

President's Report June 2021

The big event for this Club in the last few weeks was the Veteran only rally in Cowra over the Anzac weekend . A separate report is in this Drip Feed. A big thank you to Brian Dawes and his Cowra Ulysses members in providing backup and marshals

The Club stimulates restoring and riding of the oldest motorcycles. Those made before 1919. We had about 15 real veterans participating on the weekend. A few interstate regulars were missing due to Covid border closure fears. But the numbers attending must be only a fraction of the number of veteran bikes among our members.



Yes, I know it is a challenge to ride a veteran especially if the bike does not have a clutch nor gearbox. Our runs are setup and scheduled to suit these older bikes. Quiet roads, avoid steep hills, back up vehicle etc . Obviously we are all getting older and eventually one has to give up riding the Veteran. To push start the bike and then jump on is an art form of riding for those reasonably fit. It is also a test to the condition of the engine as a well setup unit will start easily. Properly setting up a Veteran and maintaining one to a high standard is half the battle. If run and jump becomes too hard, hopefully you can continue with a somewhat more modern model and the Club will continue to support you riding with us. Eventually one gets to the stage and you realise that riding the Veteran is now no longer for you. I always say : getting older is about slowly "handing in" one's abilities. A little bit of all sort over time. A little flexibility, strength, speed, memory etc.

There will be a time you should think about passing your treasured possession on to someone who would fix up the bike and start riding it again. Or when you have several consider passing some on. These are tough decisions. But would it be nice to see another person pick up your treasured bike and take it out with the Club. If you wait too long that decision might then not be yours.....

The legacy of the oldest motorcycles is enormous. And the interest they create with the public when riding them is great. It is a privilege to be the custodian over a number of years. But eventually it will be time to pass them on for someone else to enjoy.

Hans Sprangers

I ASKED AN EXPERT.....

By Antony Gullic.

I asked a fuel expert about modern fuels for veterans and this is what he sent me,. Some interesting points

My questions were

I have a number of early motorcycles that I use for vintage and veteran rallying and have been looking into the properties of modern fuels and how they affect the general running of the bikes. Most of these motrcycles are pre 1930 and go back to 1902. Their general specifications are:

Low compression = anywhere from 3:1 to 6:1

Single or twin cylinder Sidevalve intake and exhaust

Long stroke Max RPM 3,000

My thoughts are this:

High compression engines need high octane fuels, therefore it is logical that a low compression engine needs a low octane fuel. One of the reasons why these engines were low compression was that high octane fuel was not avaialable, in the day, if you wanted to run high octane they used methanol, which is of course a slow burning fuel.

What I have noticed is that some of these engines are quite difficult to start and will run hot. We have obvioulsy checked ignition timing, valve

timing, and the engines have reconditioned magnetos, putting out a healthy spark. My two thoughts are:

1. That the higher octane fuels need/like a higher compression as they are slow burning
2. Modern fuels are made for fuel injection and don't atomize as well with the venturi effect of a carburettor.

My thought was to get some 91 fuel (older fuels were somewhere between 70 - 80) and mix it with shellite, which I am told is a more pure petrol and low ocatne rated.

What I would like to know is

1. What is the octane rating of shellite
2. If I mix it with the 91 does the octane rating work proportionally e.g if the octane of shellite is 50 and i mix it 50:50 will that give me an octane of 71?

Any thoughts or advice would be greatly appreciated

HIS ANSWERS WERE

1. That the higher octane fuels need/like a higher compression as they are slow burning - I don't believe this is the case. Higher octane is only to prevent fuel igniting before the spark plug fires as the piston is compressing the air / fuel mix. So a high octane fuel in a low compression engine should make no difference to the engine. However, the composition of fuels changes as octane increases resulting in higher density fuels (high octane components are more dense) and so this can have impacts on how rich the air fuel mix is which can have impacts, like carbon deposits on spark plugs, in some engines

2. Modern fuels are made for fuel injection and don't atomize as well with the venturi effect of a carburettor. This isn't the case. The atomisation and evaporation of fuels in carburetted engines is controlled by the distillation and vapour pressure characteristics of the fuel. The more modern fuels are more tightly regulated than they were 20 years ago and so vary less from batch to batch. There is no issue in the market with any carburetted motors so if the carby and fuel jets are in good working order there should be no problem here.

As for blending Shellite and normal ulp together to try an achieve a lower

octane outcome. Tehoctane outcome of this is unpredictable and you could end up causing pinking / preignition and damage your engine. I can only advise against that. Shellite composition is variable and I would not be putting it in any engine I own. Save it for those old shellite pressure lamps or cleaning / degreasing parts.

My recommendation is check the spark plugs and make sure they are correctly gapped. Make sure the fuel you are using is fresh. Fuel left in part full petrol tanks ages and loses the volatile light ends (you know, the vapour you see coming out of the petrol tank when you fill it) and this makes for more difficult starting. Then get the engine going and adjust the air fuel screw to adjust the mix. If its running hot, try making the mix slightly richer and see how that goes as this may help achieve a cooler run for your engine and may help starting.

The difficulty in starting is most probably an spark issue or a fuel volatility issue but has nothing to do with the octane. I would recommend you stick to normal ULP 91 (the yellow handle) and then always wither keep the tank topped up full or empty it and the fuel lines before garaging for long periods. These machines are designed to be used regularly/frequently and get sulky if left stored for long periods. The fuel is designed to be used straight away and storage in a vehicle fuel tank and carby always sees evaporative losses and changes in performance.

PS Leave the bike dry (tank and carby drained) if you are going to leave it and not drive it at least once a week. Modern fuels have additives which leave residues if the fuel evaporates. This could build up in the carby jets blocking them and resulting in big droplets instead of a fine spray, giving rise to difficulty starting and rough running. The residues react with air and become insoluble in fuel so are difficult to remove if they develop (wash with fuel/shellite, then with warm water, then with WD40 to remove water is my recommendation for the jets). Best not to have fuel in the carby if the bike isnt used for long periods as these deposits have been known to form when fuel gradually evaporates from the carby jet tips.