

1889 Museum Tricycle – Report by Toby Sharp

The cycle is an 1889 Quadrant No. 8 Gentleman's tricycle, one of only a handful of survivors of a very interesting and high quality machine. It is largely unmolested and in working, but not useable order. There are two areas which require attention to make the cycle as it should be: The rims are post 1905 Westwood pneumatics (in obsolete sizes) and the saddle is a later, probably 1940s, probably Lycetts, replacement. The patina on the tricycle is generally good and should be left alone in my view. The wheels need correct rims, solid tyres and respoking. The saddle should be a Brooks B80, replicas may be available, from Canada, in due course.

I have had an auction estimate, as is and prior to inspection, from Peter Card of the Transport Collectors Auction of £4000 - £6000.

The 'finding' of this machine has generated quite a stir in among collectors and we should feel very proud that the club owns such a thing, and think carefully before deciding what to do with it, here is what I think:

There is no point in placing it at Moretonhampstead Motor Museum. It will be out of place in their collection, be of little interest to most visitors and be highly unlikely to generate interest in CTC activities in Devon. It is simply 'kicking then ball down the road'. I also dislike such things being left, unused, in museums. I am strongly against this course of (in)action.

My personal preference would be to use some of club funds to address the rims and saddle to make the cycle correct and rideable and then display and use the tricycle at cycling and other vintage transport events in Devon, and elsewhere. It will certainly generate interest and advertise CTC Devon. It is also an appreciating asset financially and is therefore a sensible use of funds. I am in the process of obtaining prices for the correct parts, as you will be able to imagine this is not totally straightforward and may take some time.

If there is no desire in the club to do this then we should sell. There is a lot of interest so I would suggest auction would be the thing, but perhaps we should wait until someone has an idea of what the funds generated should be spent on. In the hands of an enthusiast the Quadrant would be properly appreciated.

For the meantime the Tricycle is dry, safe and secure in my garage so there is no immediate need to shift it, in the unlikely event of something bad happening the committee might want to consider insurance, but the risk is very low! If anyone would like to come and view the tricycle then please contact me.

Toby Sharp
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