

ENTRY LIST ALREADY FULL FOR CENTENARY JD CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE RALLY

By Roger Houghton 27 November 2012

The maximum entry of 180 motorcycles that can be accepted for the 2013 centenary Johannesburg-Durban motorcycle rally was reached two months before the official close of entries on January 18, 2013. A reserve list has been drawn up and it already has the names of 10 would-be entrants on it.

“This is a record entry for this event and very heartening for the organising team,” said clerk of the course Pierre Cronje. “Not only is this a record for the annual DJ Rally, but arguably one of the largest entries for any single motor sport event in South Africa.

“What is amazing is the fact that only motorcycles made before 1937 are eligible to compete in the JD Rally in view of the fact that the last race between the two cities was staged in 1936 after which the authorities clamped down on racing on public roads in SA. The oldest motorcycle entered for next year’s rally is a 1908 Triumph, which will make it 105 years old when it starts the long journey to Durban.

“Motorcycles of this vintage are not easy to come by and it shows the enthusiasm for the classic motorcycle movement in South Africa that we have been able to attract almost 200 of these machines,” added Cronje.

One of the stalwarts of the commemorative DJ Rallies that have been held since 1970, Mike Milner-Smith, will not be participating in the centenary event as he died recently after a long illness. He had been chairman of the Vintage Motorcycle Club for the past 13 years, up to this year and was an enthusiastic and regular DJ competitor, usually riding an Excelsior Manxman.

The search for motorcycles that qualify to take part in the DJ Rally brings with it many human interest stories.

One of these involves Brian Hough, who has been involved with classic bikes since 1960 when he helped a friend restore a 1932 Excelsior Manxman. He then owned a 1941 5/7 Harley Davidson and a 1953 Ariel 350.

Hough has been a member of the Classic Motorcycle Club (CMC) since 2007 and turned the club’s newsletter into a thick, informative magazine when he was editor from 2008 to November 2012, so he is well steeped in the traditions of classic motorcycles.

He was loaned a 1932 Calthorpe Ivory by Clive Curry for the 2010 DJ Rally and completed the event. The bug had bitten and Brian was determined to find his own DJ motorcycle.

Having owned a 50cc NSU Quickly as his first powered two-wheeler, Hough was attracted to a 1928 NSU 501T that was up for sale for R25,000 in Queenstown. Then, having seen pictures of what he called a “basket case” he dropped his offer to R12,000 only to be told by the seller soon afterwards that he was no longer going to sell it.

A disappointed Hough resigned himself to the situation but his friends had other ideas. Unbeknown to Hough they had clubbed together and bought the motorcycle without his knowledge and handed it over in bits and pieces to the delighted new owner when he staged a big bash for his 70th birthday at the Radium Beer Hall in Johannesburg.



Pierre Cronje (left), the chairman of the Classic Motorcycle Club and clerk of the course of the 2013 JD Rally is one of the willing club members helping Brian Hough get his 1928 NSU restored and running so he can join the fully-subscribed field for the JD Rally which takes place from March 7-9 next year.

The project to restore the NSU to its former glory has already taken more than 18 months, with assistance from many CMC members. The NSU is now almost complete and the next challenge is to get it registered on the NATIS system so it can take its place as machine No. 71 at the start of the JD Rally at Carnival City on March 7.

This year the commemorative event will go from Johannesburg to Durban over three days. Usually the rally is run from Durban to Johannesburg over two days, but the centenary event will be run in the opposite direction as the original road race was staged between Johannesburg and Durban from 1913 to 1921. The races held between 1922 and 1936 went from Durban to Johannesburg.

The competitive section of the 2013 event will end in Hillcrest, KwaZulu-Natal, at noon on Saturday, March 9, before a mass ride to the ceremonial finish in Durban. There will be overnight stops in Newcastle and Nottingham Road.

The 2013 JD Rally, which has international status, is held under the auspices of the Southern African Veteran and Vintage Association (SAVVA) and promoted by the Vintage and Veteran Club (VVC).

For more information go to: www.djrun.co.za

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