter, checked out any newly purchased machinery, and of course indulged in the humorous stories and mickey taking that makes it all worthwhile.



Above left: Fred Etchells 1972 Norton Commando; right: Paul and Chris Harris Triking

From the start we went out of Bridgnorth on the Ludlow Road for a few miles before joining the Levis route at a left turn for Deuxhill and Middleton Scriven, along a lane known as Millfields Way. This took us through to the B4363 where we turned left for Kinlet and continued for a while towards Bewdley until turning left towards Sturt Common. After going through Wyre Forest for a while we turned left for Buckridge, a road that had a few really steep hills that must have tested early machines on the Levis proper. We then continued through Astley to the coffee stop at The Lenchford Inn beside the River Severn at Shrawley (below), 29 miles done, 51 more to lunch.



Bill Danks on his 1939 Royal Enfield didn't arrive at Shrawley, having suffered a pair of unusual problems. First, the carburettor needle clip broke, requiring Bill to set to and fashion a temporary one from a bit of wire. Then, the petrol pipe fractured as a result

of being disturbed, but Bill had a spare one with him. Now hands up, who among you has ever carried a spare petrol pipe...? After that I think Bill went home before anything else broke.

From the coffee stop we went towards Ockeridge then round to Abberley for Flagstaff Hill, one of the Levis test hills. It's a very steep climb with no chance of a run up, a stern test for early machines. The next few miles took us through Pensax, Stockton on Teme, Stanford Bridge and Milson to Neen Savage. The ford was still too deep and fast to be crossed safely and was avoided by all so far as I know. Then we continued north to Farlow and ascended Farlow Bank, another Levis test hill, before making our way eventually to Ludlow. I say eventually because Lesley Goodhall remarked over lunch that she had kept seeing signposts promising that Ludlow was near, but without ever seeming to get any closer.

Management at The Squirrel pub had done us proud, setting aside a whole section reserved for our use, much more sociable than being dotted around the place. After lunch the route took us to Whitbach Hill, traditionally where the Levis afternoon route restarts with a special test. This involves riders going as slowly as they can for the first section, feet up and without using the clutch, then accelerating away, all using the same gear. More marks are gained the larger the time difference between the slow and quicker sections.

From Whitbach the route took us pretty much straight back to Bridgnorth, but not up the main road. This took us through some more lovely countryside and the ford at Clee St.Margaret, which fortunately was shallower and more user friendly than Neen Savage had been.

It was an excellent day out and I'd like to thank Martyn Round for the superb route, and everyone who came for making it worthwhile.

And finally, I know I wasn't the only one to think of our recently departed friend Colin Lloyd, who rode this challenging route in The Levis Trial last September while seriously ill. On a 1926 Triumph. And he won the Levis Cup, the Premier Award. What a man.

David Spencer



#### **Caption Competition**

- "See, I told you I was having a salad"
- "Waiter, what's this green stuff?"