

November 2008

# North Birmingham News

## NEWSLETTER

# Severn Valley Run

Well guys and gals you have to admit we've had some pretty poor weather for our runs this year, so I was determined to rectify the situation for you. I spoke seriously to the great weatherman in the sky and he did not let me down. In fact the weather in the run up was so good, I panicked and printed an extra 10 sets of route sheets on Saturday evening. It turned out to be one of my better ideas as 31 riders "signed on" with visitors from the Burton, North Staffs, Ironmasters and Worcestershire sections.

Messrs. Ashen, Withers and Round represented the "Last of the Summer Wine" chapter, and did you notice the three generations of Rounds, John, Martin and young Alex. The infamous G.H.A's (Geriatric Hells Angels) entered three riders, Bill Orchard, Red Hunter Ariel, Roger Slater, '66 Bonneville, and yours truly '30 Morgan Aero. Fourth member Chairman Bull sent his apologies.

Machines varied from John Aston's lovely little "step thru" Honda, through some immaculate flat and saddle tank Sunbeams, post-war B.S.A's and Velocettes to Neil Allman's race specification International Norton.

The car park attendant was unhappy about the "grid positions" but we all managed to escape despite his intervention, young Neil (ho-ho-ho) making a spirited exit with a run-bump and much clutch slip up to 30 mph. Oh, the sound of the open mega and smell of "R" was glorious.

A short 5 mile sprint via Chelmarsh and Billingsley took us past "The Cape of Good Hope", a famous venue for national trial events and onto "The Eagle and Serpent" at Kinlet for a coffee stop. Fooee, yes Fooee and Sharon made us most welcome. Farewells said, we motored off through Wyre Forest, onto and down the Clows Top road, with it's hazy but spectacular views, onto Abberley and down to Great Witley for a right turn past "Red Marley" to breast the climb with spectacular views of the Teme Valley.

From this point we made our return journey through leafy lanes, with some pleasant autumn tints, via Pensax, Rock, Bliss Gate, Heightington safely down Hurtle Hill and into Dunley. It was here the Danks three wheel breakdown truck came across, not one, but two stationary BSA's with lots of sparks but all in the wrong places. Thirty minutes later they were off, the BSA's heading home and I motored on along the Severn, through Bewdley, no time for an ice cream at Teddy Greys today, up to Shatterford and down to "The Lock" at Wolverley for a good lunch in fine company.

My "Man of the match" award must go Neil Allman on that feisty International Norton, he must have managed "fastest time of the day". After so many years it was great to see his mom Marion at the finish. She will be remembered for her spirited riding of a New Imperial. Watch this space she's game enough to ride it again !!

Well folks, that's it. Everything went to plan although two road closures (nowadays they do that at the drop of a hat) created some lateral thinking. It's the first run I've organized for many a year, and I have to admit, I really enjoyed it. I sincerely hope you did.

Thanks for your company, and your kind donations to the St. John's Ambulance

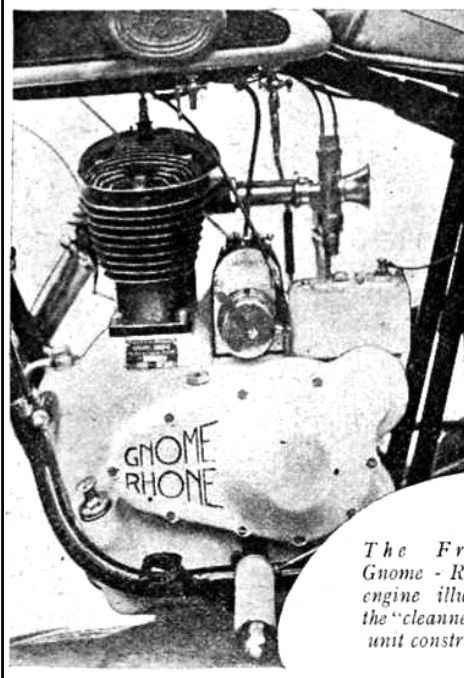
*Bill*



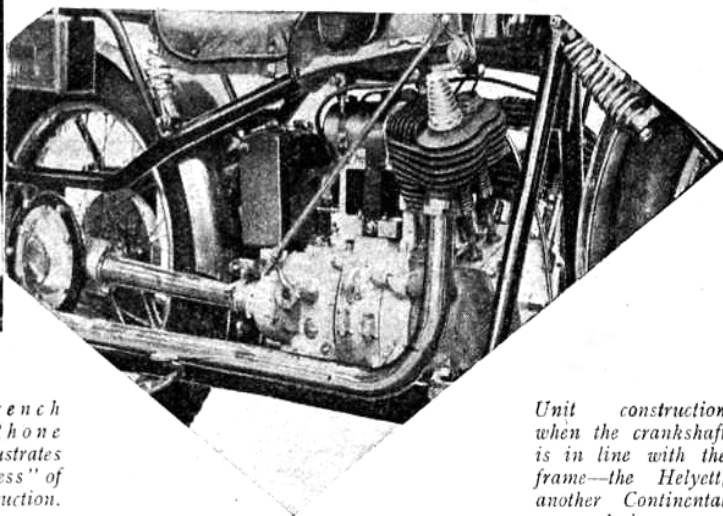


## From the Archives

### Thoughts on Unit Construction in the early 1930's



*The French Gnome - Rhone engine illustrates the "cleanness" of unit construction.*



*Unit construction when the crankshaft is in line with the frame—the Helyett, another Continental design.*

Up to this point production of unit construction in this country can be at best described as spasmodic compared with Continental and American practice. However it remains to be proved that this method is *desirable*. Most people will agree that it is desirable to eliminate, if possible, the primary chain drive, especially as so few manufacturers take the trouble to enclose it in an oil bath; yet I believe that it is the high efficiency of chain drive, over short periods, combined with our worship of speed records, that has prolonged the existence of the system.

There are several alternatives, but only two which appear to be practical at the moment. Either the chain and sprockets can be replaced by a train of gears—not more than three all told—or they can be eliminated entirely by the use of bevel or worm gearing in some stage of the transmission. The first alternative is that favoured by the manufacturers of some American Twins, and the second is standard on all four cylinder machines, and is becoming increasingly popular on the continent for singles and twins.

In these days no one would think of building a four-cylinder motor cycle with a separate gear box; why not apply the same practice to machines having fewer cylin-

Let us examine the gear drive type first. Critics will begin to talk about noise and expense, but noise in excess of that made by a primary chain is unnecessary, and, though the expense of the gear drive by itself may exceed that of the primary chain and sprockets, yet the money thus spent could probably be saved in engine and gear box brackets and fixings. Wide gears are essential, and preferably they should have helical or double helical teeth, on the score of silence, though this would add to the cost of Some extent. It remains for the designer' to decide whether the improved silence justifies the extra cost.

Smaller and possibly quieter gear wheels could be employed in the train if the practice of driving on the maximum diameter of the clutch were temporarily forgotten; this should not be a difficult matter.

The gears would be enclosed and would run in oil, a feature which would involve a wet-plate clutch. But a wet-plate clutch is not a very terrible thing; apart from successful designs to be found on motor cycles, one of the most popular and modestly priced cars is thus equipped, and the clutch is delightful and trouble-free in every respect.

Continued next month



# The Non-Levis Trial

The weather prior to the 2008 Levis was abysmal, although Sept 7th. was not too bad.

by then of course it was all over for competitors. As the section chairman, I went to the start at the Lenchford, Shrawley to advise anyone arriving that it was cancelled.

I arrived about 9-10am. and half a dozen stalwarts were waiting in eager anticipation!

Robin? on a very nice OHV twin-port Raleigh hoping for an on the day entry, and a pre-war Aerial. Nice to see Graham Dodd on a Velocette. Bob Bufton turned up BMW mounted.

I had brought last year's route in case anyone fancied an impromptu run around the lanes. In the event, only John Round and I went, picking our way around and through the mud, gravel, missing tarmac and "damp" patches. Starting at 10-20 and following the route, though not the time schedule to Ludlow. At one particularly deep water splash (flood!) we stopped and had a pleasant chat with a farmer who used to motorcycle many years ago about the state of the drainage, or lack of it, around his farm.

Three "Road Closed" barriers were encountered which we quickly ignored, and squeezed around. We returned via Clee Hill and Clows top arriving back at the Lenchford at 1-20! Timekeeper's Award for us! We met up with Bill and Sue Danks and Rachel for a well-deserved lunch. We left sometime after 4-00pm. to meet a rider arrive on an ex-military Moto Guzzi Falcone. He asked where the bikes were, and announced that he had ridden down from Liverpool to see the finish! Undaunted, he said that if he avoided motorways he would be home by 7-00 in time for tea. That's the sort of dedication we find amongst our ranks.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to the Levis organisers and helpers who did so much to put the event on, only to have it snatched away at the last moment.

*Trevor*



## FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS FOR 2008

CLUB NIGHTS	
OCTOBER 29th	Talk by Geoff Brazendale on early vehicle lighting
NOVEMBER 26th	Bring and Buy evening
DECEMBER	No Meeting

## Footnote:

Occasion: Severn Valley Run.

Place: Wolverley The Lock Pub

Speaker: Moss Withers, recounting recent misfortune trapping foot twist bike and kerbstone whilst dismounting.

Result: PAIN and bad bruising.

Explanation: Wearing snug fitting leather trousers makes getting on and off motorcycle difficult with advancing age.

Concluding comment from Moss: "I find it difficult to get my leg over these days"

Advice: Try taking the leather trousers off first!

Submitted by an Anonymous member—West Hagley

The Bring and Buy evening is fast approaching: Please can you check your sheds / garages for any items no longer needed or required and bring along as many motorcycle / automotive items only as you can carry.

If you have anything you want to put a reserve on please notify the auctioneer before the start.

Due to many requests at the Severn Valley / Autumn Run another club run may be scheduled for November.

A few more photographs from the start at The SVR car park, including a few running repairs and adjustments.



Contributions from Trevor Bull and Bill Danks. Photography from Trevor Bull and Josie Stanley