

July 2008

North Birmingham News

NEWSLETTER

The Welsh Weekend or “Rules is Rules”

The weather forecasts during the past week had been poor making me seriously consider riding the event on my 400 Honda complete with full screen and leg shields, but that's cheating so I opt for my Triumph twin. As it turned out a good decision, Friday was sunny but not too warm and it stayed that way for the rest of the weekend.

Friday

The party of 10 met at Ludlow with a selection of BMW's, Triumphs, Hondas (well one was a Jazz four wheeler) a Moto-Guzzi, and an Ariel. Sadly Moss Withers could not make it but Bill Orchard joined us and would have stayed with us but Annette thought differently. A “back door” exit from Ludlow to Wigmore, Brampton Bryan, New Invention, and Clun. Stunning scenery all the way before dropping into Montgomery Town Square and slipping 100 years back in time for our first compulsory tea and bun stop. Pete low on fuel, not to worry, try the Ironmongers. Problem solved, but surprised it did not arrive in tins!!! Pressed on to Lake Vyrnwy for lunch (as if we needed it) but oh dear, not allowed on the balcony with it's delightful views across the lake. Sorry, rules is rules!!! Lunch concluded we whizzed around the lake, and up and over Bwlch-y-Groes and Dinas Mawddwy and onto Dolgellau for a compulsory ice-cream as we've done in the past only to be told “sorry no ice-cream until the summer” What, but it's flaming June on Sunday!!! Sorry, rules is rules. Still no flaming ice-cream, so off we set, undeterred, in our motorcycle gear, down the back alleys, till we found one.

We pressed on down the Bar estuary to Arthog for a steep climb passed the lakes and onto miles and miles of fabulous greenlanes. Real International Six Days stuff with spectacular views of the estuary far below before finishing the day at Cefn Coch, north of Towyn, our base for the next two nights in the capable hands of Mike and Pat Chadwick. After a hearty meal and a few glasses of wine juice (would be rude not to) we retired, willingly, to bed.

Saturday

Beautiful morning and a huge breakfast. Oh bother!!! Chairman Bull has a puncture in the “slick” rear tyre on his Triumph. Lots of willing hands and one hour later we are off. Brian and Pat leading on their Triumph twin. On approaching Machynleth Trevor's rear let go again. Pumped up hard and retired to ATS Tyre Services. “Sorry mate can't do it we are not trained or qualified for bike tyres”. See rules is rules again. Found a Finnelec sealant in the town and set off again. We make a spirited exit to the lakes of Llyn Clywedog and took a quick lunch in Llanidloes (Pie and chips for John and Pete). Pressing on we headed for Rhayader but at St. Harmon the Triumph's tyre lets go big time and tossed Chairman Bull into the bank, fortunately without any damage. Late afternoon so I made a bee-line for the motorcross shop in Rhyader and luckily they had a 19-inch tube, wow !!! Set off again at high speed for Nant-y-Moch Reservoir, Taly-bont, Machynlleth and welcoming ice cream at Aberdovey where we finally caught up with Brian and Pat who had a lovely quiet and leisurely day. Our exciting day was concluded with a fabulous bar-b-que and a few more “pops” from Mike and Pat.

Sunday

Oh dear after yet another huge breakfast – power to weight ratio crashed out completely.

Sadly it is time for home, no excitement today (thank goodness), just a fine ride through glorious scenery via our old favourite Corris, Newtown, a compulsory ice cream in Clun before our farewells in Craven Arms.

Our sincere thanks to Josie and Ian. It was yet another fabulous weekend, great scenery, a cracking route, excellent company and superb cuisine. What more could you ask for. “Please sir, I want some more”.

Bill





From the Archives

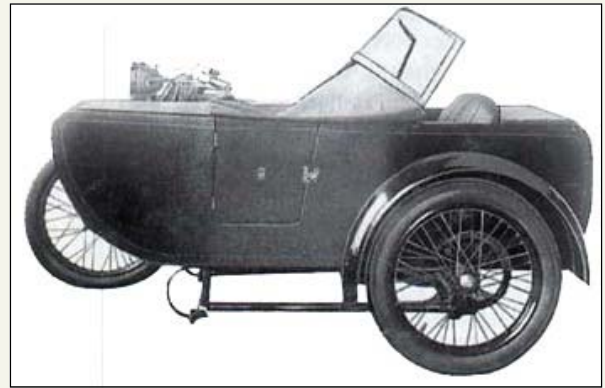
Motorcycling and camping have long gone together and still do, if the popularity of weekend rallies is anything to go by.

The newspapers always carried an annual feature at camping equipment in time for the buying season, but not everyone wanted to spend the night on the ground. To suit this customer the Bowser sidecar company came up with their novel Caravan Sidecar in 1929.

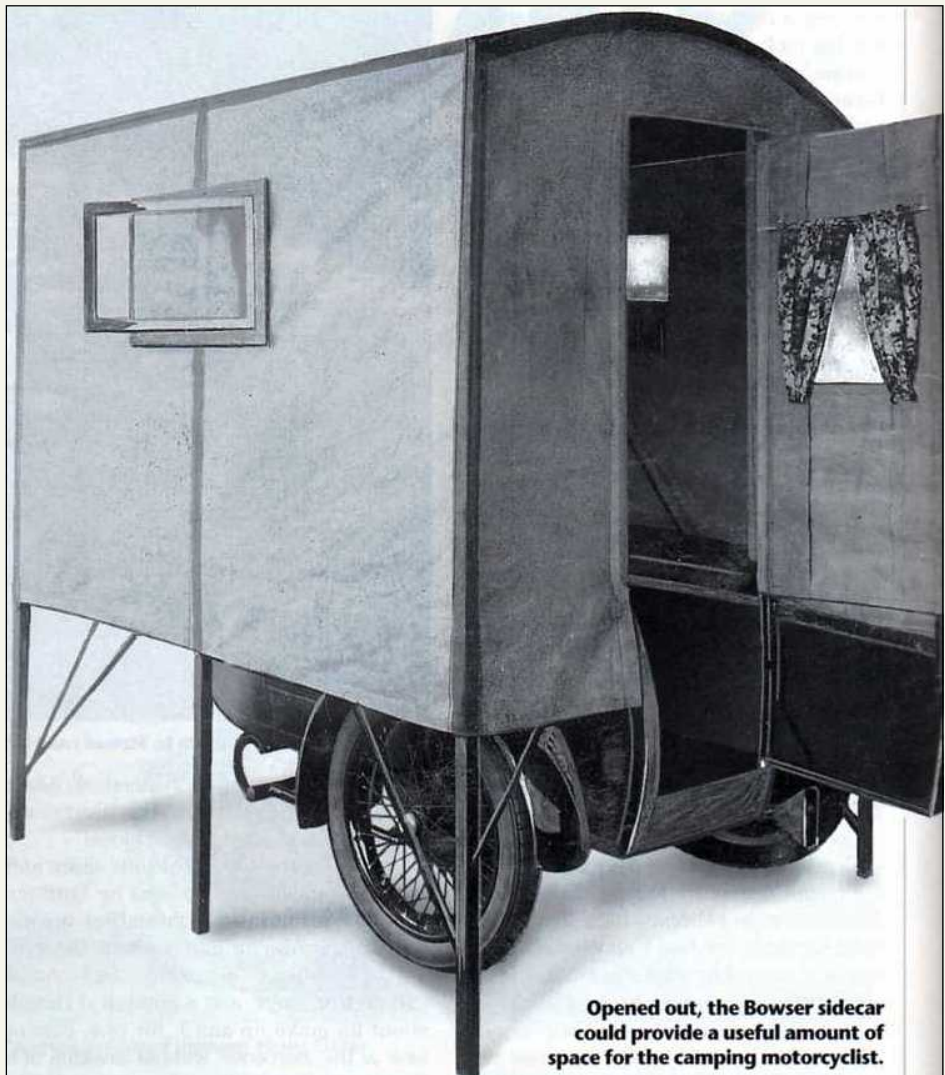
Edward Bowser of Leeds had a long run with the manufacture of sidecars, with a number of appealing designs to his name.

With this device though, he excelled himself. From a very conventional outline, his single seater open touring body could be converted into a roomy caravan in around 20 minutes. It had all enveloping canvas walls which extended out beyond the motorcycle, thus providing a mobile home and a mobile garage at the same time.

Two six foot beds, a toilet cabin with mirror, food cupboard, cutlery and folding windows were all cunningly incorporated. No mention of a cooker however, nor of any on-site mains electric link up facility; but for £39.10.0d what did you expect. It kept you off the terra firma, away from the little beasties and dry.



The Bowser caravan sidecar in travelling mode



Opened out, the Bowser sidecar could provide a useful amount of space for the camping motorcyclist.

Josie's Jaunt

I arrived at The Bowling Green Inn Lichfield with clear blue skies and the promise of warm sunshine. I had plenty of route sheets with me, and got them out ready with the signing on sheet, and waited for the first arrival who was John Aston on his little Honda step-thru. There then followed a steady stream of riders arriving on a variety of machines until we had a total of 20 signed on, mostly Post War and just one Vintage machine, the 'Trusty Triumph' outfit of Brian & Pat Empsall.

Everyone set off with me bringing up the rear, and after just a couple of miles I noticed a trail of oil along the lane, it turned into a little pool where the machine it had leaked from had obviously stopped for a while. The trail then continued until a little further along the lane I came across a group of machines parked up and the riders gathered around the culprit, Archie Graham's Triumph. Eventually the decision was made to leave the machine at a nearby house, and retrieve it the next day, and then Archie rode pillion for the rest of the day.

The route continued to a coffee stop near Draycott in the Clay, and then past the Sudbury Museum of Childhood, through Doveridge and crossed the A50 and headed towards Ellastone. There was then a long steep climb up into the Weaver Hills where there were spectacular views for those that chose to stop and admire them. I stopped to take a few photographs, and then followed the route through the Peak District National Park, whose scenery looked stunning in the glorious warm sunshine. After a long steady descent, we crossed the River Dove,



and arrived for lunch at the Pub With No Beer!

I had asked the landlord if we would be welcome, and he had said although the pub had been sold, they would be open and serving meals, however when we arrived he had left the chef to tell us there was no beer and only sandwiches to eat.

There was one man missing at the lunch stop, John Round had shot off after stopping briefly at the coffee stop, and as he didn't have a route sheet, Bill Danks set off in pursuit but couldn't find him.

The Afternoon route took us through the grounds of Okeover Hall to Clifton and crossed the A515 to Edlaston and then followed the lanes through Yeavley and Boyleston before rejoining the A515 for the last stretch back to Lichfield and ice creams at the garden centre to finish. As I arrived at the garden centre, John Aston was about to leave, pleased that his little Honda had

passed its test and was ready for its next event, the Coast to Coast. Bill Danks had enjoyed his ice cream and was about to leave the garden centre and head for home, when who should shoot past at a considerable rate of knots but John Round!

Eric Greenfield broke down on the afternoon route, so he had a lift home with the breakdown service, but he at least broke down outside a pub to ease the pain!

Many thanks to everyone who came on the run; I hope you enjoyed it and that the lunch stop was not too much of a disappointment.

Josie



Dejavous or funny, that's happened before !!!

Last week I was out on my Triumph Tiger Cub Sports making my sedate way from Kidderminster to Stourport to pick up some spares from Alec Dorrill.

At a set of traffic lights two "whipper snappers" on new scooters pulled up either side of me, and much revving, rude gestures and verbals were hurled in my direction. I chose to ignore them and potted off to the next set of lights.

The "barracking" continued but my time had come; away ahead of us stretched a delightful piece of dual carriageway into Stourport. Off they went throttles against the stop up to a creditable but highly illegal 50 mph. Now that Cub will do 80 mph as Moss Withers will testify, however, he will probably add the words "just before it blows up" which he has also witnessed. So I gave the old girl her head and as I drew level I just looked across, gave them a smile and allowed my mind to drift back 45 years when I was the aggressor.

It was 1962, I was just 16 and the proud owner of newly restored 1957 Triumph Tiger Cub. She was immaculate and quick, chrome and paintwork courtesy of the Austin Motor Company and the motor expertly assembled by my dad. I was out to show Northfield who was the new kid on the block and prove it I did with ground off footrest rubbers and timing tweaked up when my dad had his back turned.

One of my targets was a scruffy old guy, probably in his late 70's or early 80's who plodded around Northfield at 25 mph on an equally scruffy overhead camshaft KSS Velocette, yes KSS Velocette. He always wore a flat cap, no crash helmet required in those days, an oil and grease stained footing coat, yes the one that reached down to your ankles and a pipe clenched firmly between his probable false teeth. He simply did not deserve that thoroughbred and I made it my business, even if I was travelling in the opposite direction, to turn round, belt past and yes I admit it, cut him up. He plodded on quite unperturbed by my antics.

To make ends meet I had a part-time job on the petrol pumps at Bert Hadley's garage on the A38 main road out of Birmingham. I did some unsociable hours at Uncle Bert's, but the money was handy and my stunning Cub usually attracted positive comments from passing motorcyclists and ex-motorcyclists who had moved onto cars.

You can imagine my consternation when a brand new HA, Cope's registered, Tiger Cub Sports

pulled onto the forecourt ridden by "the plodder" still dressed in his flat hat and filthy coat. This was the "Baby Bonnie", the one to have on your wish list.

I found every reason not to serve him, but he looked across with that knowing smile on his craggy face. I felt so small. All my efforts had worked against me, for he was so impressed by the performance and handling of my Cub, he'd actually gone out and bought the super-doper whizz bang wallop version.

To this day I regret not summoning up the courage to go over and chat to him. This was certainly his last bike and he probably had a wealth of information and knowledge to pass onto lesser mortals like myself. After that if we passed it was a nod or a gentlemanly wave, or if we chanced to be going in the same direction, I overtook at a moderate pace and afforded him the space and respect he deserved. He plodded on at 25 mph for a few more years, then he and the Cub just disappeared. It was never cleaned and why should he change the habit of a lifetime. He liked riding 'em not polishing 'em !!!

Oh, and the two "upstarts" on scooters. Well they were somewhat stunned by lack of response, lost interest, turned off at the end of the dual carriageway, and presumably moved onto their next challenge. In 45 years time, I wonder if one of them will reflect on a similar situation. I doubt it, but I can live in hope.



Anybody recognise this young fella in 1962



A close up of the 1957 cub just refurbished in 1962

Bill

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS FOR 2008

CLUB NIGHTS	
JUNE 30th	Ride a Bike Night— no meeting
JULY 25th	Fish and Chip Supper
AUGUST 29th	Arrive on Your Bike Night
SEPTEMBER 24th	Talk by Johnny Brittain on life as a trials rider
OCTOBER 29th	Talk by Geoff Brazendale on early vehicle lighting
NOVEMBER 28th	Bring and Buy evening
DECEMBER 26th	No Meeting

CLUB RUNS

DATE	RUN	ORGANISER	Tel No
June 25th	Ride A Bike Night	Frank Ashton	01902-372719
June 29th	Roger's Run	Roger Greening	01562-730464
July 6th	Long Mynd Run	Colin Lloyd	01384-371835
July 9th	Wrinkly Run		
July 20th	Trent Valley Run	Brian Empsall	01543-264968
August 3rd	Breakfast Run	Rob Pell	0121-624-7674
August 17th	Picnic / Concours Run	Peter Ashen	01562-882854
September 7th	Flight of Fantasy Run	Trevor Bull	01905-778917
September 14th	Levis Cup Road Trial	Paul Harris	01902-842732
September 28th	Severn Valley Run	Bill Danks	01562-67103
October 12th	Autumn Run	Andy Briggs	0121-544-5938