

North Birmingham News

NEWSLETTER

The Restoration of the 1916 "White Russian Sunbeam"

We left the story of this machine as it passed into the hands of Bob Cordon—Champ who researched its history, and made a useful start in the long journey of its restoration. A new rear end of the frame was welded on which came from a scrapped model 7 sunbeam. Being identical to the old rusted frame it meant the all important Little Oil Bath from the original machine could be repaired and refitted; a job which fell to me, having had long experience of the tin bashing on Sunbeam Cars. Other missing components were acquired by Bob like correct Bowden handlebar levers, front mudguard and stays, new wheel rim; bead edge of course; and numerous correct period goodies to complete the kit of parts prior to the serious business of restoring and re-fitting all the bits back into the semblance of a motor cycle.

The project was put aside whilst Bob got busy on career development and his growing involvement the job of being a marquee specialist for Sunbeams. Useful to him in some respects as people often made a bee-line to his house if they had something Sunbeam to get rid of, the converse side; inevitably; was that they made a bee-line to his establishment if they were looking for something Sunbeam. Things have a way of taking over your life in such circumstances, Anyway, the time seemed right to suggest taking the Russian Sunbeam back into my garage. I had by this time cooled off the restoration of cars and had a completed my first rebuild of a model 7 600cc side valve Sunbeam Motorcycle (acquired from friend Paul Harris) and had just ridden it to Switzerland and back with wife Joan, just seven weeks after completing the rebuild. Bonkers ? Yes, but the enjoyment of fresh air motorcycling has never left me.

Back to the Russian Project. The rough assembly of the parts back in my garage looked considerably less daunting than previously, and considerably more complete. My first examination was to see if all the engine parts were still with us. They should have been because it was driving a circular saw bench in the Black Country when rescued buy club member Austin Gibbons. The rest of the machine being buried under a pile of wet sacks and log offcuts.

Yes all the bits were there, but their condition may be imagined!.The near impossibility of finding spare parts for a 1916 Motosacoche engine convinced me to make the best of what I'd got, so I did and it still works, though rather less efficiently than it should. Why does the rear cylinder only develop power when going up hills? Both cylinders feed from the same inlet manifold.

(Answers on a postcard please)

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Tank has three sections; oil at the front, petrol at the rear, and the largest compartment, for paraffin, in the middle. Overhead inlet valve mechanism of the 992cc MAG engine is fully enclosed.

The Spring Run Report

The saying goes "Spring is Sprung the Grass is Ris I wonder were the Bikers Is?"
On the North Birmingham Section "Spring Run" on 22nd April is the answer.

The choice of Brownhills or Bridgnorth to start was popular with 12 signing on at Brownhills and 13 at Bridgnorth with others appearing at the starts and lunch just to say hello. This was good and followed on from the mega turn out on New Years Day.

Routes converged at Norbury Warf for Coffee transforming the normal boatie scene into a great display of Vintage and Classic Motorcycles. The true spirit of the VMCC being upheld with 13 makers represented coming from **UK** - AJS, Ariel, BSA, Matchless, Morgan, Norton Sunbeam, Velocette, Triumph., **Germany** - BMW.

Italy – Ducati, Moto Guzzi. **Japan** - Honda.

Singles, Twins and Four cylinders with years of manufacture ranging from 1928 to 1980. Great!

There were very few exceptions to 100% reliability namely the John Aston Tiger Cub which seemed to encounter difficulty in transferring its substantial HT output to the plug. A threat of the breakdown truck recovery seemed to resolve the problem.

Plus Chairman Bulls' vintage Sunbeam clutch which slipped its way from Bridgnorth to beyond lunch but then decided rest would be better for it and the owners welfare.

With dry roads, a clear day and the suburb country colours of Spring it was an excellent day to be riding.

The stop offs seemed to work and the run down into the Severn Valley and Ironbridge in lovely sunshine for an all important ice cream was a very enjoyable way to complete the route.

Paul Harris



Letter to the Editor.

Julian

It was good to read John Walter's excellent contribution on the Spring Trial 1961 in the April News Letter.

46 years on North Birmingham Section is still running our Spring event although now as a social run.

In 1961 all machines were pre 1931 and generally between 30 and 45 years old and the route set then was relatively short at approximately 36 miles.

This years Spring Run attracted machines with an age ranging from 27 to 79 years. The route although un-timed was twice the distance of 1961. The oldest machine, Brian and Pat's 1928 Triumph Model N outfit, did the entire run being ridden to the start and back home afterwards.

The predominant era of machines for this year's run was the 1950s, machines over 47 years old, so most of us are riding machines older than those ridden by members in 1961.

You could argue that technology, design and reliability was much improved from the 20's to the 50's but considering distance and speeds of today runs I think they are fairly comparable. Any thoughts Guys?

Perhaps we should start a blog via Julian's excellent news letter!

Paul Harris

If anyone else has any letters they would like to send in please let me know

Julian

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Next to come under scrutiny were the forks. Outcome totally unusable! Much searching eventually produced an unused but enormously oversized set of correct pattern Brampton—Biflex forks. To give you an idea the wheel spindle width was three inches wider than the originals, and the blade lengths about two and a half inches too long. I guess they were for one of those three-wheeler bread van type vehicles made by A.J.S. Of all the restoration problems I have ever sorted, the cutting and shutting of the tube work, all internally sleeved and pegged of course, was the most taxing but ultimately most worthwhile I have attempted. The reward was that the complex spring mounts were as original pattern, and the springs themselves. Oh, and all the little oilers and greasers which ornament these early spring forks.

When I relate that the re-build of this Sunbeam took place over a period of about 25 years, and ran alongside the total re-building of 5 other motor-cycles, you can see that it was not a 'rush' job. In fact it was not finally assembled or fired up until after my retirement in 1989. Since completion it has been exercised annually and most of the gremlins removed or made to behave themselves. It would take a book to re-tell all of the problems faced and solved during the re-building process - all metal clutch plates - aligning the gearbox internals to the hand-change gate - getting the brakes to work, even a little bit, and finally discovering the original khaki colour under a frame clip - which was still in place long after the initial shot blasting.

Was it all worthwhile? Yes, it behaves itself well enough, now its problems are sorted, and rewarded my efforts by winning "The Sergeant Colley Cup" on two occasions

in the Levis Cup Trial. Yes I know that's the easy one to win because not many people enter ex W.D. Machines in the Levis, but it's still not bad for a Sunbeam built before the Russian Revolution and has lived to see and motor many years after the end of communism in the land of its original intended owners.

Peter Ashen

1916

New 1916 Models.

Light Tourist, 2-speed - 35 gns.
Light Tourist, 2-speed, clutch and kick start - 41 gns.
Light Tourist, Lady's ditto 43 gns.

New Imperial

MOTORCYCLES OF HIGH QUALITY.

OWING to the universal satisfaction which all our models have given during the past season, and the fact that their pre-eminence is still so pronounced:

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO IMPROVE

the general design and material parts of our machines.

The New 1916 Models are now ready and we can give immediate delivery to a limited number of purchasers who should order now and so avoid the disappointments which we regret were occasioned in many cases last season.

Remember, the New Imperial is the machine of perfect and proven dependability, and is incomparable.

May we send you further details?

NEW IMPERIAL CYCLES, Ltd., BIRMINGHAM.
Said 1915.

Any of our Agents will be pleased to demonstrate the "New Imperial" to you.

Small Ads Section

Wanted - Myford ML7 Lathe or similar, preferably in good condition. Suitable tooling for screwcutting, drilling, reaming etc Telephone Martyn on 01384 292704.

Can anyone recommend a company preferably local to make a new chainguard from a sample. Tel Colin 01384-371835

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Local Events / AOB

Wolverhampton Steam Fair at West Park
11am-6pm 2nd and 3rd June.

Bratch Pumping Station, Bratch Locks,
Wombourne. Please take your bike along
16th and 17th June.

F O R T H C O M I N G A T T R A C T I O N S F O R 2 0 0 7

	CLUB NIGHTS
MAY 30th	Slide show by Richard Thomas on the “President” Steam Narrow boat
JUNE 27th	Ride a Bike Night
JULY 25th	Fish and Chip Supper
AUGUST 29th	Arrive on Your Bike Night
SEPTEMBER 26th	A talk and slide show on “International trials riding” by Scott Ellis
OCTOBER 31st	Slide show by Stephen Mills on the History and development of Morgan, AJS, Austin 7, and the pocket watch.
NOVEMBER 28th	Bring and Buy evening
DECEMBER 26th	No Meeting

CLUB RUNS

DATE	RUN	ORGANISER	Tel No
June 1/2/3rd	The Welsh Weekend	Josie Stanley	01902-607293
June 10th	Josie’s Jaunt	Josie Stanley	01902-607293
June 17th	Banbury Run		
June 27th	Ride A Bike Night	Frank Ashton	01902-372719
July 8th	Roger’s Run	Roger Greening	01562-730464
July 29th	Long Mynd Run	Ian Harris	01952-299118
August 5th	Breakfast Run	Rob Pell	0121-624-7674
August 19th	Picnic / Concours Run	Peter Ashen	01562-882854
September 9th	Flight of Fantasy Run	Trevor Bull	01905-778917
September 16th	Levis Cup Road Trial		
September 30th	Clun Run	Paul Harris	01952-299118
October 14th	Autumn Run	Andy Briggs	0121-544-5938

Contributions by Peter Ashen and Paul Harris. Photography by Josie Stanley and Russell Hale

The Spring Run Norbury Junction Coffee Stop





The Spring Run Lunch Stop at The Oakgate Garden Centre



The Start of The Trent Valley Run



The Lunch Stop at Cardington Water

