

## Classic Racing at 100 Years Event at Levels this Labour Weekend By Robert Cochrane

Classes for classic, post classic and modern road race machinery are part of the programme for the Labour weekend South Canterbury Motorcycle Club Inc 100 year celebrations at Levels International Raceway. After the war the club looked at holding street races in Timaru but were turned down by the police and while the idea kept appearing in the AGM minutes for a few years, nothing came of it. In 1957 the club did get involved with the South Canterbury Car Club and their hosting of the 'Waimate 50' round the houses street races at the Waimate Centenary celebrations, and three motorcycle races were on the programme till the end of this circuit in the 1960's. In the 1960 race programme I noticed the entries of Wellingtonians, the late Bill Wetzel and also Ken Bain with his AJS 7R. When the SC car club secured land to build Levels the motorcycle club became involved and combined car-bike meetings became the norm, as they were at Ruapuna in Christchurch.

As Club Life member Rick Selfe the then club secretary in 1970 recalls, 'there weren't a lot of local racers then, all the Christchurch guys came down and bolstered the numbers with their race machines and our guys used to just take their street bikes out for a blast.' Local 17 year old Peter Waters purchased a new drum brake Triumph Trident in 1973 and started production racing the machine at Levels and Ruapuna for a couple of seasons before moving to a Z1 Kawasaki and tackling the Castrol 6hr and NZ GP and NZ production championships. The club was formed on September 24<sup>th</sup> 1909 at a meeting at 7.30pm in Budds Cafe in the Arcade with 15<sup>th</sup> members present. Four weeks later they held a hill climb at Grants Hill, Waimataita on October 21<sup>st</sup> with forty entrants, the club having fifty-two financial members by then. (membership subs were five shillings per year-approx \$0.50 in today's money).

During its one hundred years the club has run a wide variety of road, off-road, social, road and road circuit events including beach racing, grass & gravel hill climbs, miniature TT and grasstrack, mud scrambles, quarter mile grass, dirt track - speedway, flying and standing quarter-mile sprints, mile grasstrack, gymkana, 4,8 & 24 Hour reliability trials, observed trials, pillion trials, the Gold Leaf International Motocross Series and the International Marlboro Road Race Series. In many ways the club could be considered one of the true pioneer clubs of motorcycling in New Zealand. The 100 year weekend events include socials, a day rally for road riders with a mystery road trial in the region, classic and modern road racing at Levels, gravel hill climb at Taiko that will have an historic opening but is also aimed at four-wheelers and dirt bikes (or ride what ya brung), classic, twinshock and modern trials at Pleasant Point, a vintage, classic and modern motorcycle display in a marquee at Levels throughout the weekend, a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary classic scramble at Pleasant Point plus modern motocross, and a Gala Dinner on the Sunday night.

As current Club President Chris Broadhead says, "We are offering motorcyclists from throughout New Zealand the chance to join us for a weekend of celebration and participation, whether you are a modern road rider, a rally rider, classic or vintage road enthusiast, a modern or classic trials rider or motocrosser, a classic or modern road racer, a dirt rider or four wheeler who loves gravel roads, we have an event for each of you to participate in, plus great socials and a dinner with re-unions to wind up the weekend. Come and join us for a great weekend to mark the pioneer spirit of the club founders. They were riding motorcycle events while basic motorised cycles were still evolving into the earliest motorcycles. You have to take your hats off to these guys, especially when you consider their second event was a 24 hour trial from Timaru to Dunedin leaving at 9am on Xmas day 1909". More details at [www.100yearsouthcanterbury.co.nz](http://www.100yearsouthcanterbury.co.nz) with entry and registration forms.