



The Vintage Motorcycle Club

www.vintagemotorcycleclub.co.za

PO Box 782835
Sandton
2146
South Africa

info@vintagemotorcycleclub.co.za

Century Run

Muldersdrift, Johannesburg, 27th March 2011.

Story and Results

A wet one! by Andy Stead

The Century run. Felt I must be in with a chance here, and seeing as it's unlikely I will ever win a rally, maybe with a combined age of 147 years I would be in amongst the winners here (Mr. Cunningham watch out!!). I mean without giving away my age the old V Twin BSA celebrates its 82nd birthday this year and that ain't no mean feat given that I am the mechanic/rider.

Anyway having just put the V twin away a couple of weeks ago after an extremely successful DJ (I mean 55th is an admirable effort wouldn't you say?) I thought fettling would be down to a minimum and after several beers on the Saturday before the run hauled it out of the shed and pressed the start button. NOTHING and I do mean NOTHING. Not a peep, not a splutter just a pool of fuel from a tad too much tickling.

It wouldn't take Einstein to tell me there was no spark, so off with the mag as the Queen of Hearts might have said (remember where all those sprockets go or you'll never get the timing right) and first indication that there may be a problem was a small tsunami that flowed out of the innards (Dam it - knew I shouldn't have left the bike outside directly after the DJ in a bit of a rainstorm but beers were calling)

Anyway enough of this. Its clear as a bell that this is not a two minute repair wonder even with Q Bond, so what is plan B? Lurking in said shed was Mark Palmers nimble little Sunbeam model 9. OK MUCH younger than the venerable V twin, its still an oldie, and may even start when required, although not ridden for over two years.

No wonder Sunbeam were such venerated bikes in their day. Guess what - a couple of prods and off it went sounding extremely healthy, so major fettle completed in 30 minutes flat, and with tyre pressures up to spec (Hhhmm is it 2PSI or 2 Bar - never can remember) and oil in the tank, main chain, 'The little sunbeam primary chain case patent pending' and all over the floor I was ready for possible fame albeit now a few years younger.

Comes rally day - grey and overcast with what we used to call in Rhodesia 'Gutti' - (No not mutti you bonehead!) but still - not to be distracted, donned rain suite, clever chamois over index finger for wiping visor clean and a quick check on life insurance by wifie I am off on the ride to the start which is probably a lot longer than the run itself.

Problem number one (This after finding that the brakes ain't good in the wet and that this strange bike has FOUR gears and not the comfortable V twins three) is that the stand keeps falling from the rear mudguard to the road, and make a dreadful din and causes all following cars to pass recklessly, pull level and shout things at you through the window. Yes, yes I know they do that anyhow, but not with the same mindless need to push you off the road as they do when your stand is dragging along behind you I can tell you.

So fixed that with a bungee cord, but felt was getting wetter all the time, and mean time between wipes of the visor definitely getting more frequent. Going through Kya Sands now in FOURTH gear and travelling now at a fair lick guess what?? A POLICE roadblock. Well not for the Taxis who are hurtling through at 150kph plus, but designed for rain soaked bedraggled Sunbeam rider with a much worse offence - NO LIGHTS.

I got so fired up defending my case that zip on the rain suite jacket popped and would not re zip again despite help from a beefy bobby. Suspect that zip failure also due in some way to huge egg and bacon breakfast just before leaving. Anyway rain now doing a major thing, and both cops and me gave up on struggle, with cops retreating to police van and me heading back the way I came having decided that someone up there was trying to tell me something.

Thus ended my Century run. Oh well another year older next year MUST improve my chances, however seems that Jeff Frost with a combined age of around 168 years won the trophy and yellow jacket, so have a few years to go yet.. WELL DONE JEFF.



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Results

GOLD AWARDS

164	Jef Frost	1913 Norton BRS	500cc	VMC (Senior Award plus Winner's Yellow Jacket)
164	Frank Hayward	1925 Excelsior Super X	1000cc	VVC
154	Neville Smith	1933 AJS Model 9	500cc	VMC
152	Henry Watermeyer	1926 Sunbeam 6 L/S	500cc	VVC
150	Trevor Jones	1926 OK Supreme Sport	300cc	VMC
150	Kevin Robertson	1935 Excelsior Manxman	250cc	VMC

SILVER AWARDS

139	Ric Lewis	1929 Sunbeam Model 5	500cc	VVC
138	Philip Gordon	1932 Sunbeam Lion	500cc	VMC
138	Brian Wright	1953 Excelsior R1	175cc	VMC
137	Pierre Cronje	1930 Norton Model ES2	500cc	CMC
135	Leon Badenhorst	1917 Triumph Model H	500cc	VMC (Nipper Award, Rider 53 years younger than machine)
128	Steven Helm	1928 OK Supreme	300cc	VMC
128	Roly Tilman	1958 BMW R60	600cc	VMC
126	David Pitchford	1936 BSA B2	250cc	VMC

BRONZE AWARDS

114	Grant Bakewell	1928 OK Supreme	300cc	CMC
110	Erhard Langanke	1969 BMW R50/2 Combination		VMC
103	Trevor Ou Tim	1948 BSA B33	500cc	VMC

NON FINISHERS

174	Mike Milner-Smyth	1916 Triumph Junior	225cc	VMC
162	Les Sim	1920 Triumph Model H	500cc	VMC (Award for best period outfit)