

Cootamundra Ton Plus One Run: 18th Nov 2023 by Brad Martin

Approximately 60 rider enthusiasts, were lucky enough to find the time and get to this fantastic weekend run put on by the Cootamundra Antique Motor Club – it has now been going for the past three years, and retraces part of the route used by the Cootamundra Motor Cycle Club back in the 1920's. About 140 klms all up, via Harden, Young and then back to Coota.

The gathered machines at the Cootamundra showground for the 8.30am start included veterans (5), vintage (12), with the balance being a strong and mixed contingent of post vintage and post war bikes. The cut-off date for machine eligibility is 31st December 1955.

Some bikes fell into the post 1955 category, but these guys are local riders, and they offered their services as Route Marshalls, and this was very much appreciated by all those that attended.

All the entered machines are notable bikes in their own right, and the following list is an indication of some of the more spectacular entries, namely;

- A group of beautiful late 40's and early 50's AJS and Matchless bikes,
- A truly stunning Sunbeam 500, dating from 1939,
- A gorgeous, girder fork HRD 1000, and
- A particularly well presented BSA Blue Star 500 from the mid/late 30's

Also, riding in this event for the first time was a veteran Abington King Dick, a big veteran Indian Power Plus, and a few vintage AJS's, Sunbeams, Rudge, Nortons, Triumph, Matchless, Scott and an early BMW. The balance of the machines included Ariel, New Hudson, Douglas, BSA, Royal Enfield, Velocette, Harley Davidson, Indian and a sidecar Norton. Deepest apologies if I missed anyone.

We did have a failure or two along the way, but this is always the case with this many entries, and my thoughts go out to those guys based on my own breakdowns in both the last two events. Although trailer bound, I'm sure those guys enjoyed themselves all the same.

Even the evergreen Laurie Deller on his 1911 Norton had trouble, albeit minor and due to a simple air lock – the fuel cap O-ring had over-expanded in the hot Young sun which restricted the tank breathing on the trip back to Coota – a roadside stop and investigation for 2 mins and the mystery solved.



The absolutely stunning 1939 Sunbeam

Greg Blaides also had trouble with his big and very impressive Velocette, and on its first outing too. The machine is an SOHC 500, built to mirror the mid/late 1930's Works bikes (as ridden at the time by Les Archer and Ted Mellors). Sadly, the bike was over oiling and needed final setting and adjustment on jet-pressures and flow – so only minor stuff really.

Showing off to all and sundry was the remarkable and (almost) 91 years young Denis Fry who was in fine riding form on his Velocette. He was called to the stage at dinner by Mark Loiterton and told a great couple of tales around his IOM days in the early 1960's, the Continental Circus experiences throughout Europe and Australia's own Castrol Six Hour event – very well received and plenty of laughs as part of that.

The dinner event at the Coota RSL showed a full room and with possibly around 100 people seated. Our Guest Speaker Graham Snape gave a fantastic recount of his days in the motor racing fraternity (and those of his son) – mainly around designing mechanical work and then preparing special privateer machines for events such as Goodwood and Monte Carlo (to name a few). A very humble guy too, but one who has seen the echelons of historic motor racing and been one of its important participants.

Next year, the ride route is planned to go out towards Temora district and will include a new section of the ride across a part of the original route that hasn't yet been sampled in the previous events, so something to be looked forward to by all.

If I had one comment to make, I'd ask that a longer period of about 20 minutes (that's actually enforced) is given to the veterans to get away from each of the planned stops, and for all the machines that are post war to be the last group off. This really does give a better buffer for the earlier bikes and only adds a few minor minutes to the days riding for the later machines. Trouble is, it's a bit hard to hold back your ride when everyone is having such a good time and I totally understand that.

I'm sure my thoughts and sincere thanks to the CAMC will be endorsed by all those attending the Ton Plus One Run this year. Very much looking forward to making it again in 2024 for the Ton Plus Two Run.



*At Harden showground morning tea - four motorcycling mates
Denis Fry wearing the red hat, John Simpfendorfer in white overalls
standing beside Ken Robinson,
and Brad Martin kneeling.*

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