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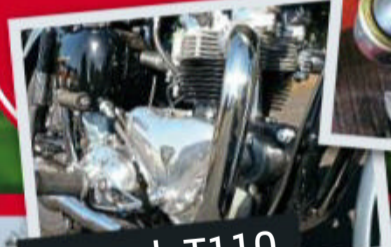
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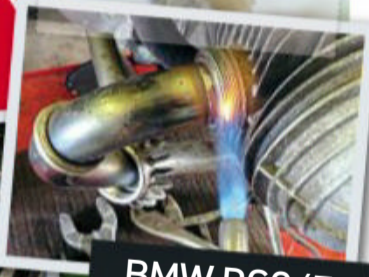
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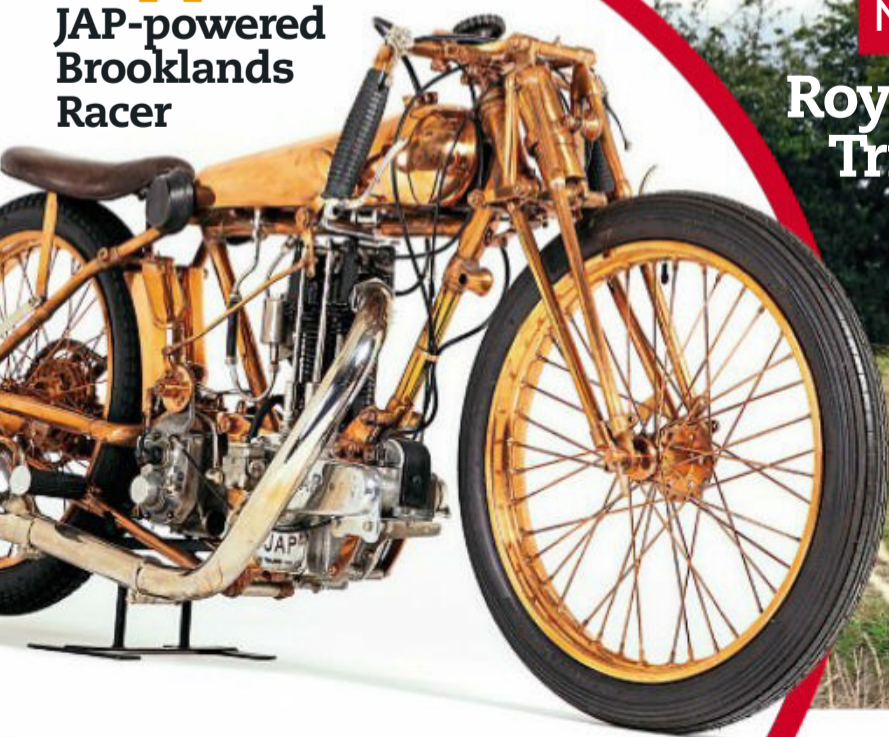
Triumph T110



BMW R60/5

Copperknob

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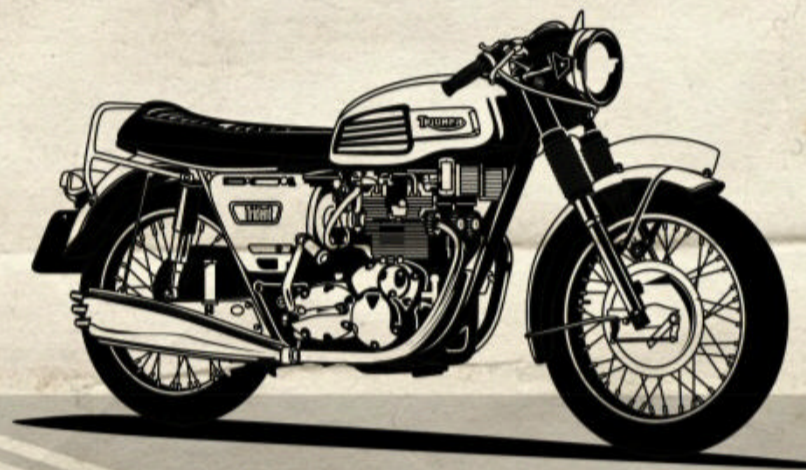
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Two-stroke, four-stroke, racing, road and electric!

I MUST TRY TO DO LESS BIKE-RELATED STUFF, I told myself this year. And, I've failed. There's just so much on! Take this weekend; Saturday was the CRMC racing at Snetterton, my local circuit – some great racing, many fantastic bikes and, of course, meeting up with old friends made for an exciting day. Where else do you see Eighties Japanese bikes racing one minute and Thirties Rudgets racing the next? And everyone is helping each other, no matter what the bike is.

Then, on Sunday, it was time to dress up for the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride, so another day, albeit slower, with yet more bikes and more fun and interesting riders. Old Nortons parked next to new, Hinkley Triumph owners chatting to Meriden owners – and all for a noble cause.

So, on Monday 'I must get on with work,' I thought. Reading emails, I then heard the rattle of the Series One Landy, announcing Neville had turned up. "Got to get that Benelli working boy," I was told. This Seventies 125 enduro is a family heirloom, part enduro, part child's plaything and part resto project. I knew the problem was electrical, but it's not modern enough or old enough to make sense to my simple mind – and I had spoken to too many people and got all confused about it. Neville had come to the same opinion – I'd not started with the basics.

After a clean tank, clean points, clean plug and rebuilt carb, the ring-a-ding-ding emanated from the pigshed! All it needed was a friend to help spot the obvious and give me a shove. Yes, it needs a little fettling, but now another shed-dwelling bike lives. And Neville, whose shed hosts a plethora of four-stroke loveliness, was quickly becoming more enamoured with this revvy little two-stroke. Thank you, Nev!

And there's another new bike – 'boy' has his own. After watching him get better and better on his bicycle, I bit the bullet and, for his fifth birthday, bought an electric Oset trials bike. He's taken to it like a duck to water and it's silent, it'll do miles on a charge and there's no hot exhaust if he tips off. Norwich Vikings will let it into their trials, so when he's torn up the garden enough, I'll see if he wants to compete – it's a cheap motorsport that is really friendly, isn't too dangerous and teaches balance, thought, planning and throttle control.

Ever-keen to keep boy practicing, I took him on it to watch the racing. Now if you were going to look for sarcastic comments about electric bikes, then a classic race meet should be it. But no – we could've been on George Brough's Old Bill and received fewer smiles, thumbs-ups and positive comments. It seems that us bikers just like the idea of new people

coming into the world we love – no matter how it's powered. Ironically, read Paul D'Orlean's column on page 70, which talks about just that and how long we have had electric motorcycles.

This all leads to the realisation that those who are attracted to motorbikes are a friendly, accommodating and accepting bunch! I'd love to tell you that we'll all get our rewards in time, but let's face it, who knows. Nevertheless it makes me smile. So testing this, we've a trio of cyclecars this month. Three-wheelers were an integral part of our world in the past and most buyers nowadays are bikers. I hope you enjoy them as much as I did.

Last month we spoke about the idea of starting an old bike-friendly listing in the mag, to help owners. We've had some replies, which is very encouraging, but please keep it up. If you know of any workshops that are happy to work on older bikes, then let us know at editor@classicbikeguide.com

Right, it's 18.59 and it's already dark, so I'm off for a cuppa and then get back in the shed.

Be good.

Matt Hull

editor@classicbikeguide.com



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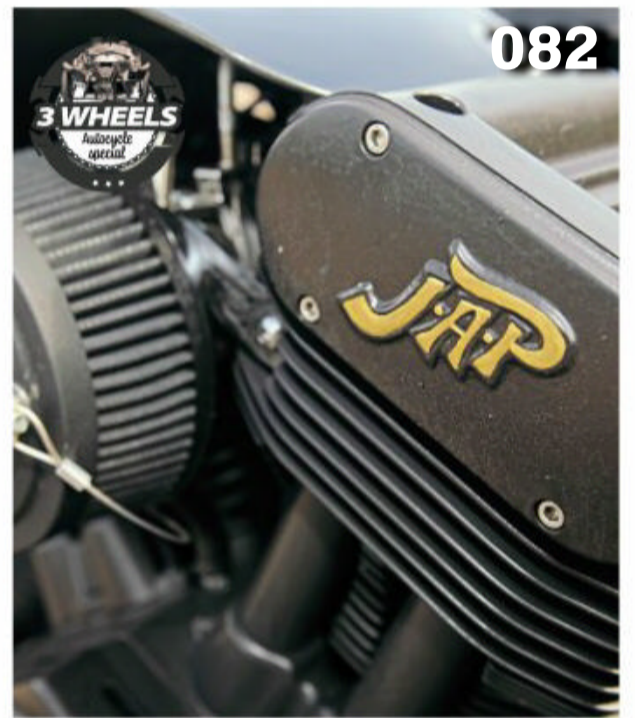
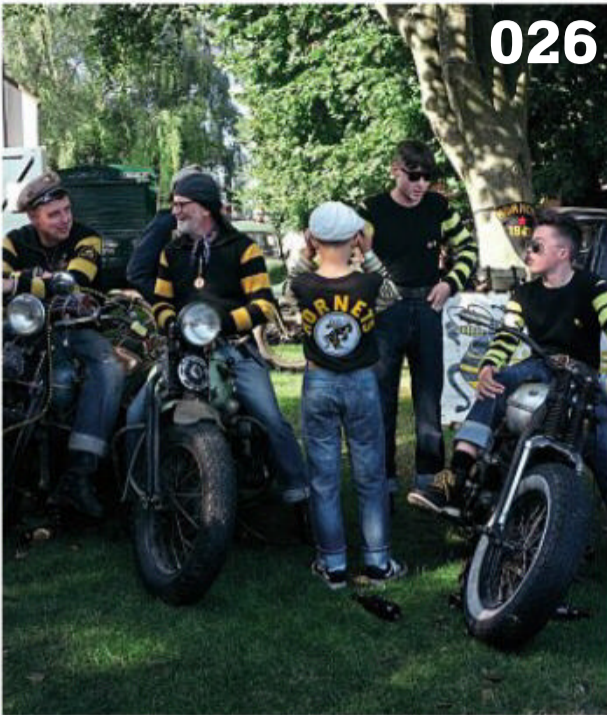
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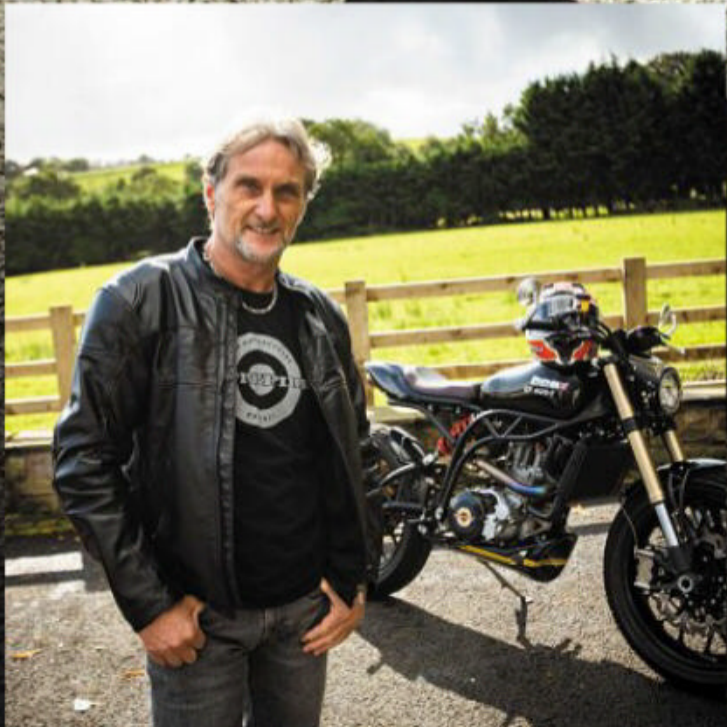
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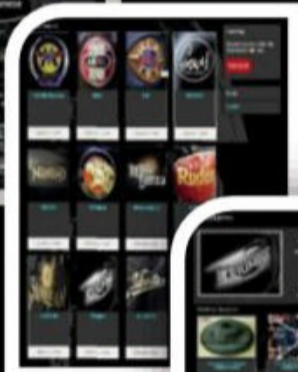
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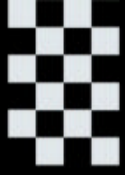
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■ FROM THE ARCHIVE

The world never stops changing, but I instantly found myself smiling at this photograph. My first job was as a petrol pump attendant, though by the 1980s a shirt and tie was not necessary and to be honest, I spent more time watching the mechanics and helping the MoT tester than serving the public...

But there is so much about this photo that tells us about change. We fill our own vehicles up, now. It's easier, but it means less jobs. We don't need to check our oil in between services because our vehicles are more reliable and use less, so oil pumps aren't needed. But fewer people know about how their vehicle works, and little things, like tyre pressures, get unnoticed. Life changes.

But what is the modern version of the Ariel Leader? This chap has smart trousers and shoes, with a screen that'll keep him out of the weather. A scooter would do similar, but without the handy built-in panniers and pothole friendly larger wheels. In our modern world, is there a replacement for the Leader in the bike world?

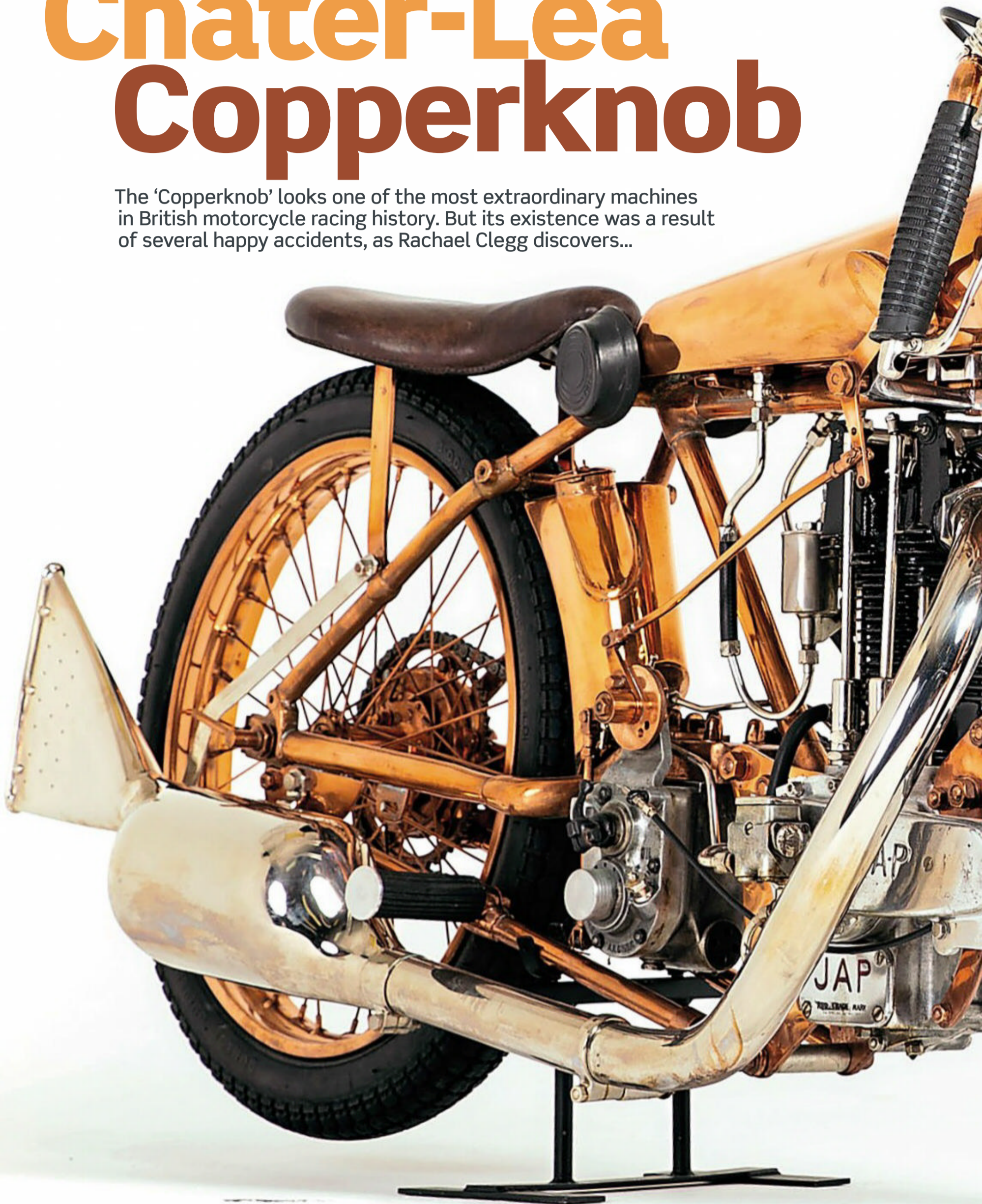
Matt **CBG**





Chater-Lea Copperknob

The 'Copperknob' looks one of the most extraordinary machines in British motorcycle racing history. But its existence was a result of several happy accidents, as Rachael Clegg discovers...

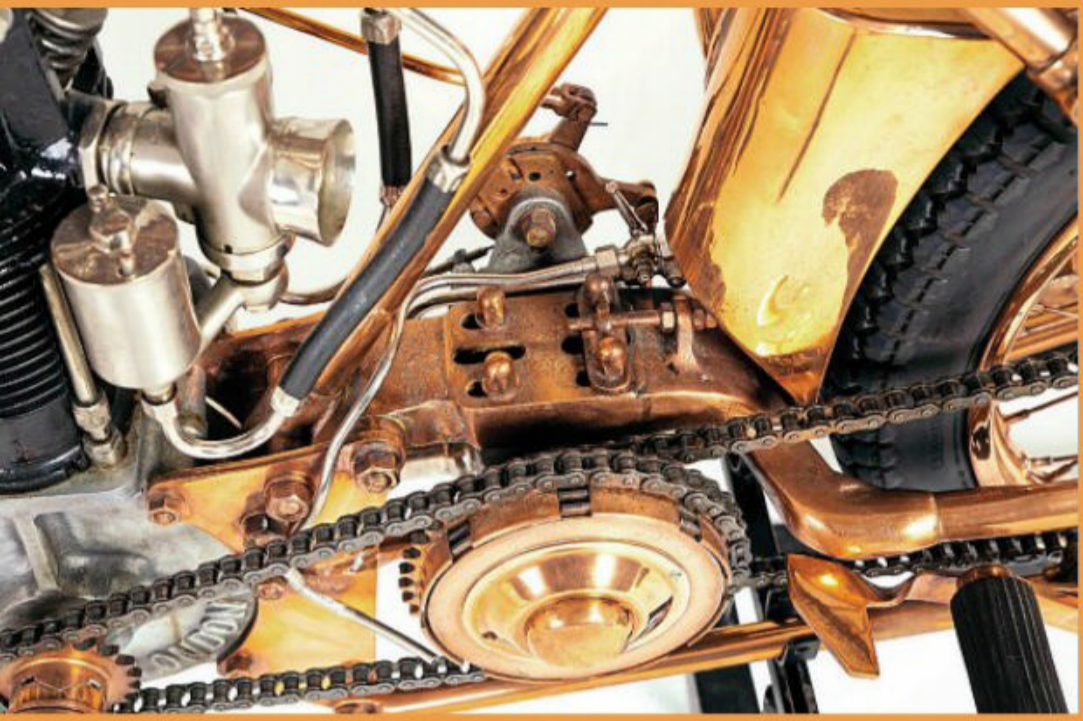




OF ALL THE MATERIALS ONE WOULD ASSOCIATE with a motorcycle, copper isn't one of them. Small change, yes. Wiring, yes. Piping, yes (even the ancient Egyptians had copper plumbing systems). But not motorcycles.

Yet, in the National Motorcycle Museum stands a machine whose lush plating glistens in Number 29 of the periodic table. And perhaps unsurprisingly, this machine – a Chater-Lea/JAP-engine hybrid – is a one-off hybrid that became known as the 'Copperknob'.

This edition of *Machines that Matter* explores the incidental history of the Copperknob – a machine whose existence is thanks to – of all things – a dare... ▶



In 1928 former civil servant and latter-day garage proprietor, Ben Bickell, was set a personal motorcycle challenge at a grasstrack. This singular event confirmed his love for speed and, needless to say, the 33-year-old was soon afflicted with the racing 'bug'. By the end of the year this one-off dare had become a serious hobby: Bickell had started making appearances at Brooklands and, by the end of the season, he was starting to turn heads in the racing scene. Clearly, Bickell was a natural and before the year was out he was mixing with the front-runners.

There was no turning back: the grasstrack challenge, along with his successful racing debut year, had whet his appetite and – as we will later discover – altered his fate. But more of that later. For now, the task at hand – for Ben Bickell at least – was to build his own racing machine and it was in this context that Bickell, along with his brother, Joe, concocted their one-off copper creation at the Bickell Bros garage they ran on Archer Road, Highgate. The pair took an ex-AA patrolman's Chater-Lea – a marque of notorious reliability and quality, which no doubt contributed to it being the AA's choice fleet machine – and re-hashed it to meet their own needs. Racing needs, that is.

To do this the Bickells retained the Chater-Lea's diamond frame and even kept the sidecar mounting lug, they but installed racing front forks and controllable friction damping. Then, they replaced the standard 545cc side-valve engine with a very powerful 487cc JAP. The brothers then added strengthening tubes, which ran from the rear spindle to the engine's mounting plates, removed the mudguards and installed a haemorrhoid-inducing unsprung saddle.

Then came the copper.

The Bickells wanted to base their machine on Bill Lacey's nickel-plated Grindley-Peerless – which featured as the CBG July edition of *Machines that Matter* – and had their own machine shipped off to the platers to be nickel-plated. But the plater was taking too long, and so the pair set about retrieving their Chater-Lea special – only to discover it was only at the copper stage of plating. Despite this, the brothers took the machine as it was, sticking with the copper finish

“But the plater was taking too long, and so the pair set about retrieving their Chater-Lea special - only to discover it was only at the copper stage of plating”



and inadvertently setting the bar for one of the most unusual motorcycles ever built.

And it was, of course, the copper finish that caught the crowd's eye when the Chater-Lea JAP – known as the Bickell JAP – made its debut at Brooklands for the first race of the season. So striking was the Bickell JAP Copperknob's appearance that *Motor Cycle* reported: "Hicks had things his own way from the outset. He rapidly drew away from L.J. Archer (New Imperial) and a Bickell (on an all copper-plated Chater-Lea)."

For the next meeting, *Motor Cycle* reported: "C.B. Bickell has carried the all-copper plating idea a stage beyond his Chater-Lea, for his crash helmet gleamed brightly with the same metallic hue. Of course, he was immediately greeted with 'Hello Copperknob' and 'Here comes the Golden Arrow.'"

Indeed, as if a machine entirely clad in copper wasn't enough – Ben Bickell had also thrown in protective gear into the mix. In doing so, he instigated a moniker that was quickly transferred from Ben to the bike – one that has lasted until this day.

But for all its glittering metallic hues, the Copperknob's 1929 season was not particularly successful. Despite this, however, the brothers persisted and the following year proved to be a dramatic turnaround – at Brooklands Ben Bickell recorded numerous wins and in one race he lapped at more than 112mph. Furthermore, Bickell came third in the BMCRC Grand Prix meeting, finished third in the 350cc GP and second in the 500cc race, all on a machine that had very little in the way of suspension, even when compared with its racing contemporaries.

So strong were Bickell's results that on August 21, 1930, *Motor Cycle* reported: "Every time the Chater-Lea came round the crowd murmured its appreciation. Optical illusions about speed are common at these Grand Prix meetings but there was no illusion about the fact that Bickell was gaining whole seconds on every lap. Each time he screamed into the turn, throwing his machine first left and then right with amazing quickness, and, indeed, seeming to take the whole obstacle without slackening speed."

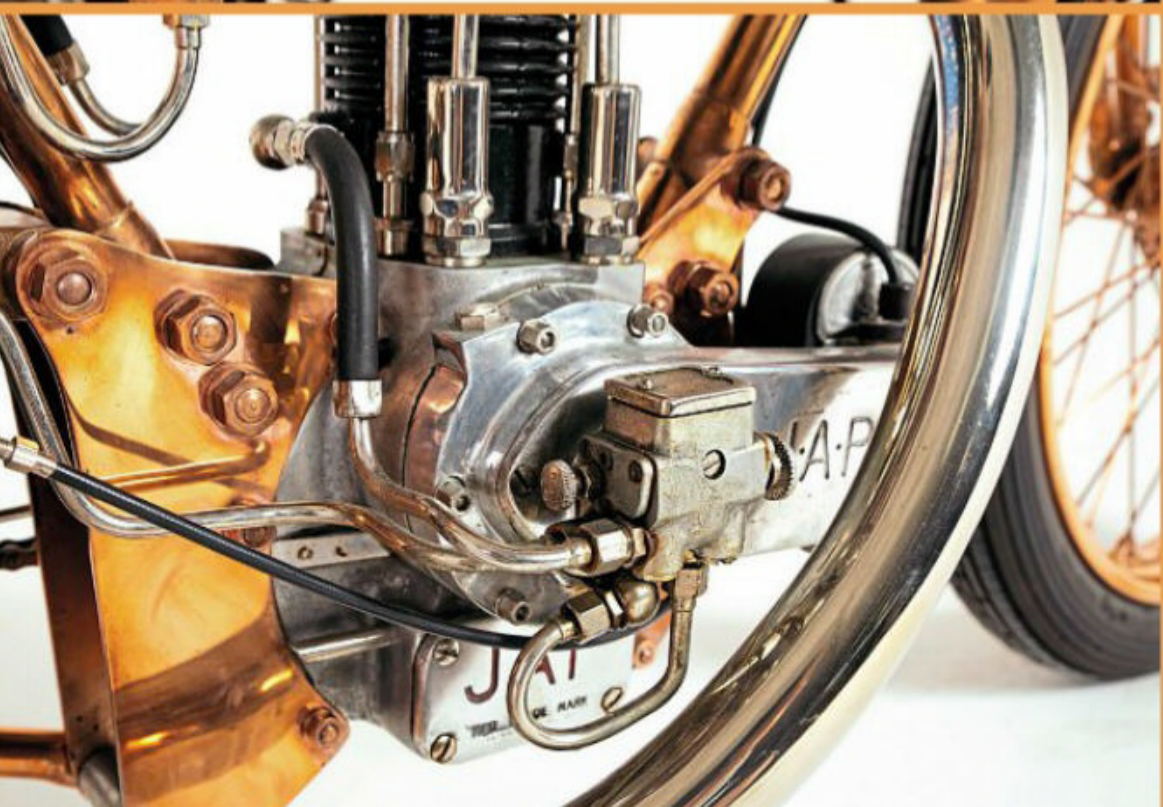
Later that year the brothers started experimenting with different engines. At the start of the season the pair installed a twin-cylinder JAP, but this proved to be a failure. So for the next year's season the brothers used a 350cc Chater-Lea engine, which won them the first race at Brooklands with a speed of 91.22mph.

Then, in April that same year, the brothers made ▶





**“So strong were Bickell’s results that on August 21, 1930, Motor Cycle reported:
“Every time the Chater-Lea came round the crowd murmured its appreciation”**



changes once again, this time installing a dirt-track JAP engine. But this time, they weren’t alone in their experimenting: several competitors had fitted the JAP dirt-bike power unit in order to compete in a special JAP-sponsored meeting at Brooklands.

Motor Cycle records the event as such: “Four out of the seven entries came to the line, and each machine was fitted with the new dirt-track engine. On this occasion the dirt-track cylinder barrels, with fins ground away to almost nothing, were, of course, out of the question. More or less normal barrels were used, but the small amount of head finning was noticeable.”

The report reads on: “Bickell’s speed, in spite of the adverse track conditions, was 93.97mph.” Put simply, the Copperknob – with Bickell in its saddle – was flying. In 1932 alone, Bickell won the Driscoll Cup Gold Star Scratch race on the Bickell-JAP, he broke his own record at Brooklands’ Mountain Circuit in the five-lap 500cc race and then he went on to win the famous Hutchinson Hundred, lapping consistently at more than 100mph. The latter victory was in spite of shockingly wet conditions and proved – somewhat inevitably – an immensely thrilling race.

Writing of the Hutchinson Hundred, Motor Cycle reported: “Bickell continued to streak round, lapping at 101mph, with an occasional wobble as he passed the Fork and (as he said afterwards) some of the most uncomfortable ‘broadside’ were where he was grass-cutting around the Byfleet banking.”

The report continues: “At 29 laps (eight laps to go) Bickell was about a quarter of a lap behind Baker (AJS). At 31 laps Bickell had caught the AJS and was in the lead; six more laps and the race would be his. As it turned out, he won at the remarkable average of 99.61mph – wetter than if he had been ducked in the Fork pond, shivering, but supremely happy, though a little disappointed that he had failed to top the hundred. A fine show.”

Bickell focused more on Ariels from 1932 onwards, opting only to ride Copperknob in 1936 while his Ariel

was in the workshop, ahead of the 1936 Ulster Grand Prix. The Copperknob – in spite of its relative maturity by this stage, was still finishing third and fourth at Brooklands.

But the Bickells' fate – both machine and rider – would be sealed at the Ulster GP later that year. Bickell had a fateful crash at Muckamore while making a sharp turn, as *Motor Cycle* reported: "His machine goes one way and himself another. E R Evans (Rudge) is just behind, and by some superhuman effort, gets through, but Bickell unfortunately has to go to hospital. Later it is reported that he is suffering from concussion. Still later it is learned that this Brooklands favourite is sinking, and that he has finally passed away."

The Copperknob seemed to vanish after the Bickell Brothers garage in Highgate was sold in the 1940s. Fortunately, however – it hadn't strayed far: it was rediscovered in 1950 at a garage in Edmonton. Following this it passed through several owners and among them was Sid King, who managed to rebuild the machine from its utterly dismantled state.

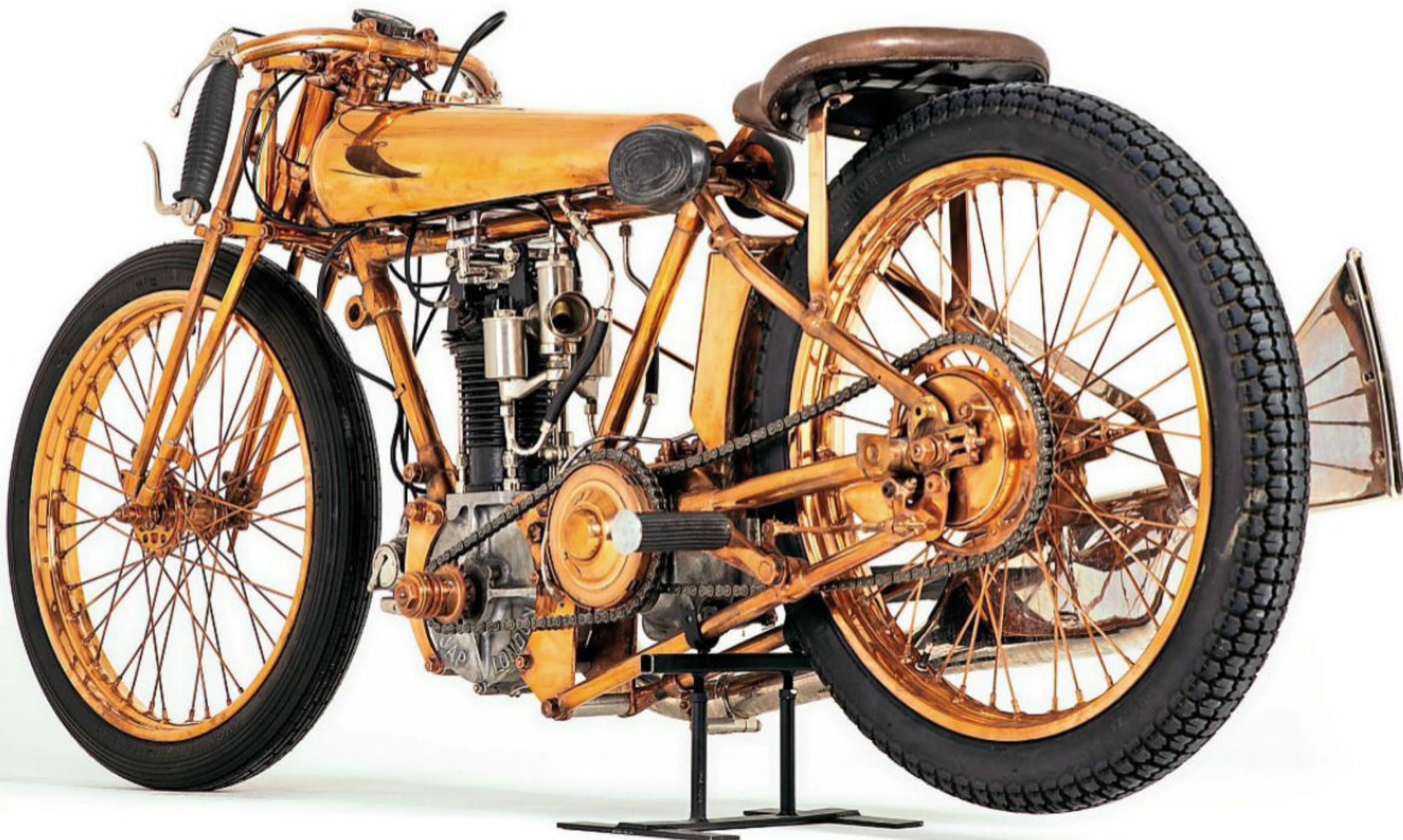
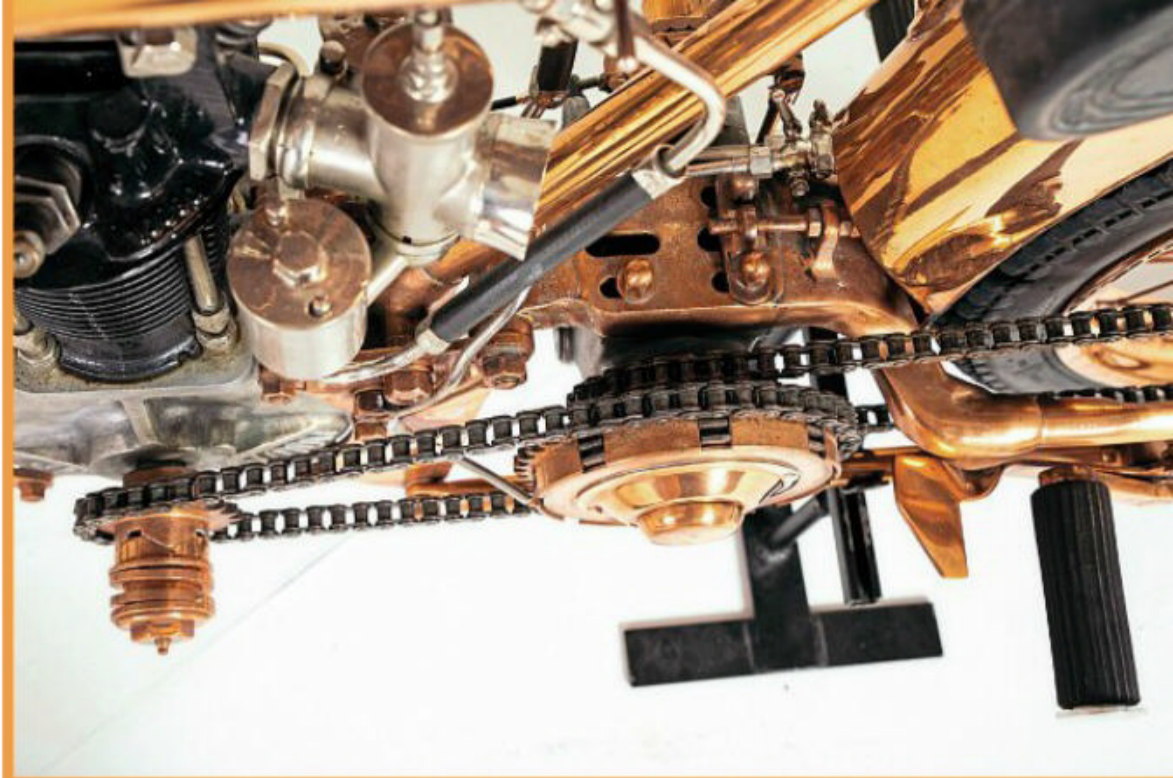
Eventually, following a near-total rebuild, the Copperknob was making reunion appearances at its spiritual home – Brooklands.

It was later acquired by the National Motorcycle Museum and – following further restoration work – now stands on display, gleaming.

Thank goodness that the nickel plater was so slack at his job – there would have been no 'Copperknob' otherwise. **CHG**

SPECIFICATION:

MAKE: Chater-Lea **MODEL:** Special (Bickell brothers)
ENGINE CAPACITY: 497cc JAP, among many others **FRAME:** Tubular diamond



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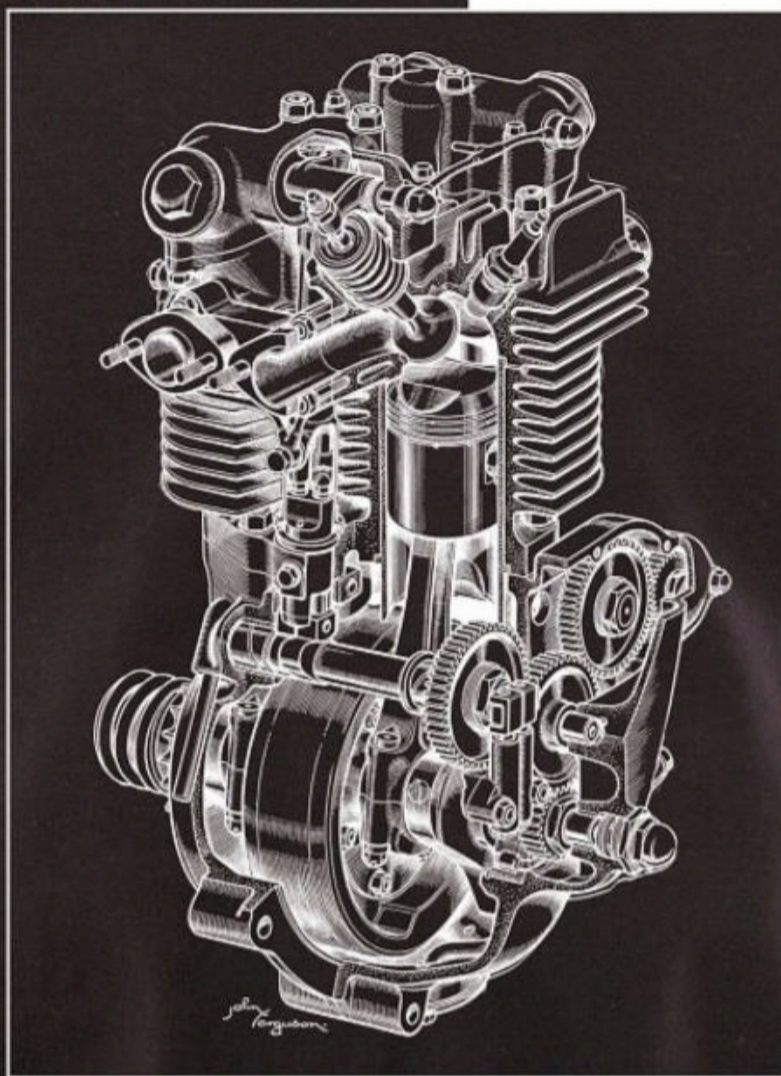
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Christmas Gift Guide

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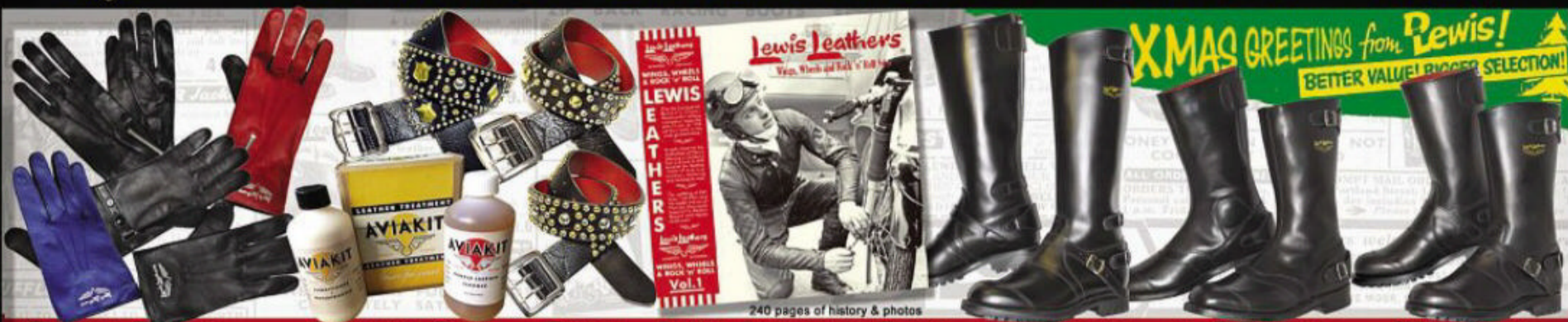
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COUNCIL CASH SQUEEZE FORCES MUSEUM CLOSURE

THE LONDON MOTORCYCLE MUSEUM has closed its doors for the last time.

Opened in 1999, the museum housed almost 200 bikes, with some dating back to 1907. The museum contained one of the most comprehensive collections of Meriden-built Triumphs in the world.

The museum was set up by Bill Crosby who also owned Reg Allen's, the legendary Triumph dealership that closed earlier this year. When it was established the museum had support from Ealing Council which allowed the use of the council-owned site at a low rent. The squeeze in local government funding has meant that the rent was massively hiked leaving the museum facing an annual £40,000 bill to pay. Efforts to crowdfund to raise the money were unsuccessful.

A museum spokesman said: "In May we celebrated 20 fulfilling years of sharing our rich and varied British motorcycle history and culture with visitors from around the globe. Our visitors' books are full of enthusiastic comments and encouragement but sadly those do not pay the bills and we are now at a point where we are not able to continue.

"We would like to whole heartedly thank all our dedicated volunteers over the years and everyone who has ever visited or expressed support."

More than 70 machines from the Crosby Collection, once resident at the museum, including the last Triumph Bonneville to leave Meriden and the fully faired TS8 prototype, went under the hammer at Bonham's Stafford auction last month.



GRAB A GLASSY CALENDAR

SUFFOLK BASED CLASSIC motorcycle dealer Andy Tiernan Classics has launched its classic calendar for 2020. Automotive artist Mike Harbar has created six pieces of artwork for the calendar. It unfolds, so that the beautiful machines illustrated each fill an entire A4 sheet. The lower part has individual days outlined, providing enough room to note down award ceremonies, hospital appointments, court appearances and other important engagements!

The six motorcycles in this year's calendar – two BSAs, a Levis, Vincent, Ariel and Brough Superior – are all beautifully drawn in pencil and painted in water colour. Proceeds go to the East Anglian Air Ambulance and the last calendar raised £1601.59 for this good cause. In the UK the calendar costs £10, including postage and packing. Buyers in the EU will pay £15 and in the rest of the world it costs £17. To acquire one of these calendars, visit www.andybuysbikes.com and click on the link to Andy's calendars.

Andy Tiernan



CLASSICS TAKE TO THE HILLS

THE BEAMISH TROPHY TRIAL, which covers 120 miles of northern dales in Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland, attracted 128 riders on classic off-rovers in September.

The event, run by South Durham Vintage Motorcycle Club, saw a wide range of steeds from Scotts to Suzukis tackle the route which includes some of the finest motorcycling roads in the country and some challenging off-road sections.

It was run originally for 27 years by The Friends of Beamish, then by Durham Classic Motorcycle Club from 1998 until the task was handed over to South Durham VMCC in 2008. Starting and finishing at The New Board Inn, Hill Top, Esh, Co. Durham

riders enjoyed warm sunshine and endured torrential downpours over the trial.

Of the 128 starters, all but five finished. A change of lunchstop over previous years necessitated a change of route dropping the tricky Studdon Hairpins in favour of some challenging green lanes and an observed section near the Cumbrian village of Garrigill.

The Robert Atkinson Cup for outstanding achievement was awarded to Steven Salvin, who despite the weather completed the run on the smallest machine entered – a 75cc Lambretta Vega. Next year's Beamish Trophy Trial will take place on Sunday, September 20.

Contact the organisers at beamishtt@live.co.uk for details of how to take part.



PHOTOGRAPHER: MARK WOJTECKI

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THUNDERBIRD TOPS BIG NIGHTS OUT

BIKE NIGHTS COME in all sizes, from gatherings in tiny pub car parks to big organised ride outs. But there aren't many as big, impressive or in such dramatic surroundings as the regular Tuesday night at Poole Quay... and they don't usually get organised by local authorities.

The night takes place every Tuesday from April to the end of September and on some nights more than 3000 machines and riders turn up during the summer in the Dorset seaside town.

The night is organised by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Tourism and has been supported by the local authority since 2002, but motorcyclists have been meeting on the Quayside for more than 30 years.

On sunny summer evenings the event is so popular they have to open an overspill venue nearby. The cost of marshalling and running the road closures needed is met by riders paying £1.50 per bike to attend or by buying a season-long armband at the beginning of the 26-week run. The event is fully marshalled by volunteers and council employees.

The backdrop of the quay and harbour offers a great location with a selection of waterside cafes, bars, restaurants and food kiosks, many with bike night specials on their menus. The end of the season was marked with the presentation of trophies to

the winners of the Bike of the Year contest, selected from the weekly winners of the popular Bike of the Night competition. Each week a different judge selects their favourite bike on display and winners are invited to return on the final night of the season to compete for Bike of the Year.

This winner is voted for by other riders, spectators and avid fans at the last gathering. First place this year went to Dave Northern, with his 1956 Triumph. Dave won £300, the Midge Holloway Trophy and an ultimate motorcycle care kit courtesy of Muc-Off.

Dave said: "I am delighted. There were some lovely bikes to choose from and it was a real surprise to win. The Triumph is a fantastic classic and I am really proud to own and ride it." Second place went to Philip Baker with his Indian Scout while third place went to another British classic, Richard Stephens' BSA Super Rocket.

Adrian Cormack from prize sponsor Coles Miller Solicitors said: "We're keen supporters of tourism and events in Poole. Bike of the Year is always a fabulous event. Massive congratulations to the worthy winners and huge thanks to everyone who takes part – they create truly superb displays every week." We want to hear about your local bike night, be it big or small. Email us with details to editor@classicbikeguide.co.uk



Richard Stephens - third place winner, Graham Richardson - BCP tourism liaison manager, Dave Northern - Bike of the Year winner, Bronte Cormack, Adrian Cormack of Coles Miller Solicitors and Philip Baker - second place winner.



VMCC JUMBLE SET FOR SHEPTON MALLET

WITH THE ADVENT of autumn, there's a prime destination coming up for any classic motorcycle fan – the Vintage Motor Cycle Club Autojumble at the Bath and West Showground in Somerset.

Organised by the Somerset section of the VMCC, the autojumble encompasses three large indoor halls and additional outdoor space, with approximately 500 stalls selling motorcycles, parts, spares, clothing, tools, and all manner of accessories both new and pre-loved. Entry per person is £3.

This is one of the best autojumbles in the country and is the perfect opportunity to spend a day chewing the fat with fellow enthusiasts, discussing the price of things and waving something oily at a stall holder and saying: "how much for this?" At least one member of the CBG team will be there, trying to offload his surplus spares and he promises to even mark some of it up with prices. The autojumble runs from 9.30am to 4pm.



END OF THE ROAD FOR CHARLIE'S?

A BIKE SHOP once hailed by Triumph as the world's number one spares dealer looks set to close down.

Charlie's Motorcycles in Eastville, Bristol, was established more than 60 years ago and is known by motorcyclists across the globe. Reg Hall set up Charlie's Motorcycles in 1957 and ran it until 1996. He owned it until his death last year.

Reg was presented with a plaque by Triumph in the 1980s proclaiming him "the world's number 1 spares dealer" and was made a Freeman of the City of London in 2005. In its heyday, the shop was supplying spares for British motorbikes to enthusiasts all over the world. Reg also developed the now well-known replaceable oil filter modification for the oil in frame Triumph and BSA models, which has been widely copied.

Charlie's mechanics were renowned for their skills and the shop had a contract to repair any Government-owned motorbike in the south of England.

Steve Smith, who runs Charlie's today, said following Reg's death ownership of the property passed to a distant relation and is now expected to be sold, forcing the closure of the shop. "We'll hang on in here as long as possible, but we might



have to close in a month or so. If we can find affordable alternative premises, we will try to carry on," he said.

KENT HURRICANE TRIBUTE TOPS THE BOBBER CHARTS

THE WINNER OF the first Triumph Bobber Build-Off Challenge harked back to the legendary Triumph X-75 Hurricane.

Laguna Ashford Triumph's entry, The Drag Racer, took the laurels for the winning build which was announced at the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride in London.

Triumph launched its first ever Build-Off at The Bike Shed show earlier this year. The competition attracted entries from 13 dealerships around the UK, who used a combination of off-the-shelf parts and hand-crafted engineering skills to design and personalise their Bonneville Bobbers.

A public vote saw the three finalists Pure Triumph Wellingborough, Peterborough Triumph and Laguna Ashford, enter into a head-to-head showdown, judged by an experienced panel, comprising of football legend Ian Wright, The Bike Shed's Dutch van Someren and Triumph's own chief product officer Steve Sargent.

"The whole silhouette just looks right from the first moment you see it, the retro paint creates a bodywork line that looks fresh out of a factory design studio. When you dig a little deeper behind the concept, the Bobber's surprising start-line performance and torque is more drag-bike, so creating a build with pretensions for increased performance feels more appropriate

than its competition," said Dutch.

Steve Sargent added: "The Laguna Drag Racer is a stunning piece of design and is probably the least expected way to customise the original bike. The bike has a stance and design language that emphasises the performance angle of the motorcycle and I am sure anyone who has ridden it can testify this is a bike that makes you smile when you open the throttle.

"What has really impressed me is how good it looks from every angle. The bodywork flows naturally from front to back and is incredibly well-executed. Dare I say it, I actually like it more than the original Hurricane that inspired it. Now I just need a chance to ride it."



Chris Bowering (left) and Jim Cook (right) of Laguna Ashford Triumph.

Win a Thunderbolt for £1!

IF YOU LIKE the idea of owning a BSA A65, as featured elsewhere in this magazine, you have just a few days to get the chance to pick one up for just £1. The BSA Owners' Club is offering a 1972 Oil in Frame Thunderbolt as its 2019 Raffle Prize.

This example has been owned by a club

member for the past 14 years and has been used as a very reliable, regular riding machine. The machine has had sensible upgrades to make it more suitable to today's road environment. A Devimead/SRM End feed conversion for crankshaft lubrication, the crankshaft balanced, in line oil filter,

uprated electrics, a new exhaust and a new paint job are just some of the improvements and goodies. To grab a raffle ticket, which cost £1 each, you have just a few days as the draw will be made at the BSAOC Members' Meeting at Long Compton on November 3. To get a ticket email natsec@bsaownersclub.co.uk



NETLEY WELCOMES CROSS CHANNEL VISITORS

THOUSANDS OF VISITORS from the UK and across Europe turned up at the recent Carole Nash Eurojumble in Hampshire.

One of the UK's biggest bike autojumbles, the EuroJumble is held at Netley Marsh near Southampton each September.

The jumble was a treasure trove of parts both common and obscure, classic projects and complete runners, tools and all manner of automobilia.

The proximity to the channel brought buyers and sellers across the briny, with at least one coach party making it from Sweden.

Among items on offer was a basketcase Ducati 750ss, all manner of British singles and twins and some rare French and German scooters. The cross-channel link also made it an ideal place to pick up parts for more obscure European makes that never made it to the UK when they were new.

The event is held on the same weekend as a large autojumble at the nearby Beaulieu Motor Museum, making a visit a must and was as much a social event as a buy and sell session with camping available for the hardy and the early rising bargain hunter.

Netley is organised by the same team that runs the Newark, Stratford and Kempton Park Jumbles. For details of forthcoming events visit www.mortonsevents.co.uk



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Where we've been

The Trip Out festival

A festival of old school-style choppers turns out to be one of the friendliest, most laid-back events of the year

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY MATT

LOVE CHOPPERS; THEIR STRANGE LOOKS and daring to be different: but they are not my thing, I'll admit. But what I do like is the work that goes into them, the different styles, the history and the fact that everyone in the Chopper scene is so damn friendly.

Run by Andy and Anna from Pacoima motorcycles, The Trip Out is held at Debach Airfield in Suffolk. It's a laid-back weekend where everyone is welcome. Set up your camp, then wander around the 'appropriate' bikes and cars gathered in the middle; and by appropriate I mean

there's no code, bikes are just chosen because they look good, give the right feel or the organisers just like them, so I was tickled my B31 ratter was allowed!

People dressed how they wished and there were plenty of old bikes to see. They came from far afield – riders from Switzerland, Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany turning up late into Friday night – on some rather uncomfortable-looking bikes – fair play! Plenty of American trucks, vans and cars also rocked the vibe, alongside VW campers too.



Above: My favourite, a 45

Below: Practical, no. Cool, yes. Choppers are what you want them to be





The control tower, like the rest of the museum, has all been restored by volunteers - a mammoth task appreciated by the festivalgoers



This Harley-Davidson was built for the festival



The bar is next to the bikes and in the evening the music and bands playing had different styles; it was good and varied. There's room to mingle, or you could head over to the 'build off' marquee, where some individuals and some companies had built bikes for the festival.

Saturday saw the excellent Second World War museum volunteers turn up and show folk round the old control tower and the various Nissan sheds with carefully documented displays - it's always good to be reminded what people went through for what we have today.

But it was the lack of commercialisation and the carefree, chilled out nature that I liked the most. The organisers laid on some cult movies and plenty of food stalls but didn't have something happening every two minutes; there were just a few traders and so the focus was on the bikes, maybe popping out for a ride to the coast, having fun and relaxing around old bikes with a beer. What a weekend. And now I want a chopper. See you next year.

For more information on next year's event, see thetripout.co.uk **CBG**



Appropriate bikes gather in the morning, but the Trip Out is not about rows - park it and leave it!



The Goodwood Revival 2019

Old cars and bikes on the south coast? Dressing up? Why not?

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT

HAVE TO SAY I'M NOT ONE TO LAVISH THE upper classes with praise in general, but boy, does the Duke of Richmond know how to put on a good show – the Revival, now in its 21st year, aims to relive the time when the circuit was first open, from 1948 until 1966, when it ceased holding races for safety reasons and was just used for testing.

It is said that the then Duke of Richmond and Gordon refused to ruin his circuit with steel barriers, but it opened again in 1998 when the current Duke, no doubt spurred on by the success of the Festival of Speed held in his back garden (it is said the first festival was held to raise funds to repair the roof of the house), worked with locals and the governing body to get racing back. This included a run-off, gravel traps and huge mounds to keep the noise down, but also to make spectator viewing much better.

The Revival is all about celebrating the old days, concentrating on the decades from the Forties to the Sixties. The public is encouraged to dress up in period costume, which adds a real feel to the atmosphere, as are the drivers, riders, mechanics and even the press. Actors are everywhere, as spivs, as washer women, nuns or even the Beatles and their hordes of girls following them, as was the case this year with the celebration of all things Mini.

Bikes play a minor fiddle compared to cars, so if you are a two-wheeled-only fan, then it's not worth going. But the racing has some big names on some of the top machines and a couple had literally just been unpacked from the Classic TT and the Lansdowne Cup front-runners were also there. BMW, as usual, brought over a full works effort, there were MVs, AJS, Norton and Matchless, and if you think

this was just a parade, just watch the Barry Sheene Memorial Race on the internet – the likes of Troy Corser, John McGuinness, James Hayden and even Dani Pedrosa don't do slow!

After I looked up and watched the Second World War fighter flypast, I walked past a row of more than 20 upright Bentleys in the wooden, period pit buildings. After a quick chat with some GPO telegram boys on their original Bantams, I went into the Earls Court motorshow, before looking round some astonishing racecars. As these D-type Jaguars, Ferraris and Maseratis were about to harness a top racing driver and be hurled from apex to apex, there was no issue about getting close to these innovative, period cars. And they're no replicas – these are the real thing, although like all competition cars, there's a little 'Trigger's broom' to them! ▶

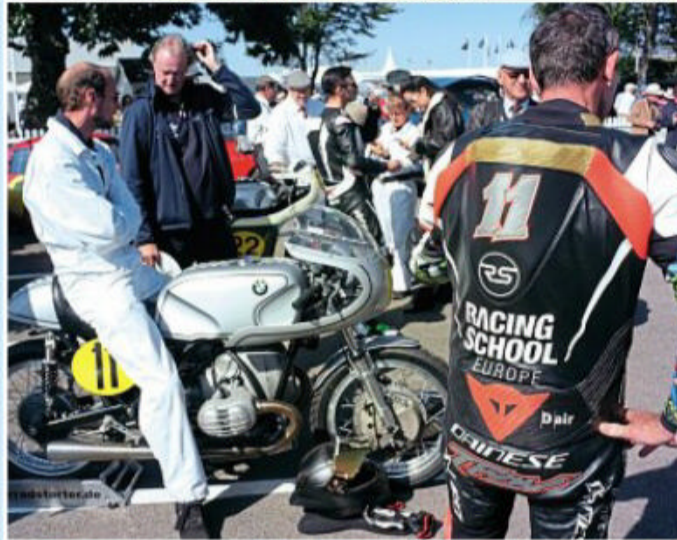
The Revival is all about celebrating the old days, concentrating on the decades from the Forties to the Sixties





Rockers fought mods outside the circuit, while you could have your haircut, shoes shined or moustache sorted if you wished. The racing was tremendous, even if you weren't watching – the noise of the bikes and cars are so different to normal and the wail of a V12, followed by a Manx or MV on full chat, all day, is sublime. Well, to me it is.

Is it expensive? Yes, but there are three days if you choose, you won't be bored and after the first day you'll see the effort put in. Book your accommodation early or take/borrow a caravan, plan your attire, and enjoy what has to be the closest weekend to petrolhead utopia. Just hope that it doesn't rain! **CBC**



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Distinguished Gentleman's Ride

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT

IN JUST SEVEN YEARS, THE DISTINGUISHED Gentleman's Ride has grown to be the largest one-day ride in the world.

Started in Australia by Mark Hawwa, the idea was for riders to join up on old-style bikes in their finest robes; all in the name of men's health charities. Since then, more than 700 rides are now organised, raising in excess of \$7 million for prostate cancer, suicide prevention and other great causes.

The weather had looked to be against the UK rides, but we joined the Bury St Edmunds ride and were blessed with a little sunshine and no rain until the end. So one could ride in one's best attire without looking like the proverbial drowned rat!

Organised by Bernard and Lexi Adams, around 110 bikes and outfits met at Wetherden Hall with tea and coffee laid on by Camrider training; local dealer Crazy Horse provided breakfast at their dealership and a support van for those in trouble.

Before the ride there was time to admire each other's steeds, before a shortened (due to the forecast) ride to another tea stop! Just this ride alone raised more than £18,000.

The sight of the riders in their finest togs and old-style bikes had people waiting on the side of the road to take photographs and wave. The mix of bikes and riders was also great to see. Look out for a Distinguished Ride near you next year – it's for a great cause. **CHG**



Two fine gentlemen with Enfield Bullet and Triumph Bobber



Crazy Horse back-up team



Smile!



The weather kept spirits high



Lexi and Bernard Adams, hosts and organisers of the Bury St Edmunds ride



Norfolk mafia got lost and ended up in Suffolk...



Graeme, Bernard and Alistair



Early Goldwing caught my eye



Graeme Whiting had some late nights to get his 650SS ready after it sprung a leak the week before



Products

Vintage Motor Brands 1:6th scale BSA DBD34 Gold Star Clubman and 1959 Triumph Bonneville

THERE ARE MODELS and then there are models. These two examples of a couple of the most legendary British bikes are incredible – seeing them I'm lost for words.

The attention to detail, the finish and the sheer size of them are beautiful and would look great in any display case or on any mantelpiece.

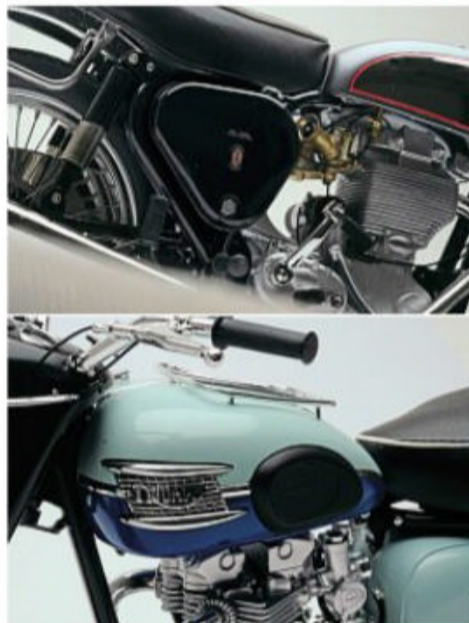
The number of spokes, type of brakes and fittings are correct; even the number of fins. To get the BSA just right, VMB went to Phil Pearson, Gold Star expert, who looked at the first few prototypes and offered advice and observations on how to get them exactly correct for the period. With the Triumph, Kev and Cliff at Ace Classics were

asked to review the model, making sure everything was as should be. In fact, it is based on a bike in their showroom, but with the European tank and handlebars fitted.

1:6th scale means these models are around 13 inches long – they're very imposing. They are made from resin, which is easier to use for limited-batch runs than die-cast. The hoses and cables are then put on after the paint is applied. The

wheels turn, but due to way they are built, the sidestand doesn't come down, so they are screwed to a bike stand for safety. At £300 each, you really don't want them falling over! Only limited numbers of these are being made, do if you're interested, have a look at the website.

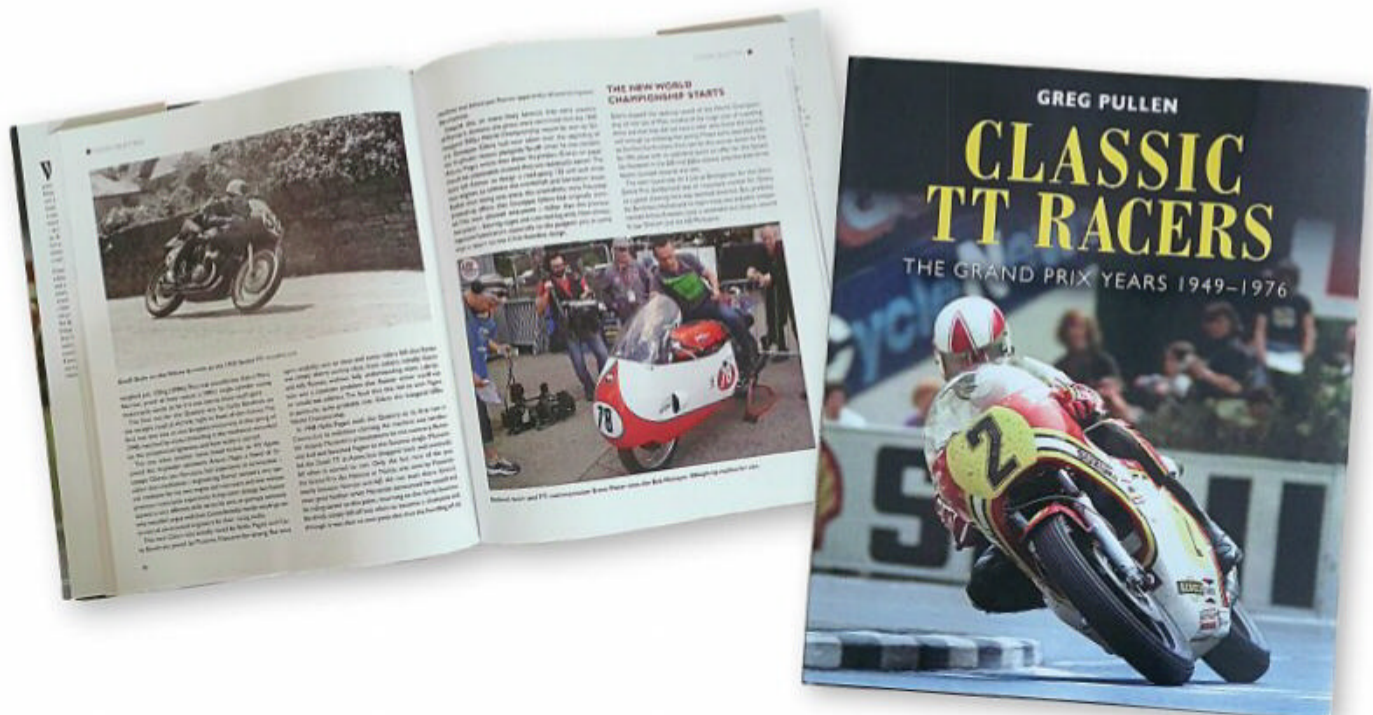
■ **£299.99**
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Classic TT racers – The Grand Prix years, 1949-1976

GREG PULLEN HAS come out with a lovely new book, covering a time when there may have been less innovation than the early years of the TT, but was still important to the manufacturers and of course, as a race in the GP championship, to the riders. It shows the constant evolution, tells of the battles and heads into the development of the bikes and engines. I thoroughly enjoyed dipping in and out of this book; indeed it lived in the kitchen for breakfast reading, the office for five minute screen breaks and even the toilet! (Sorry, Greg!) It's written with enough detail to keep the die-hard fans happy, but is accessible to those not so familiar. A great read with great photography.

■ **£25** ■ **crowood.com**



Sena Savage Bluetooth helmet

THIS HELMET IS a comfortable and well made – if basic looking – open face helmet. It comes with a long and short visor, though the three poppers can also hold a bubble visor or the like. But, and it's a big but, it has a Bluetooth 4.1 system built in with stereo speakers and microphone, giving you full use of your phone, sat nav or communication between rider and passenger, or rider to rider.

You set up the system via a phone app and I found it easy to set up to talk to my phone. The microphone is built into the top of the helmet, so you have no awkward booms sticking out, and as the control dial and button that you can use with gloves on are built in, there is no large box hanging off the side. The battery is located inside too, to the bottom of the rear of the helmet. There should be a size for you, with two shell sizes and fits from extra small to extra, extra large.

It works really well up to around 60mph, depending on the bike. I tried it on a faired bike and you could talk and hear clearly to 70mph, whereas on an unfaired Bonneville the clocks



seemed to create wind noise, so your height and bike will dictate this. But the battery easily lasted for several journeys totalling around eight to nine hours with some lengthy calls, plus music for longer periods. It's light, has an elegant, slim look and, for an open face helmet, is comfy and quiet. If you like to chat, or want to hear your sat nav, this is a great lid that doesn't look like you're connected.

■ Motohaus.com
■ £349.99

Weise ladies' Boston textile denim jeans – black



AS A LEARNER rider I have only worn a few varieties of one-piece, second-hand leathers and I don't pretend to know what is right or wrong for you.

On the other hand, I do know that a good pair of jeans is hard to come by. We all have a pair that fits perfectly, feels like another skin and if they got damaged beyond repair, we'd feel lost.

The Weise ladies' Boston textile jeans are a great alternative for anyone who doesn't want to wear leather but still wants protective clothing that could pass for normal jeans. This particular style is high-waisted with four deep pockets, aramid fibre lining at key locations and four

removable protective pads (two x hip and two x knee).

As with all motorcycle gear that isn't fitted leathers, there is a compromise. Simply increase the size so you can include your protective padding, keeping you secure and safe.

For me, I have found the sizing slightly generous, so if you are unsure on size, I'd recommend trying these on.

However, overall I find that these are a stylish alternative to what can be bulky leathers and so far, they are extremely comfortable. They are also available in blue.

Kirsty Garner

■ fowlers.co.uk
■ £69.98

34 Years in Hell, by Jamie Morgan Kane

THIS BIOGRAPHY WAS sent to me as the author is a British bike enthusiast and used to own Sunrise Cycles, a pre-1960 motorcycle shop; but it seems life had a different path for him.

Ending up in some of the nastiest prisons in the US, Jamie Morgan Kane's story is hard and at

times, dark. But it is interesting and, at heart, he is still a passionate biker like you and I.

I found it a good read, but there's little about bikes – treat it as an escape.

Matt Henshaw

■ mirrorbooks.co.uk
■ £8.99



Forcefield Pro shirt and pants

NO ONE INTENDS to crash, but most of us know that it hurts when we do. So, with my boy getting into trials and me wanting a go too, plus some dirt track racing coming up, I spoke to the guys at Forcefield body armour to see what they recommend.

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Level 2 is thicker than Level 1, so you can chop and change, while for trials, you can take some parts out, like the bum protection.

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■ Shirt £144.99, pants £169.99

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Thunderbolts AND LIGHTNINGS...

All hail BSA's finest - the mighty A65

WORDS BY OLI PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHIPPY 'PIN SHARP' WOOD

THE A65 WAS THE FLAGSHIP BSA BIKE FOR most of the 1960s. Along with its smaller sibling, the A50, they established a look that lasted for a decade with multiple models, states of tune and levels of equipment.

The engine, dubbed the 'power egg', was far more modern to look at than that of the pre-unit A10 and while those looking for up-to-date styling liked it, more traditional buyers were upset that it was so different to the earlier twins.

Motorcyclists have often been conservative when it comes to radical change, but there was no looking back with the styling, when other manufacturers preferred more gradual updates. The Americans, who BSA might have expected to welcome curves and clean lines, were also far from keen, describing the power plants as 'those watermelon engines'.

The move to a unit construction engine was a big one for BSA, and the look was an extension of that used on their C15 and B40 unit singles and which was originally based on the design Triumph used on their little Tiger Cub.

Apart from appearances, one big change for riders was the reversing of the gear shift. After years of BSA's one-up, three-down changes, the gearbox became one-down, three-up. Although considered a unit-construction engine, the gearbox was separate in the engine casings with its own oil supply.

A clever addition on the earlier engines, which was later discontinued, was the positioning of a pair of plugs under a pear-shaped plate on the primary drive cover. One plug allowed access to the clutch adjuster screw in the centre of the clutch pressure plate, while the other meant you could adjust the individual spring tensions on the clutch, and all without removing the primary chaincase. The cylinder bores were marginally undersquare, with a bore and stroke of 75mm by 74mm.

Under all the polished casings, the A65 followed the principles established by BSA with the A10. A 360-degree crankshaft was fitted, there was dry sump lubrication and valve operation was

conventional with a single camshaft mounted behind the cylinders.

The pushrods ran in a tunnel between those cylinders while the top end had an alloy head with much more substantial finning than the A10 and a one-piece alloy rocker cover. The design, with the gearbox and vertically split crankcase all as one unit, was intended to reduce oil leaks, as was the clever design of the top end. There are just three gaskets between the bottom barrel flange and the tappets. This compares to the 14 gaskets and seals on a Triumph unit engine, all of which could fail and spread Duckhams 20/50 all over your trousers.

BSA gave the bike coil ignition, an alternator and a triplex primary drive chain driving a four-speed gearbox, while a four-spring clutch ran in an oil bath.

WEAKNESSES

Although BSA had gone all out for modernity with the styling, they retained the use of a lot of metal on the first models, which were fitted with heavily valanced painted mudguards front and back, a headlamp nacelle and large metal side panels.

Today, any A65 that's still running will probably have been taken apart and put back together many times, so most of the weaknesses with the A65 design should have been sorted out. One was the alloy oil pump that would warp and fail to deliver enough pressure. The oil that did get through was sent to the big ends via the timing-side main bush and through the crankshaft by the overworked pump, against centrifugal force resulting in an under-oiled left big-end bearing with the result that the left-hand con rod could fail.

And then there was the infamous and possibly unfairly maligned timing side crankshaft bush. Originally the engine was fitted with a ball race bearing on the drive side, but this was replaced with a lipped roller main bearing. When subjected to serious high-speed running this could turn in its housing, loosen off and then the cage would start to fall apart. This then started the timing side plain bush to turn in its housing and fail. ▶



THE 'POWER EGG' – AN OWNER'S VIEWPOINT

We asked Brian Pollitt of the BSA Owners' Club the three most important questions you should ask about any old motorcycle. What's good about them, what's bad, and which one should we buy? The last answer may surprise you...

What's good about the A65, Brian?

"The A65 is a good, fairly reliable bike with a sturdy frame. It comes in many guises, so there is a model for everyone, from the day to day commuter to the 'tape up the glass' clubman's racer. It is easy to tune and uprate to whatever spec you desire. Despite what people say about the 'egg' engine it is a good-looking bike."

What's bad about the A65?

"The two main downsides are the vibration and the main bearing bush. The vibration can be dealt with by balancing the crank. It doesn't get rid of it, but the area of most vibration can be moved up or down the rev range, to where the bike is not revved so much. Or

you can buy an A50 which vibrates less. Many people run on about the bush, but change the oil regularly and fit a filter. If it is not thrashed, you can see up to 70,000 miles on a single bush. The alternative is to have an end feed conversion."

What's the best A65?

"I have ridden most of the range and have a very low mileage MKIII Spitfire which I use regularly. My preference and that of most others is that the later OIF models are the best. By that time most of the problems had been ironed out, if only they had done something about the Comical hub brakes. But that said, many people reckon with a bit of work, the brake can be made to perform well. My own A65 has had a lot of time spent on it by me, so the 190mm front brake works well and the carbs now work in synchronisation. It starts easily, ticks over and stops well. A couple of people who have ridden the bike, say it is the best A65 they have ridden, so really I should plump for that one."

WHAT IS IT?
BSA's last production twin

👍
GOOD POINTS?

A well looked after one offers good handling, a punchy engine and a smooth gearbox



BAD POINTS?

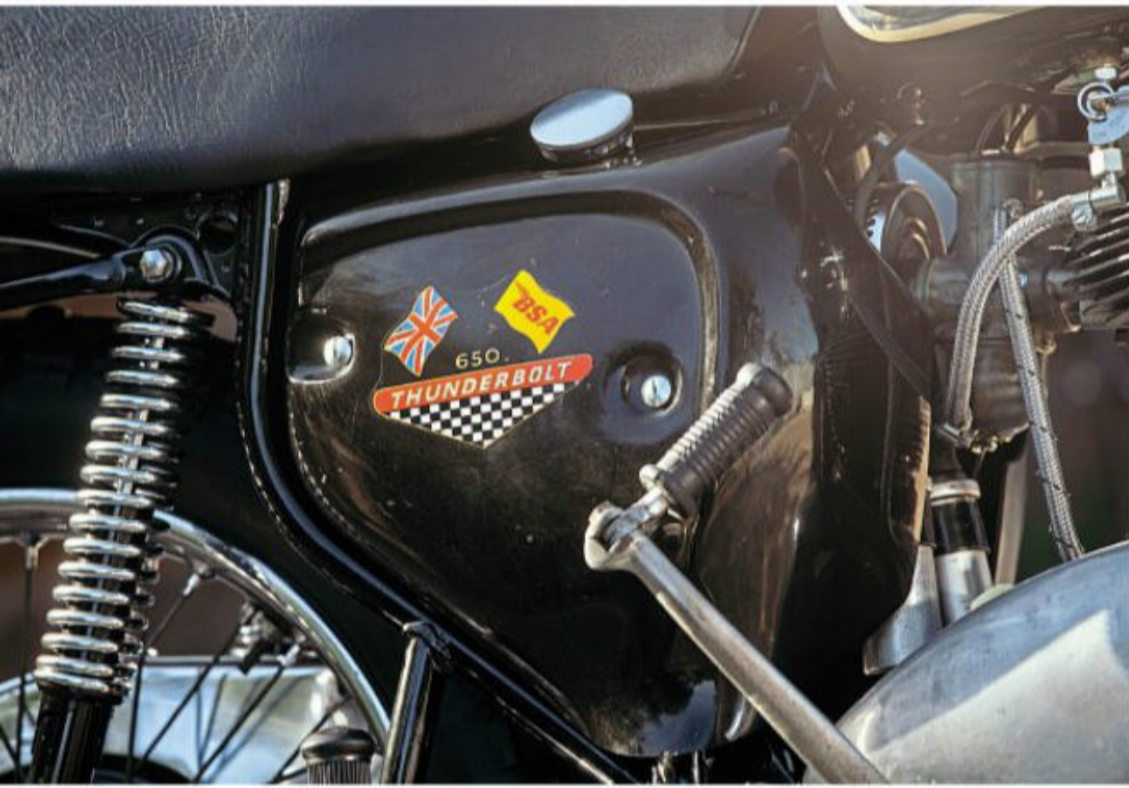
A few well publicised engine issues and some buzzy vibration on the twin carb machines

COST?

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Concours:
£8000



Buying guide



There were other issues with the A65 when it was new, such as badly designed Lucas points that would bounce at high speed, with the possibility of piston seizure as the timing went to heck. The clutch was fairly stiff and there was heavy primary chain wear. A 12v upgrade to the electrical system was available, but this originally required the installation of two 6v batteries, rather than a single 12v unit. And there were irritating design touches.

The screwheads on the side-panel retaining Oddie studs/Dzus fasteners were supposed to be undone by using a coin, but the crossheads weren't big enough for a coin bigger than a sixpence and a sixpence didn't produce enough purchase to undo them. The toolbox was too small for the tools provided. The A65s were thought of as vibratory and owners reported that the BSA factory simply weren't putting them together very well, which meant plenty of trips back to the dealership to have faults rectified.

Yet a well set-up late 1960s A65 is no slouch. BSA claimed their Spitfire variant was good for 120mph out of the crate. The original frame was similar to that used on the last A10s and was a solid double cradle affair fitted with Silentbloc swingarm bushes for most of the run. There were, at first, reasonable and then excellent brakes and decent two-way damped forks borrowed from Triumph were used from 1968. When the 'Oil in Frame' design arrived in 1971 that frame was designed for the BSA rather than for the Triumph twin that also used it, and it fitted the A65 rather better.

Finding an A65 is not hard to do, with plenty to choose from in all kinds of conditions and a variety of prices, though with the plethora of models, it's possibly best not to set your heart on one particular type of machine. They might not quite have Triumph's glamour, or Norton's class, but if you find a rare original, get a restored one, or build one yourself, they're still a route to Brit-twin heaven.

THE STAR TWIN

The first A65 from 1962 was branded as the Star Twin, a name that had first been used for the top of the range 1949 A7 and A10 models. On launch the Star Twin 650 came in polychromatic blue, or as an option in red or

SPECIFICATION: (1965 ROCKET)

ENGINE: Air-cooled ohv twin **BORE / STROKE:** 75mm x 74mm **CAPACITY:** 654cc
COMPRESSION: 9:1 **POWER:** 45bhp @ 6250rpm **LUBRICATION:** Dry sump **IGNITION:**
6v Lucas points **CARBURETTOR:** Amal Monobloc **TRANSMISSION:** Triplex chain
GEARBOX: Four-speed foot change **FRAME:** Twin downtube duplex cradle **FRONT
SUSPENSION:** Telescopic forks, hydraulic damping **REAR SUSPENSION:** Swinging
arm, twin Girling three position shocks **FRONT BRAKE:** 8in sls drum **REAR BRAKE:**
8in sls drum **TYRES:** 3.25 x 18 front 3.50 x18 rear **WHEELBASE:** 54in **GROUND
CLEARANCE:** 7in **SEAT HEIGHT:** 31.5 in **DRY WEIGHT:** 390lb **TOP SPEED:** 108mph



black. These first A65s had those big heavily valanced mudguards, headlamp nacelle and large metal side panels. It was smaller and lighter than the A10 and lacked the previous twin's presence. These A65s were also the first to become cheap enough for the café racer crowd, who would try to increase speed by reducing weight. They would chuck away mudguards, side panels and nacelles and fit cheap alloy guards, glass fibre racing tanks and headlights from Pride and Clarke and Vale Onslow. This in turn means that much of the original tinware was long ago cast into the builder's skip of time, making such items hard to come across today. There were three-way adjustable Girling shocks, a single Amal Monobloc carb hidden from view and from easy access by the side panels, forks from the A10, a steering damper and 18-inch wheels. It had a top speed of just over 100mph.

THE A65R ROCKET

In late 1963 BSA launched a sportier version of the A65, the A65R Rocket. This had more power, thanks to a lumpier camshaft, stiffer valve springs and a compression ratio that jumped from 7.5:1 to 9:1.

There was a beefier clutch to cope with the extra power, but just as important was the refreshing of the styling. The big metal fork shrouds were replaced by chromed cups and rubber gaiters, the mudguards were changed to chromed steel, the headlight nacelle was replaced by a chromed item, and you could specify the addition of a rev counter. This modification required the replacement of the timing case, the fitting of a different headlight and a mounting plate for the extra clock.

The Rocket had a lighter Siamesed exhaust system. The already big steel side panels got even bigger to accommodate the extra 6v battery in case the 12v system was fitted.

Road testers from *The Motor Cycle* clocked the A65R at 108mph in 1964, which wasn't quite as quick as its rivals, but was pretty good for a twin cylinder motorcycle with a single carb.

THE LIGHTNING AND LIGHTNING CLUBMAN

Speed was clearly the key when trying to flog the A65, and in October 1964 the A65L Lightning and proddy-racing Lightning Clubman arrived. These sporty twins came with light alloy cylinder heads with twin splayed inlet ports and a pair of Amal carbs with stylish chromed filters, the camshaft and exhaust from the Rocket and, on the Clubman, a close-ratio gearbox.

The Clubman had rearsets, a reversed gearshift pedal and a new camplate, so the one-down, three-up gearchange sequence remained the same. The front wheel grew to 19 inches on the ▶



Buying guide

front, and both tyres got fatter. The fitting of the extra carb meant the side panels got smaller, to allow the fitting of the air filters. These panels were a lighter glass fibre construction. The Lightning had straight bars and there were dropped bars on the Lightning Clubman, which produced 51bhp at 6750rpm and was blisteringly fast. Following the fashion of the times, US models were thought to be big city steeds and had smaller tanks than European models which were expected to cover greater distances and had a 3.5 gallon tank.

SPITFIRE II, THUNDERBOLTS AND HORNETS

1965 saw the arrival of an even more powerful A65, the Spitfire MkII special. There hadn't been an A65 Spitfire MkI, as a version of the old A10 had been given Spitfire badging in the 1950s. The A65 Spitfire took compression to 10:1, had a racing cam, two Amal Grand Prix racing carbs, alloy wheel rims and a bigger front brake. A two-gallon tank was fitted. There was a new off-road version too. The Hornet had the fire-breathing Spitfire engine with Monobloc rather than GP carbs, the Spitfire's tank, no lights, straight-through high-level exhaust pipes and yet fatter tyres. The basic single carb A65 got a new name, becoming the Thunderbolt, which was the cheapest BSA 650. Road tests suggested that in the real world it was the single-carb Thunderbolt that was the most usable A65.

The carbs on the sportier models got a cable each, the clutch became a three-spring, six-plate item (though this wasn't always the case. BSA often fitted whatever they had in the stores) while the forks were now those also fitted to the Victor single. The speedometer, which had previously been driven from the gearbox now operated with a cable stretching to the back wheel.

SPITFIRE III

In 1966 the Spitfire III was offered with a gorgeous five-gallon racing petrol tank as an option and in 1967 the engine got a new and rather stylish finned rocker cover which became a popular retrofit. Some changes to the way the ignition timing was set up were introduced, allowing more accurate strobe timing. The wheel at the





back grew to 4.00x18. A highly optimistic 150mph speedometer was fitted in a rubber cup to stop the buzzy BSA from shaking it to bits, and there were new cushioned handlebar grips to save the rider from similar treatment. The Spitfire got two of the spanking new Amal Concentric carbs that boosted power still further, to 55bhp. 1967 saw the Spitfire get another performance boost, now touching 56.5bhp at a tooth rattling 7200rpm. The superb Triumph TLS front brake was pressed into service on the Lightning and Spitfire, Lucas finally sorted out their dodgy points design and Amal Concentrics became common across the range. Oil supply to the rockers was improved. A significant style change arrived when BSA decided that in order to make production easier, all the twins would be built to American spec, with high bars and other previously US-only touches like side reflectors.

THE FIREBIRD AND THE LAST TRADITIONAL TWINS

In the autumn of 1968, the A65 lost its place at the top of BSAs product tree with the launch of the 750cc Rocket 3 triple. The Hornet was rebadged as the Firebird and given lights and silencers. The Spitfire was no longer needed as a sports flagship and was dropped, leaving the Thunderbolt and the Lightning carrying the twin-cylinder banner in the UK. The Firebird was officially made for export only, though a few escaped onto the home market. The Lightning's place as a performance mount was starting to fade, and road testers could only coax 104mph out of it. Build quality was slipping too, and these late Lightnings were prone to wearying vibration, blowing headlight bulbs and fractured brackets. At lower speeds however the Lightning and the Thunderbolt were comfortable beasts at 70-75 mph.

In 1969 some Firebird and the Lightning models got new petrol tanks, derived from those fitted to the smaller Victor and Starfire singles, with big knee cut outs and quick-fill caps. The 1970 production year saw changes to the engine. There were modifications to the crankshaft to reduce vibration, con rods were bigger and larger studs were used to secure the bottom of the cylinder barrel. There were cut outs above the studs to make access easier to nuts with a new design to help clamp everything together. Triumph's three ball cam ramp was adopted to operate the clutch and a new cast iron oil pump was fitted. Frame mods saw an inch added to the swing arm and the bushes became phosphor bronze.

OIL IN FRAME TWINS

In November 1970 BSA's last desperate dice were rolled, though they were thrown with such style and chutzpah you wouldn't have thought it was a company on the verge of collapse. The A65 got a major revamp. The engine remained virtually the same as in 1970, but everything else changed. A new, tall, dove grey frame carried the oil in the rear spine. Forks were of the modern Ceriani-style with alloy fork legs. Triumph's brake was ditched in favour of the conical hub, a brake that's great when properly set up and terrible the rest of the time. New, slender tanks were fitted, cast aluminium airboxes held the filters and the megaphone silencer arrived, except on the Firebird. There were indicators, decent lights, if the vibration didn't shatter the bulb filaments, and new, ugly and difficult to use Lucas switchgear. Build quality was occasionally poor when new and niggles ranging from collapsing headlight brackets to a frame tube/oil tank that could fracture at the base frustrated some buyers.

TWILIGHT OF THE TWINS

Sales collapsed in 1971, not least because BSA had spent so much time and money on failed projects like the Ariel 3 and the Fury 350 that they couldn't get the bikes they did make into the showrooms. There were also problems getting buyers to ride them out of those showrooms. Honda by now had launched the CB750 four and Yamaha the XS-1 650 twin in the US, which hit sales. The last, rather sad catalogue, arrived in 1972 and included the Rocket 3 and the B50 Gold Star, the single carb Thunderbolt and the twin-carb Lightning; two near-identical Oil in Frame bikes. These were fitted with a petrol tank that would, subtly modified, become the 'bread bin' fitted to the T140 Bonneville. BSA's engineers and American buyers hadn't quite given up with the 'power egg' and 200 new long-stroke 751cc engines were built mostly for export to the USA to be used in dirt track bikes. A handful arrived in UK shops as the A70, but while the creators had faith in the engine, the bankers didn't and after a messy and dubious attempt to save BSA failed, production ended for good.

THINKING OF BUYING ONE?

If you are searching for an A65, Mike Ives Motorcycles is a good place to start. Mike has a decent selection of the twins, and when we visited had a quartet for sale: a 1965 Rocket, a 1967 Thunderbolt with a Lightning head and two Amal Concentric carbs, a 1969 Thunderbolt, which, thanks to confusion over frame numbers ended up being registered as a 1962 model, and a 1972 Oil in Frame Lightning. Mike suggested that the best of the bunch was the 1967 Thunderbolt/Lightning and that's what we wheeled out. The first impressions were of the lines. The A65 is clean. There's nothing sticking out anywhere, no jagged edges to catch yourself on, no big flat bits of metal requiring a tortured riding position. With a US tank but UK bars the riding geometry is near perfect, and it's easy to paddle around. Controls are minimal. No choke levers are needed, and just two switches on the handlebars control the horn and



TOP: Thunderbolt

ABOVE: Later flat side panels

BELOW: Oli getting too attached to one of Mike Ives' bikes...

the dip switch, with the lights operated by a toggle switch on the headlight. After tickling both carbs, two kicks got things rolling, the first to get the fuel into the inlet tract, the second to bring it into life with a satisfying whoompf. Immediately apparent on the road were the lightness of the clutch and how slick the gearchange is. One down, then up all the way. The 1960s suspension copes well with the potholed Yorkshire roads and cornering is very much a case of point – lean it into things and give it a squirt and you're out the other side, looking for another decent curve to enjoy. The front brake, Triumph's TLS drum, is near perfect. I was momentarily confused by the speed of the thing, which appeared to leap up to 70 in rapid steps – it wasn't until later that I realised it had a kph speedometer, having been restored in Denmark.

Vibration is very different to the other 1960s and 70s twins I've ridden. There's nothing near to the rhythmic thumping of a Royal Enfield, or the grunty blast of a Triumph. Instead, the Lightning spec engine is a buzzy thing. While doing bend-swinging or hacking through traffic such things don't bother the rider much as they have more important things to think about, but I would imagine that on a long ride it would become wearisome. Power comes in at around 5000rpm, a lot higher than the A65's contemporaries, and this means buzziness is amplified. While this Lightning/Thunderbolt was a machine with presence, the fitting of the twin carb head makes it feel as if it's most at home on 100-mile



SPECIALISTS:

Mike Ives

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SRM Motorcycles

www.srmclassicbikes.
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Thanks go to Mike Ives,
Mick Roome, Brian
Pollitt and Bill Nelson

blasts on our better roads. For the high mileage rider planning days or weeks in the saddle, the single carb Thunderbolt, a smoother and more civilised mount, may be a wiser choice.

As well as the four A65s sitting alongside Mike's selection of Scotts, Panthers, Triumphs and rare French tiddlers, Mike has a further 23 A65s in various states of restoration in Denmark. And he has 70 engines he described as his hoard of "fool's gold", accumulated over the years, in between road racing his Matchless Seeley G50 and taking on continental bike trips.

A great A65, such as a restored twin-carb Spitfire won't cost more than £8000, while the Thunderbolt/Lightning hybrid seen here at Mike Ives Motorcycles is currently listed at £5750. You can pick up a decent runner for less than £5000 and if you want to trawl the classifieds you can pick up a roadworthy A65 for as little as £3500, which makes the A65 about the cheapest big British twin you can lay your hands on, and well worth considering.

TOP TIPS! IN THE WORKSHOP

Mick, the ace mechanic at Mike Ives Motorcycles was introduced as a man who knows all there is to know about A65s and Norton Commandos, and seemed the ideal chap to talk to about BSA's twin. Mick has a 1966 Spitfire which he's owned for decades although his Spitfire is fitted with the single carb head from the Thunderbolt.

"It came with it fitted so I ran it like that for 20 years. I swapped a Panther for it and was just going to keep it for a bit as a spare bike. But it's so reliable I've kept it ever since. It's got electronic ignition and with the single carb it is so much easier to keep it running smoothly.

"If you compare the A65 with the T140 Bonneville, there's a lot less maintenance needed to keep it on the road, especially on the top end. The issues with the timing side bush aren't as bad as people think. You can convert them, but if you do regular oil changes and use good quality oil, anyone using an A65 today isn't likely to experience problems.

"There's nothing wrong with the design, although it's not quite as easy as replacing a couple of bearings if it does go wrong. There were also a few issues in the past with people fitting poor quality pattern parts and below par bushes, that doesn't tend to happen today. You have to remember these bikes weren't pampered in their younger days, and owners would look after their bikes by themselves, so you don't know what one has gone through. The handling is fine, and the later twin leading shoe brake is the best brake they made. Fitting electronic ignition is a must. Setting the tappets is easy with that one-piece rocker cover and tappets with lock nut adjusters, as there is plenty of room to get at things. It's a lot easier than doing the tappets on the A10 where you really need two people and special tools to set the pushrods.

"For parts, scout autojumbles or go to reputable suppliers like SRM or Burton Bike Bits, especially for things like big end shells and sludge trap plugs. Cylinder heads are available, but barrels are harder to find in good condition. The barrels changed in 1970, so you need to make sure you are getting the right one. They can't be interchanged as the stud size and spacing is different. Steel side panels are difficult to find, and parts for the 1972/73 bikes are the hardest to get.

"Fitting a Boyer Power Box, which is an electronic device that does away with the need for a rectifier, capacitor and zener diode and tidies the wiring up is a good thing and use good quality silicone rubber to seal the push-in exhaust headers.

"External oil filter kits do give you a bit more oil capacity. I'm not a fan of anti-drain valves to stop wet sumping as they can cause all sort of problems. I'd rather fit the SRM sump plate with a magnetic drain plug and drain the oil out without disturbing the filter. Or you could just use it! If you can't, then definitely start it up every week for 10 minutes and keep everything circulating, even if you aren't going to ride it."

BELOW: Mike Ives, with
his Seeley-framed racer





NOT TEMPTED BY AN A65? WHY NOT TRY...

Triumph 650 Unit Twin

Whether a Bonneville or a TR6, a 1960s Triumph 650 is one of the prettiest motorcycles you can buy. The T120 Bonneville is the one with the style, but just as with the A65 the Thunderbolt is more useful than the Lightning, the TR6 is a better real-world mount than the T120. The single carb models are also cheaper, often to the tune of many thousands of pounds. The Triumph's don't handle quite as well as the BSA, but they're so splendid to look at your heart will leap each time you open the shed door.

Norton 650 twins

If handling is your bag, a Slimline Featherbed-framed Norton 650 will walk all over most of its rivals. The twin carb versions, the 650SS or 99SS, were uncompromisingly sporty, the 650SS being tested at 120mph in 1962, 10mph faster than the Bonneville tested the year before. It had twin Amal Monobloc carburetors, twin exhausts replaced an earlier two-into-one and the headlight nacelle was replaced with a separately mounted speedometer and tachometer. The Norton isn't as pretty as its rivals, and is a good bit heavier than the A65 but as a riding machine it's hard to beat. If you can find one, the last single carb Mercury is as good as it gets.

Royal Enfield 692/736cc twins

The Royal Enfield Constellation and Interceptor twins are big old bruisers and are all about power. The Connie is more mechanically suspect, and requires you to wrestle it along, while the Interceptor, despite putting up with Royal Enfield's somewhat arcane engineering practices, combines the Connie's brutality with more reliability and useability. Don't expect subtlety though. These twins are all or nothing. **CBG**



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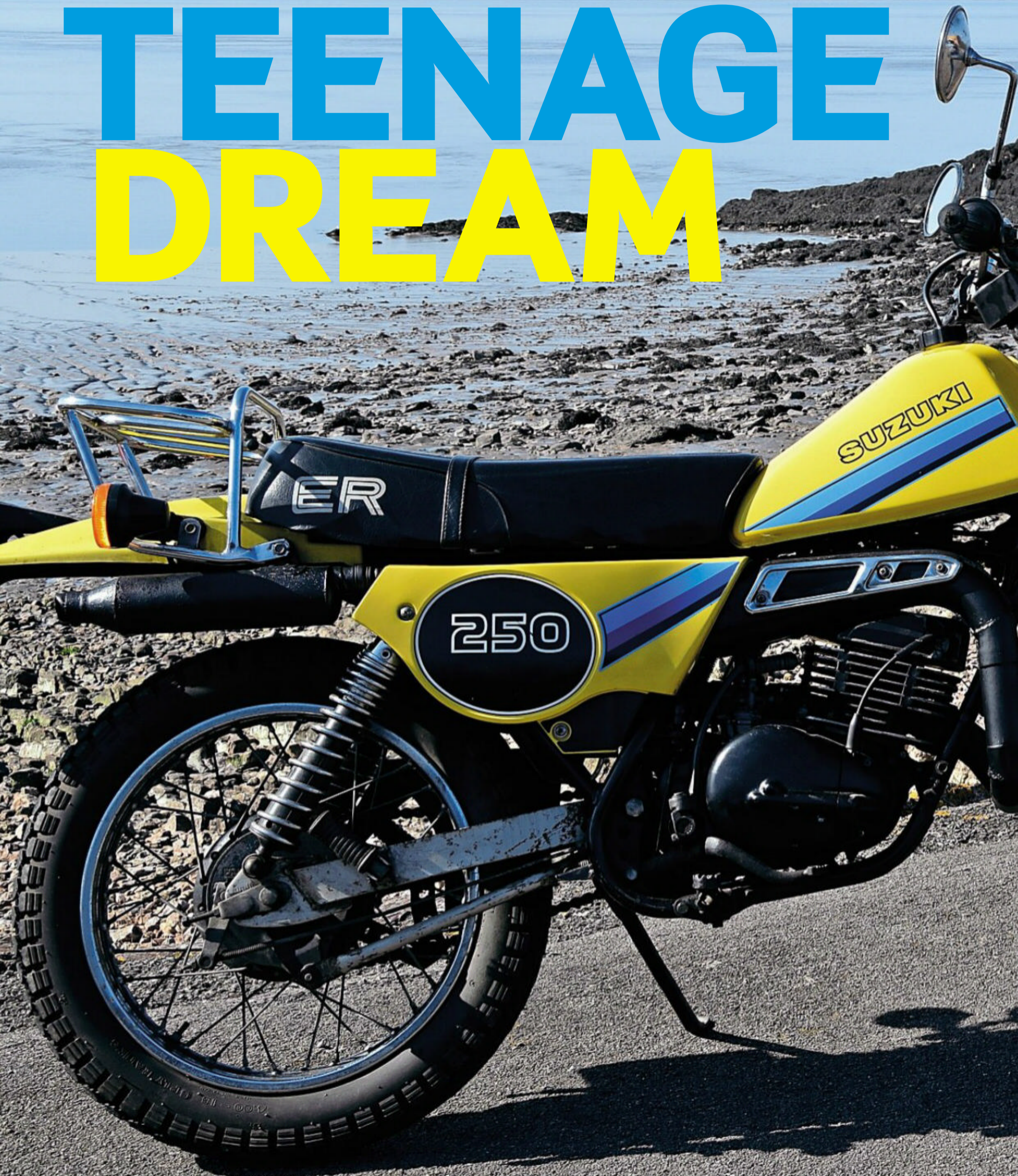
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SUZUKI TS250ER

TEENAGE DREAM





WORDS AND PICTURES: OLI

IT'S NEARLY 40 YEARS SINCE THE GOVERNMENT killed the UK market for the 250cc motorcycle. With a flood of scare-mongering tabloid stories about L-plated 17-year-olds piling their 100mph Yamaha 250LCs and Suzuki X7s into Morris Itals, there wasn't a lot else it could do. The human cost of these accidents wasn't something that could be ignored, and we were sometimes our own worst enemies.

For two decades we had been able to rock up at a dealer, sign the papers and take away a very silly motorcycle indeed, from a Kawasaki triple to a Benelli four. Then with our L-plates flapping in the breeze, our protective equipment limited to a Stadium open face and a pair of gloves from our mum's Freemans catalogue, an anorak, jeans and pair of boots, we were on the road. Those late 1970s 250s were capable creatures and you could cover sizeable distances on the things.

While quarter-litre street racers were all very well, they weren't the only option. There was another way to go, especially if you lived in the countryside; a biggish trail bike. You could hack it to work in the week and explore the byways at the weekend. If you were a real rebel, you might take your girlfriend on the back and go and explore some leafy glades, having first detached your red and white badges of shame, of course.

125 trail bikes were okay, and they often worked better than bigger trail bikes off road, but what you really wanted was a 250. There weren't a lot of trail bikes bigger than a 250, so



“The TS250 was a last gasp for the two-stroke trail bike”



owning one put you near the top of the tree. Yamaha and Suzuki built ridiculous life and limb-threatening 400cc two-strokes, but 250s were where it was at and they were popular partly because they weren't overshadowed by larger siblings. A 250 two-stroke trail bike was a demonstration of how tough you were, rather than a street 250 which showed how tough you wished you were. And the trail bikes could wheelie, too.

Suzuki had been ahead of the curve in two-stroke technology for some time, which was definitely not because it had nicked much of it when MZ racer Ernst Degner defected and went to work for the company in 1961. Suzuki had used this advanced two-stroke technology to build fast racers, road bikes and some proper sporting off-rovers, its range of competition moto-crossers in particular.

Its TS trail bike models were among the best of the bunch too. Suzuki started knocking them out in the late 1960s and

while the style might have changed over the next 15 years or so, it wasn't until the early 1980s that significant changes were made with the TS250ER.

The old TS250 had gone through a range of looks until the arrival of the ER versions. That early 1980s look hasn't aged as well as the earlier 250s, which went from curvy to angular in just a few years. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but the mid-70s TS with its tiny petrol tank and big chrome shield on the upswept silencer was arguably the best looking of the bunch. After that Suzuki went for straight lines and sharp angles. The TS250C, which came before the ER, used a frame that was close to identical to the earlier models and had an engine with origins in the 1960s. The ER changed most of that, though it still used an updated version of the old engine. An all-new frame came with some goodies that appeared to have been taken from Suzuki's competition motocrossers.

The TS250ER was a user-friendly motorcycle. The frame dipped in the middle and it was given a shallow and wide seat, which meant that the shorter riders could still try them out for size. The handlebars rose up above the tank and seat, which made for a comfortable riding position and meant standing on the pegs to try it out off-road was a possibility if you were daring enough.

The compact engine meant that the frame had no ground clearance problems despite its usefully low seat height. There were leading axle forks and a steel box-section swinging arm which Suzuki painted silver-grey to make sure you noticed it. The silver paint might have also persuaded the unaware onlooker that it was made of aluminium, until the paint flaked off at least. The rear end was controlled by big, chunky, inverted gas shocks with dual-rate springs providing a comfy ride. The brakes were small but, given that the TS250 only weighed about one pound per cc, there wasn't a lot to haul to a halt. There were huge motocross style fork gaiters to keep the mud off the stanchions and out of the oil seals. Other manufacturers might have gone for bare stanchions, but Suzuki's decision gave the TS more of a 'crosser look. The rear wheel was a QD item which was rare for the period.

Keeping muck off the rider was done with a bigish plastic front mudguard, big side panels and a broad rear mudguard.

Clocks were square, as was deemed fashionable at the time, and were surrounded by something close to being a





headlamp nacelle. That headlamp, a 6v 25/25w item, was largely useless after dark, and the low powered charging system meant the indicators struggled to function as the same time as the headlight and electronic ignition.

Another weak spot on the TS250, and indeed all the TS trail bikes, was the design of the exhaust pipe. To keep weight down Suzuki made it from very thin metal, put the tightest possible curve on it and tried to protect it from rot caused by road muck thrown up by the front wheel by just painting it black, a practice that didn't work and led to the pipe rusting out in short order.

The engine was a reed valve inducted single with tuning that was more about mild usable performance than out-and-out power. There was an alloy barrel and head and a great big 28mm Mikuni slide carburettor which pumped the fuel in through Suzuki's 'power reed' valve. The gearbox was a five-speed with a multiplate wet clutch and engine lubrication used Suzuki's CCI oil injection system. Power picked up at about 2500 revs in low gears, with a big wedge

coming in at 4000rpm, which could be a shock for the unwary. The size of the engine made it harder to trickle along off-road than a 125 or 175 of the era but the TS250 wasn't really designed for serious off-roading. On the road the extra capacity gave a bit more flexibility, though the off-road gearing meant that it was better at mid-range hooning about between 50-60mph than all out top end. As the engine speed approached the 7000rpm red line, the power died away.

The switchgear was of a good standard and efficient and the seat was lockable and had a built-in helmet lock. The engine oil filler was hidden under the seat where it was tamper-proof and easier to get at than earlier arrangements which had a cap sticking out of a side panel. There was a low oil level sight glass on the left-hand side panel. All things considered the TS is a member of a lost tribe of middleweightish two-stroke off roaders that we'll never see again, and the motorcycling world is poorer for it.

Simple and capable, these late 1970s and 80s bikes were fun with a capital F.



Why not try?



YAMAHA DT250

The DT250 had pretensions to being a proper off-roader and to this end it got a monoshock rear end in 1977. It was a lot less powerful than the TS, and despite only using one shock absorber, a huge unit that sits inside the top frame tube, the DT was marginally heavier. More of a trail bike than the TS, the DT250 had better gear ratios and was slightly better set up. It also had superior lights and a more powerful 6v generator. By the time the TS250ER came along it was getting a little long in the tooth, and Yamaha was diverting attention to its XT four-stroke singles.



HONDA XL250S

You might be surprised to learn that Honda's XL250 is not only lighter than the TS but more powerful and faster too. Powered by Honda's four-valve 250 single engine that was also used in the 250RS road bike, the XL was an excellent trail bike for the road and a great road bike on the dirt. It was fast, light and responsive. It was reliable too, until the top end went west, which was usually down to insufficient oil changes. The XL has a lot of fans. At the time it was popular with many, apart from those who felt only a two-stroke would do on the dirt.



TRIUMPH 250 TRAIL BLAZER

If you are looking for a 250cc trail bike and don't want to go Japanese the choice is limited. One to consider is the early 1970s Triumph Trail Blazer 250. Based on the BSA 250cc pushrod engine and also available with BSA badging, the Triumph version was one of the fastest accelerating 250s you could buy in 1972. The trail bike trim was more cosmetic than practical, but it could handle well and was useable up until you got it to 70mph, at which point it would start to shake itself to bits. It could be hard to start, which was problematic if you stalled it in the mud, and the over stressed engine was a little fragile, but the Trail Blazer was a good-looking motorcycle. Good ones are hard to find and they are holding their value well. If you can find a complete one at a good price, snap it up, but be aware that some components are hard to find.

Modern middleweight trail bikes tend not to be as dual-purpose, and advances in tech and increasingly stringent emissions regulations have strangled the raw nature of the breed.

The TS250 was a last gasp for the two-stroke trail bike. The Californians were consigning the two-stroke and its smoky emissions to the scrap bin of history in the late 1970s and manufacturers were building new lightweight four-stroke singles to replace them. These lacked the all-round blue-smoke trailing lunacy of their older cousins and by the time the four-stroke 250 was ready the UK government had killed the 250 by condemning L-plated teenagers to 12bhp of 125cc power until they passed their tests. The death of the 250 saw an era of teenage freedom come to an end.

A TS250 REBORN

GARETH LLOYD'S TS250ER is one of those bikes you dream about finding.

The ER was registered in Bristol in 1982 and has a genuine 11,000 miles on the clock. The first owner bought it from city dealership APS and part-exchanged it the following year at Fowlers Motorcycles, where it was bought by a firefighter, who rode it periodically until 1993, when the piston seized due

WHAT IS IT?

A funky 250cc trail bike



GOOD POINTS?

They're smart, do well on- and off-road and they are simple to look after.



BAD POINTS?

The looks haven't aged well, and they might have had a hard life.

COST?

Basketcase/project:

£500-£1500

Useable runner:

£1500-£2500

Concours:

£3000-£4000

to lack of use and it was parked up. In 1995 the owner decided to emigrate to Spain, and offered it to Gareth, a fellow firefighter, who can't remember exactly how much he paid for it: "I don't think it was a lot," he says.

Gareth put it in a shed and left it there until 2018, untouched, when he decided it was time to drag it out and get it back on the road.

The cylinder head was removed, and the piston whacked with a big hammer until it came free. Remarkably the bores were still in good condition and largely unworn, so Gareth got hold of a three-stone barrel honing tool, cleaned up the barrel and bought a standard replacement NOS piston and ring set from Fowlers, who still had them in stock. The carb was sent for ultrasonic cleaning and a new gasket set was also acquired. There was a new fuel tap and choke lever too. Gareth bolted it all back together, checked the oil pump settings, refitted the carb, changed the two-stroke oil for Silkolene Competition lube, replaced the gear box oil, adjusted the chain, fitted a new battery, and it started third kick.

The exhaust on the TS was in good condition, but realising how expensive replacements are, Gareth got his hands on a battered and holey replacement and found a talented welder to build it by fabricating a new set of bends. This was fitted to keep the original



SPECIFICATION TS250ER

ENGINE: 246cc air-cooled single-cylinder reed valve two-stroke **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 5.9:1
POWER: 23bhp @ 6,000rpm **GEARBOX:** 5-speed **FINAL DRIVE:** Chain **FRAME:** Steel-tubed double cradle **SUSPENSION:** 34mm telescopic forks, twin shock rear **BRAKES:** 150mm single leading shoe drum, 150mm single leading shoe drum **TYRES:** 3.00x21 4.60x18 **SEAT HEIGHT:** 32.5in/825mm **WHEELBASE:** 55ins/1401mm **GROUND CLEARANCE:** 10ins/254mm **DRY WEIGHT:** 267lb 121kg **FUEL CAPACITY:** 2.2gallons/10 litres **TOP SPEED:** 80mph

in the best possible condition. It's not immediately obvious it's been hacked about and while it doesn't quite have the finish of the original it functions well and has preserved the original for posterity.

The bike came with the original tool kit, service book from APS Motorcycles plus a number of old MOTs and brochure of the Suzuki range from 1982. The mirrors still have the factory plastic covering on.

The 6v electrics aren't perfect. "The indicators flash three times and stop," says Gareth. This is not a major issue as the electronic ignition system can function without the battery anyway and the TS is rarely used after dark. The tyres are the same as those fitted when the bike arrived in his care. It's running the original chain and sprockets and original shock absorbers. The bodywork is untouched.

The bike went straight through the MOT last year, with no advisories, so there was nothing to do but take it on the road – in this case to the Isle of Man Classic TT where it drew a lot of attention. "I did two or three laps including a day trip to the Jurby festival and some light trail riding across the island. The bike has done around 400 miles since the rebuild and MOT and is going well. It's a great ride and takes me back to being a 17-year-old and always wanting one."

The temptation to restore it rather than retaining its original patina has been avoided. "I put it back on the road to ride it, not look at it," says Gareth. There's no better reason to put a classic on the road. **CBG**

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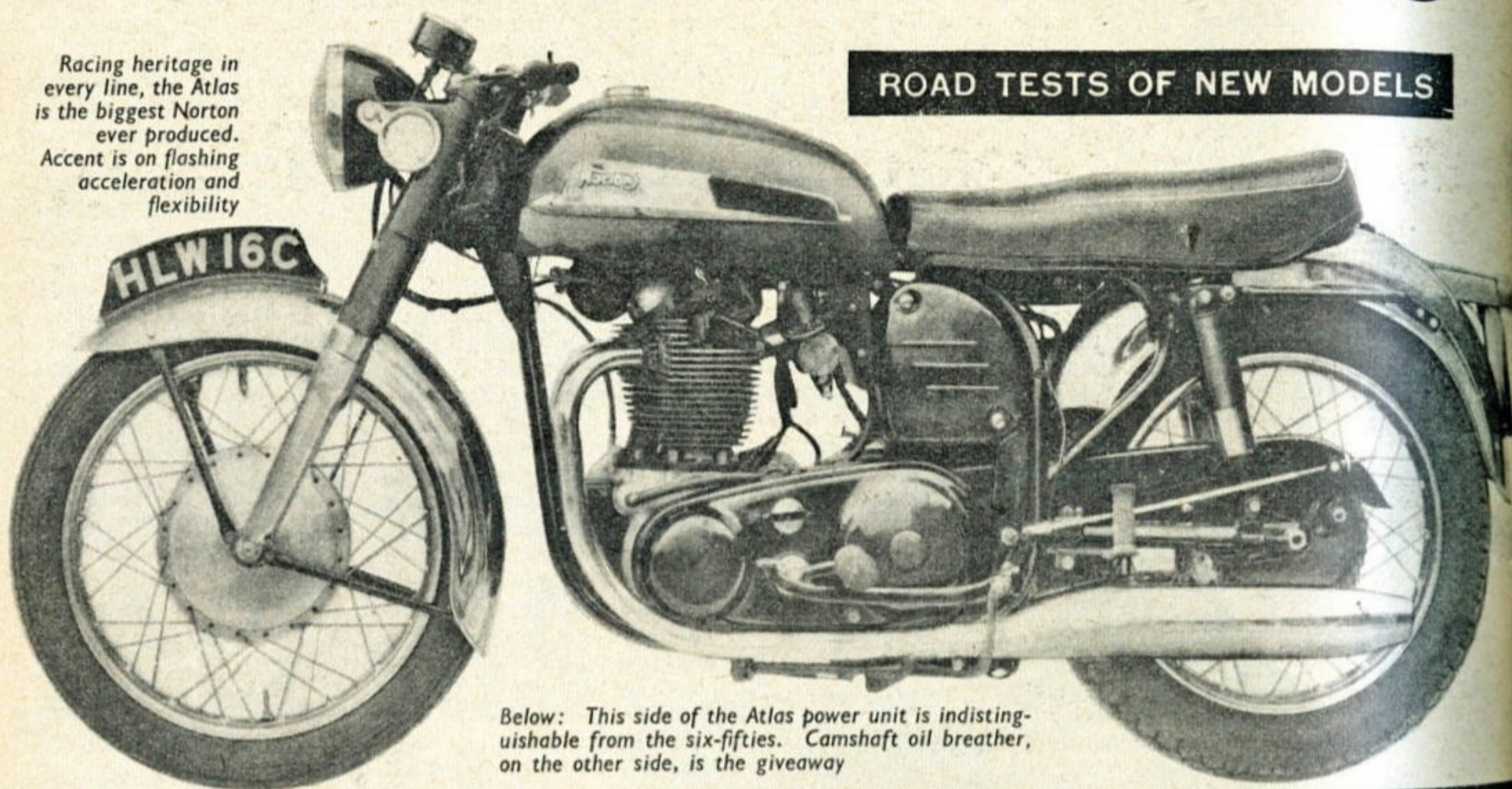


FLATTENING hills is fun. Exhilarating, satisfying and a fair substitute for our lately mourned over-70 mph cruising. But flattening needs power, the more the better. That is when the Atlas engine comes into its own, for this Norton-bred seven-fifty must rank as the most lusty high-speed engine available today. Basis is the famous 650SS unit with the bore 5mm larger and the stroke 7mm longer. Combustion chambers differ, too, and the concave pistons give a compression ratio of 7.5 to 1 compared with the 8.2 to 1 for the six-fifty.

These changes do the trick in extra bottom-end punch and greater top-gear flexibility. The result is a potent roadster that eats up the miles in effortless fashion—a bike for the long-range man. Yet the Atlas has plenty of zip as well. With beefy power on tap from 2,000 rpm, acceleration is shattering. Maximum power is developed at 6,800 rpm but even for serious pressing on there seemed no need to rev higher than about 5,000 before changing up.

745 cc NORTON ATLAS

Racing heritage in every line, the Atlas is the biggest Norton ever produced. Accent is on flashing acceleration and flexibility



ROAD TESTS OF NEW MODELS

Below: This side of the Atlas power unit is indistinguishable from the six-fifties. Camshaft oil breather, on the other side, is the giveaway

When cruising, it was rarely necessary to drop below third gear for overtaking. Normally one rolled the grip back, waited for the right moment to pass, then opened up. In figures this was shown to mean that on its 4.5-to-1 top gear the bike accelerated really boldly from 2,500 rpm, which is about 43 mph.

At the other end of the scale, the 11.6-to-1 bottom gear gave a smooth and effortless pull away at 2,500 rpm from standstill on the 1-in-3 test hill at the MIRA proving ground. On the 1-in-4 hill, the clutch was fully home at a mere 2,000 rpm.

Just a whiff of throttle wafts the speed to a 70 mph-limit cruising speed. This gait could be maintained up the steepest main-road gradients with a barely perceptible increase in throttle opening.

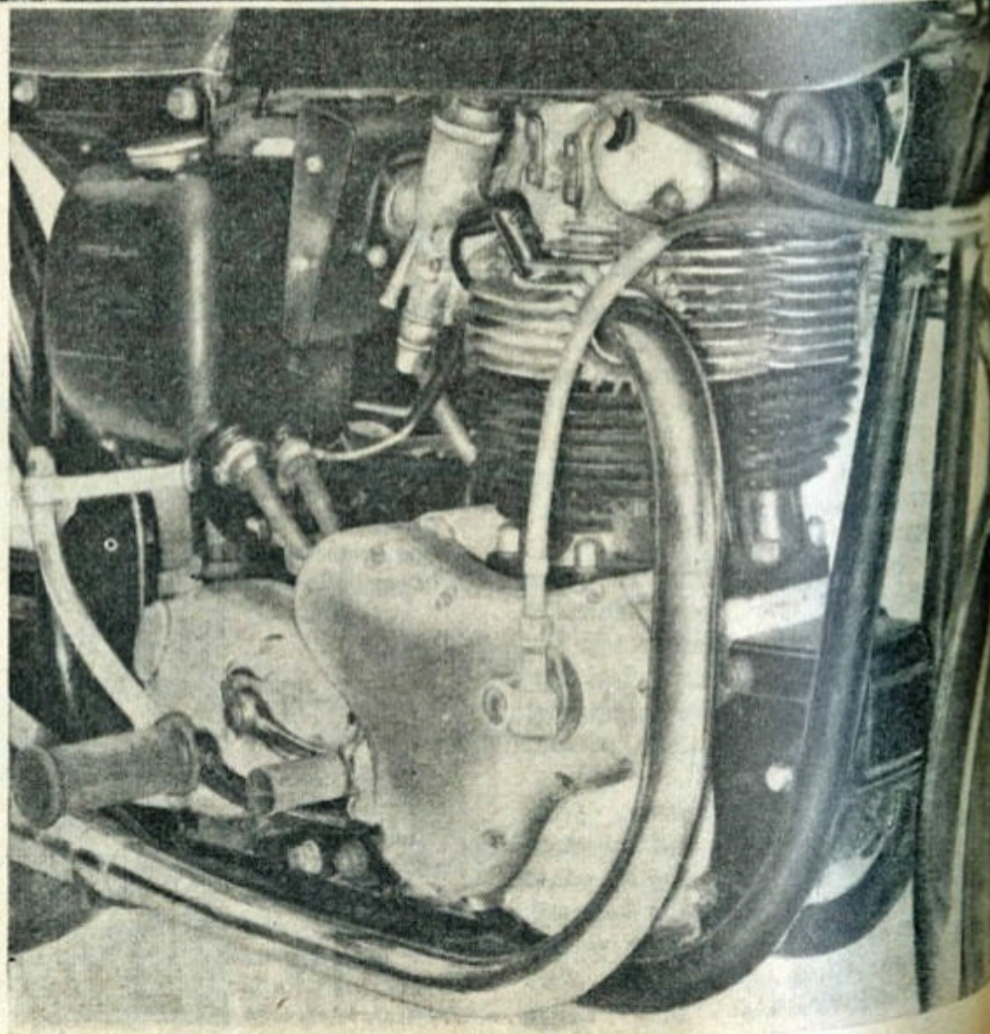
On occasion, the twistgrip was purposely rolled off and speed allowed to drop; then the throttle was tweaked hard. Response was instantaneous provided the twistgrip was not slammed fully opened, otherwise there was momentary fluffing.

On the high-speed track at MIRA, sitting-up cruising speed on two-thirds throttle opening varied between 80 mph into a strong headwind, or 90 mph down wind.

Using reserve power the model nudged 100 mph, with the rider clad in a bulky riding coat.

The speedometer was 3 mph fast to 60 mph, but was accurate at maximum speed.

Up to 5,000 rpm, the engine was relatively smooth. Then some vibration was felt through the handlebar, seat and footrests, up to maximum.





David Dixon enjoys the Norton handling on a twisty road. Good ground clearance enables full use to be made of the cornering capabilities



While the maximum performance figures were being obtained, the left exhaust pipe flange nut repeatedly loosened, though it was tightened as securely as possible on each occasion.

Also noticed when obtaining the figures was oil mist forced through the tank breather on to the rear of the machine; to cure it the oil level had to be kept below the "recommended" mark.

Leaving the machine overnight in the open produced no starting problems. Gearing of the kick-starter seemed just about right and the engine responded after a couple of swings provided the down-draught carburetors were not flooded.

The drill was to close the air lever and turn on the petrol but avoid depressing the float ticklers. The air control could

be fully opened after the first mile.

Noticeable piston slap when the engine was cold lessened, but did not disappear, when the normal working temperature was reached.

The silencers were very effective at normal throttle openings, such as when cruising, but the noise level was on the high side during hard acceleration.

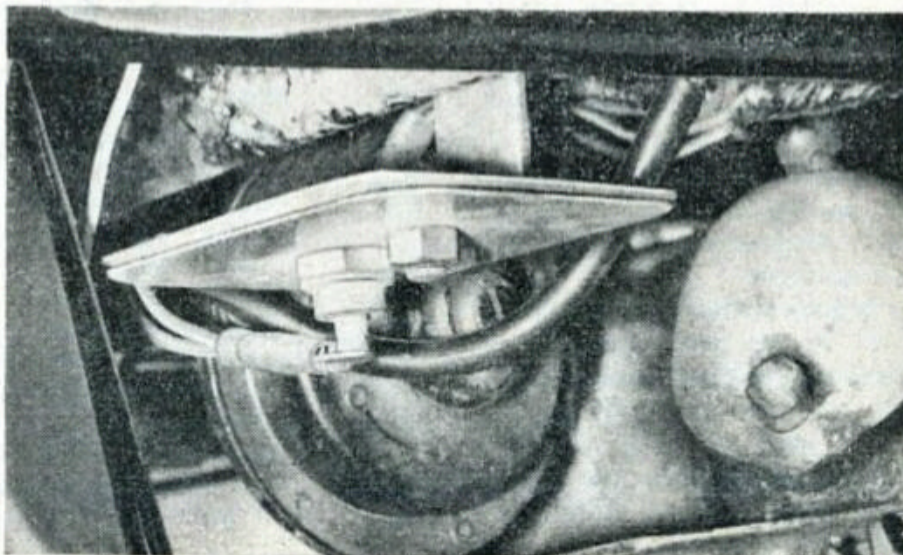
Renowned for its crisp, precise gear change, the AMC gear box lived up to its reputation. No matter how rapidly cogs were swapped, engagement was quiet and completely positive at all times.

With such a flexible engine, the choice of ratios would not be critical but those selected are admirable for all normal use.

Caned hard while obtaining the performance figures, the



Left: Finger adjuster for the rear brake. Below: The Zener diode heat sink, mounted in front of the cylinder head—in a stream of cooling air





clutch friction material swelled slightly and lever clearance at the handlebar increased. However, there was no slip but spring pressure was on the acceptable limit of heaviness.

In anticipation of high-speed cruising, a short, flat handlebar is fitted and gives a forward lean to combat wind pressure. A fair compromise for town and open-road use, the riding position was com-

rear-suspension units adjusted for the maximum static loading.

Heavy below 20 mph, the steering becomes lighter as soon as the speed is raised. Right up to maximum, it is taut and remarkably precise, without the least tendency to stray. Riding on wet or greasy roads is especially confidence-inspiring.

Smooth, progressive and

very powerful, the brakes were more than adequate for the model's performance and kept dry at all times; much of the test mileage was over very wet roads.

Twelve-volt electrical equipment is fitted and the headlamp beam was brilliant, deep and well spread, with a sufficiently sharp cut off on dip to avoid offending other road users.

Located between the speedometer and revmeter, the lighting switch, though small, is accessible and easy to operate. Another good point is that the horn note was loud enough to do its job.

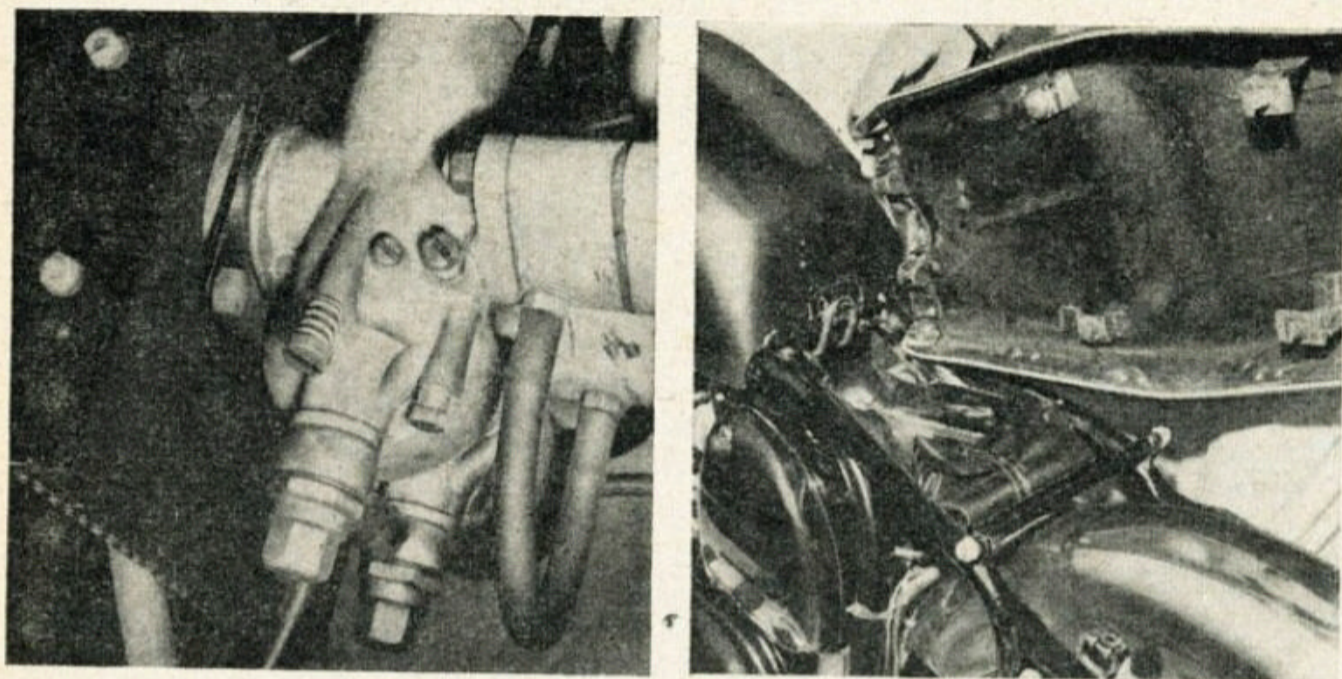
Of average quality, the tool kit is adequate for routine maintenance. The rear chain is not automatically lubricated and following the bedding-down adjustment, required further adjustment after about 300 miles.

The centre roll-on stand requires merely an easy upward pull on the bike to the rear to bring it into use.

Not so easy to operate is the prop stand, the extension for which is too well tucked away beneath the left exhaust pipe; however, it has the advantage of not grounding on corners.

With the petrol tank finished in Burgundy, the frame and side covers painted black and the usual parts — including mudguards — chromium-plated, the Atlas is a most attractive and neatly finished mount.

It gives the best of all worlds: searing acceleration, effortless cruising and zestful road-burning.



Left: The balance pipe between the inlet tracts. This ensures even running at idling speeds. Right: Lifting the dualseat after undoing the quick-release fastener. Rear of the petrol tank is held down by a rubber band

fortable at speeds up to about 70 mph.

Above that, and the footrests were slightly too far forward for a tallish rider.

All controls are well placed for easy operation and, with the exception of the clutch as mentioned, were pleasantly light in operation.

Norton roadholding is the standard by which others are judged. Certainly the Atlas is extremely good in this respect, with precise, positive handling at all times. But the effect of the 4.00 x 18in rear tyre—compared with 3.50 x 19in on other big Nortons—is noticed on fast bends.

More conscious effort is required to lay the model over. The technique is make sure the power is kept turned on; then stability is in the best Norton tradition and well above average.

A big advantage of the large tyre is markedly good rear-wheel braking, especially on poor surfaces.

Characteristically Norton, action of the front fork gives a firm ride at town speeds but very effectively absorbs road shocks when nipping along. For a 12½-stone rider, the best results were obtained with the

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: Atlas 745 cc (73 x 89mm) overhead-valve twin. Crankshaft supported in ball and roller bearings; plain big-end bearings. Light-alloy cylinder head, compression ratio 7.5 to 1. Dry-sump lubrication; oil-tank capacity, 4½ pints.

CARBURETTORS: Twin Amal Monoblocs; air slides operated by handlebar lever.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT: Lucas magneto with auto-advance. Lucas 12-volt, RM19 alternator, with rotor on drive-side crankshaft, charging twin Lucas six-volt, 8-amp-hour batteries, through rectifier; Zener diode charging control. Lucas 7in-diameter prefocus light unit with 50/40-watt main bulb.

TRANSMISSION: AMC four-speed, foot-change gear box. Gear ratios: bottom, 11.6; second, 7.7; third, 5.52; top, 4.53 to 1. Multi-plate clutch with bonded friction facings. Primary chain ½ x 0.305in in oil-bath case. Rear chain ⅝ x ⅝in with guard over top run. Engine rpm at 30 mph in top gear, 1,800.

FUEL CAPACITY: 3½ gallons.

TYRES: Avon—front, 3.00 x 19in Speedmaster Mk II; rear, 4.00 x 18in SM.

BRAKES: 8in-diameter front; 7in-diameter rear, both 1½in wide and with finger adjusters.

SUSPENSION: Roadholder front fork with hydraulic damping. Pivoted rear fork controlled by Girling spring-and-hydraulic units with three-position adjustment for load.

DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase, 55½in. Ground clearance, 5½in. Seat height 31in. All unladen.

WEIGHT: 433 lb fully equipped, with full oil tank and approximately one gallon of petrol.

PRICE: £369 3s 6d, including British purchase tax.

ROAD TAX: £8 a year; £2 19s for four months.

MAKERS: Associated Motor Cycles, Plumstead Road, London, SE18.

PERFORMANCE

Obtained at the Motor Industry Research Association's proving ground, Lindley, Leicestershire

MEAN MAXIMUM SPEEDS: Bottom, 45 mph; second, 67 mph; third, 93 mph; top, 110 mph. *Taken at peak power, 6,800 rpm.

HIGHEST ONE-WAY SPEED: 114 mph (conditions: moderate tail wind, 12½-stone rider wearing one-piece leathers and boots).

MEAN ACCELERATION:

	10-30 mph	20-40 mph	30-50 mph
Bottom	2.5 sec	2.6 sec	3.4 sec
Second	4 sec	3.8 sec	5 sec
Third	—	5 sec	5.8 sec
Top	—	6.2 sec	—

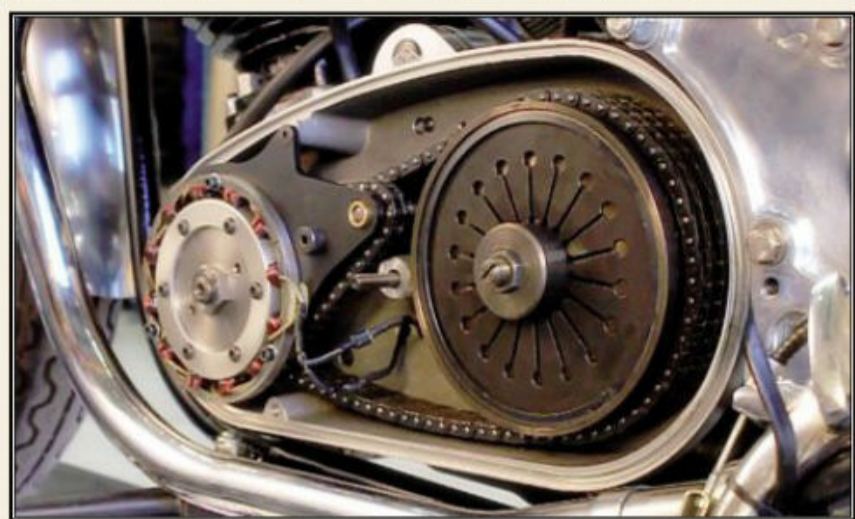
Mean speed at end of quarter-mile from rest, 92 mph. Mean time to cover standing quarter-mile, 14.8s.

BRAKING: From 30 mph to rest, 32 ft (surface, dry tarmac).

TURNING CIRCLE: 15 ft 4in.

MAXIMUM NON-SNATCH SPEED: 18 mph in top gear.

WEIGHT PER CC: 0.58 lb.



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John McGuinness, Ian Bain, Norton CS1 1928 own build, Davida 94 Koura, Goodwood Festival of Speed 2019. © Gareth Buddo / Davida archive.

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Living with a
**NORTON
ATLAS 750**

What is it like living with the big Norton twin?

WORDS BY HUTCH AND MATT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHIPPY WOOD AND MORTONS ARCHIVE



LIVING UNDER THE SHADOW OF ITS SUCCESSOR, THE Commando, and born in the troubled times of Norton, the Atlas 750 had a hard life. It was born primarily to tempt the American market who were lusting after ever-larger engines, with Harley-Davidson now offering both 883cc and 1200cc variants.

Bert Hopwood's parallel twin had already risen in size from 500cc to 650 and now, with supervision from Doug Hele, yet more was asked – 745cc.

But it proved to be a step too far, as vibrations were a key issue. Mick Duckworth interviewed Hele in 1995 who told of the test rider, Fred Swift, coming back from riding a prototype on the M1 with swollen hands, such was the vibes!

After that, the decision was made to lower the compression ratio from 9:1 to 7.5:1 – less of a cure, more of a bandage. The US market was the recipient of the 750 Atlas for the first couple of years, with the UK market getting a slightly revised version later. But the big twin was still in the brochure until 1968, though the talk was all about the the Atlas MkIII – or as it ended up being called – The Commando.

So, was I looking forward to riding an Atlas? Of course. The vibration issue is often the first quip when talking about the last of Norton's Featherbed-framed models, and has gone down in motorcycle folklore, like Italian electrics. Could it be that bad? Engines cause vibrations; you just have to make sure all is put together as well as possible (possibly part of the problem with the antiquated machinery Norton was using and the fact they had to move from Birmingham to London in that time) and adjust the balance to tune the vibes to an rpm that is best.

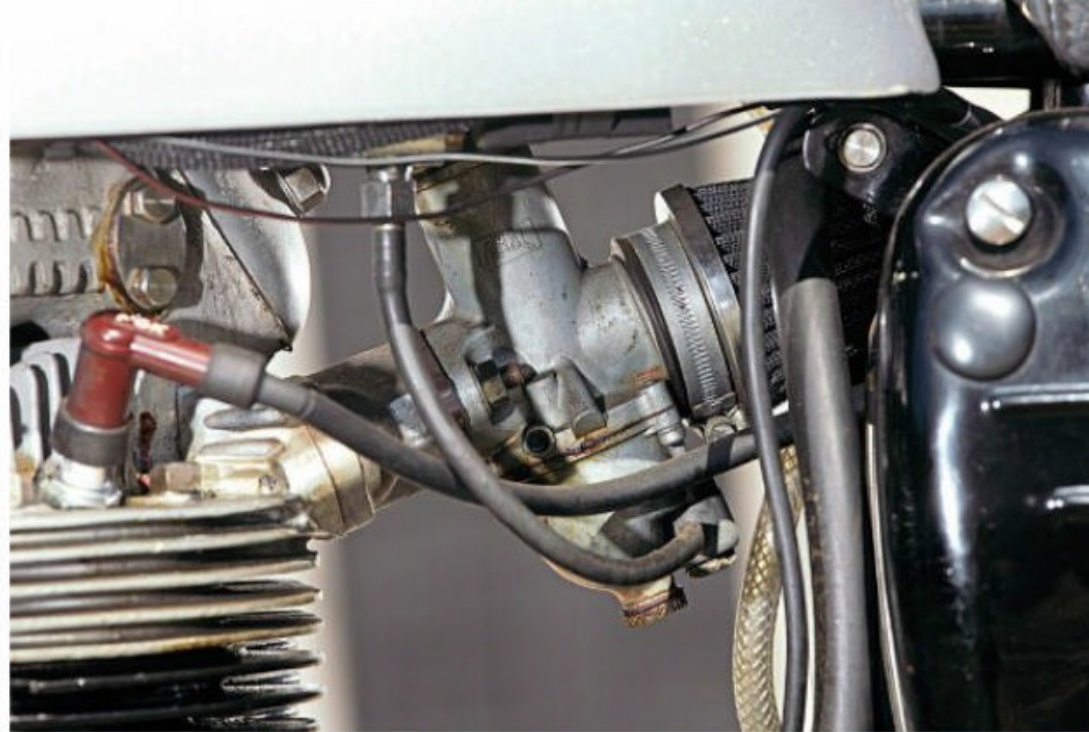
Good friend, Hutch, bought one a few years ago. "It's pretty much as I got it," he explains. I note he kicks it over for me on the centrestand, so I make sure I remember to have a go myself later. The big twin roars instantly, the standard exhausts sounding, purposeful.

The clutch is heavy, without being too heavy. Gears feel fine, if slightly slow compared to the TR6 I'd been riding previously, though the Norton gearbox can trace its lineage back rather a long way. But into first, conscious not to stall, and away to enjoy this hot, sunny summer's day on a Norton.

Heading through the village is easier than I thought it would be, but I'm conscious of the weight. Brakes are alright, but you're constantly aware there's a big bike underneath you. But no dramas and it becomes second nature quite quickly. Out onto some open B roads. It's not tall, the slimline Featherbed frame is a good height, but the seat is quite wide and does force your legs out a little, making it feel tall.

Apologies in advance, but there's only one way to sum up how an Atlas 750 rides; it's a man's bike. The weight is obvious at low speed, and Hutch's bike has lower bars fitted, too. The weighty clutch gives you the impression that this is a committed ride – get into gear and go. And then there's the torque; though the Atlas had similar power figures to the 600SS it had a broader spread of torque.

“Apologies in advance, but there's only one way to sum up how an Atlas 750 rides; it's a man's bike.”



“It should have higher bars, but it’s a Norton – they’re meant to have flat bars!”



Pop it into a higher gear, let the clutch back out and it just goes. Handling is nice and surefooted with the Atlas going where I ask it without too much bullying. And out of the corners, it just pulls, and pulls, and pulls, with a wondrous soundtrack in case you weren't enjoying it enough already!

Carburation is spot on. This is a single carb model and it doesn't feel strangled; though I have to say on someone else's bike I didn't feel like revving it too high. But then, it doesn't need to – I come up behind some cars and dispatch them easily without too much noise or revs and even when I hit the main road it sits comfortably at cruising speed without heading up the rev counter too high.

Vibrations? Where are the vibrations? Well, Hutch admits it's a good one – he's had Commandos much worse; but I think someone has got the balance of the crank just right and with that lower compression and single carb, the threat of vibes is a non-starter. Don't get me wrong, you still feel the bike, the engine and even with ear plugs in you can hear the exhaust note, but because of the spread of torque allowing tall gearing, you just don't need to visit those higher revs where the vibes would cause an issue. I didn't get to sit at 70mph anywhere for any time, but no fear of swollen hands from this tester, on this example!

The Atlas would be wasted on once a week pootles to the local bike meet. And you may have issues if you use it less frequently with wet sumping. The 750 is a bike to use, to enjoy stretching its legs, to enjoy being different in a row of Commandos and after riding this one, I know that the worry about

the revs, while founded, doesn't have to ruin what is a great long-legged classic Norton. Spares are available and parts supply is pretty good, so maybe it's time to consider an Atlas.

WHAT THE OWNER THINKS

This is Hutch's fourth Norton, but first Atlas. "I've had a single, an ES2, but my first British bike was a Commando when I was 21, with plastic Interstate tank and a Combat engine which I rode as my only bike for 12 years and kept it going on a student-type shoestring, rebuilding it on the floor of a squat! Back then it was cheaper to just buy a replacement head than fit new valve guides, and it went and went. But it always needed spannering; when it went it was fantastic – but you were always repairing it. It was a bike of the times.

"A customer of mine had this, had restored it himself and had spent a lot of money on it, but he could never get it to start consistently. In the meantime I bought another Commando, a Roadster, and it had everything my old one didn't. Belt drive, roller bearing conversion on the gearbox – but I hated it. I did around 200 miles on it and just hated it; I don't know why. Rose-tinted specs! So I flogged it and did a deal with the Atlas. It still wasn't starting right, but when I rode it, it was everything the Commando wasn't – it was lovely.

"It handled well, rode nicely, and the only thing about it is the seating position – it should have higher bars, but it's a Norton – they're meant to have flat bars! And it makes you feel like Geoff Duke the moment you get on it!

"It already had a single carb conversion manifold with concentric Amal, it's got electronic ignition conversion in the mag, which is difficult to adjust, so I took the end of the mag off that didn't need to be there and put a plate in so you can get in and adjust the timing. Being able to get the timing right and a couple of other jobs done, it started nicely, even after sitting for a few weeks. In fact it starts so well, I don't bother keeping the battery on charge. Also it used to wet sump, which is to be expected on twin rotor pumps, so I put a valve in the oil line with a warning light LED in the top yoke where the steering lock would have been.

"I put a Commando-style oil filter on it from an 850 Commando, which I put in the return line. It's not my favourite place to fit it, but I couldn't find anywhere else to put it. But it seems oil-tight, I've not been into the engine. And the Radaelli rims, which I'm sure were nice when new but are to a price, and Wassell had just bought out some new alloy rims, so I bought a pair to see what they were like, and they're really nice and look good on the Atlas.

"The main stand has been built up at some point to get the wheel off the ground and I've fitted a solid state reg/ rec on it because I don't like the electronic ignition with the Zenor diode; it's a bit spikey and I put a rack on it because there's no point having a bike with no rack, even if it's just to carry your tool roll – I've had Nortons long enough to know I'll need them occasionally! But I like the Atlas, I may have been lucky with a good one, but for what I use it for, which is taking it out on sunny days and thrap it around, it's perfect! **CBG**



Fancy a day out?

Know of a show, club meet or event that would be of interest to fellow classic bike enthusiasts? Then feel free to drop us a line with some details and we'll do our best to include it so others can enjoy it as well.

NOVEMBER 2019

■ **1 DECEMBER ISSUE OF THE CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE**

■ **2 NOVEMBER ISSUE OF OLD BIKE MART**

■ **2 Rockers Revival Harrow Leisure Centre, Kenton:** Buff up your quiff and your Triton, because it's time for the Rockers Revival. If you love rock'n'roll music and classic motorcycles, then the Rockers Revival is just the thing to rock away those autumnal blues. The line-up features Rebel Dean & The Star Cats, Crazy Cavan & The Rhythm Rockers, Furious and The Draglinks. The event runs from 4pm to midnight and advance tickets are £22, or £27 on the door. Harrow Leisure Centre, Christchurch Avenue, Kenton, HA3 5BD Email: rockersrevival@mail.com

■ **2 Firework Frenzy:** Santa Pod Raceway, Airfield Road, Podington, Wellingborough, Northants, NN29 7XA. www.santapod.com Tel. 01234 782828.

■ **2-3 The 19th Footman James Classic Vehicle Restoration Show:** Although primarily aimed at classic car fans, many of the techniques and products on show at this event transfer easily to those of us who are restoring classic motorcycles, and as it is the start of what for many is restoration season, a visit is definitely worthwhile. Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, BA4 6QN www.bristolclassicarshows.com

■ **3 Ton Up Day - England Expects:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.

■ **4 NOVEMBER ISSUE OF REAL CLASSIC**

■ **6 VMCC (Dorset section) Lunch Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/

■ **9 Straightliners Dakota Raceway South West:** Smeatharpe Airfield, Devon EX14 9RF www.straightlinersonline.co.uk

■ **10 Poppy Day Parade & Service - Military Vehicle Meet:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.

■ **10 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Trencherfield Mill, Wigan. Tel. 01772 782516.

■ **16-24 Motorcycle Live:** The major new bike show of the year, visit the NEC to sit on lots of bikes you've thought of buying and then decide not to, collect leaflets and try and find a reduced to clear clothing bargain. Experience shows it's the retro brands that



The Goodwood Revival 2019.

put on the most entertaining displays. Buy an advance ticket for £25 and get an Oxford disc lock worth £24.99. Senior citizen tickets are £12 in advance and while you don't get the disc lock at that price, if you have drum brake, who cares? The NEC, Birmingham. www.motorcyclelive.co.uk.

■ **16 Scorton Auto & Bike Jumble:** Scorton, North Yorkshire Events Centre, DL10 6EJ. Tel. Bert 07909 904705.

■ **17 Ariel OC 'Founders' Day' + Classic Bike Day:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.

■ **17 'Normous Newark Autojumble:** The Showground, Drove Lane, Winthorpe, Newark, Notts, NG24 2NY. www.newarkautojumble.co.uk

■ **17 VMCC (Dorset section) Memorial Run:** Hillbrush Visitor Centre, Norwood Park, Mere, Somerset, BA12 6FE. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/

■ **20 DECEMBER ISSUE OF CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS**

■ **21 CLASSIC DIRT BIKE ISSUE 53**

■ **21 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Knott Working Men's Club (fish & chips). Tel. 01772 782516.

■ **24 Mud Pluggers Day:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London,

NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.

■ **24 Huddersfield Auto/Retro Jumble:** Old Market Building, Brook Street HD1 1RG. Tel. 01773 819154.

www.phoenixfairs.jimdo.com

■ **24 Malvern Drive-In Classic Car & Bike Autojumble:** West Midlands and Welsh Marches readers might want to take a trip to Malvern for this event, a large motorcycle and classic car autojumble located at the Three Counties Showground. There will be lots of trade and autojumbles stalls offering a great opportunity to locate those hard-to-find parts and accessories. Wye Halls and outside, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6NW. Tel. 01484 667776. www.classicshows.org

■ **27 DECEMBER ISSUE OF CLASSIC BIKE GUIDE**

■ **30 VMCC (Dorset section) Breakfast Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/

■ **30 LE Velo Northampton Gathering:** The Stag's Head, Gt Doddington, NN29 7TQ. Tel. 01604 499858.

■ **30 Vintage Motor Cycle Club Autojumble:** This is a must for the South West based



What's on

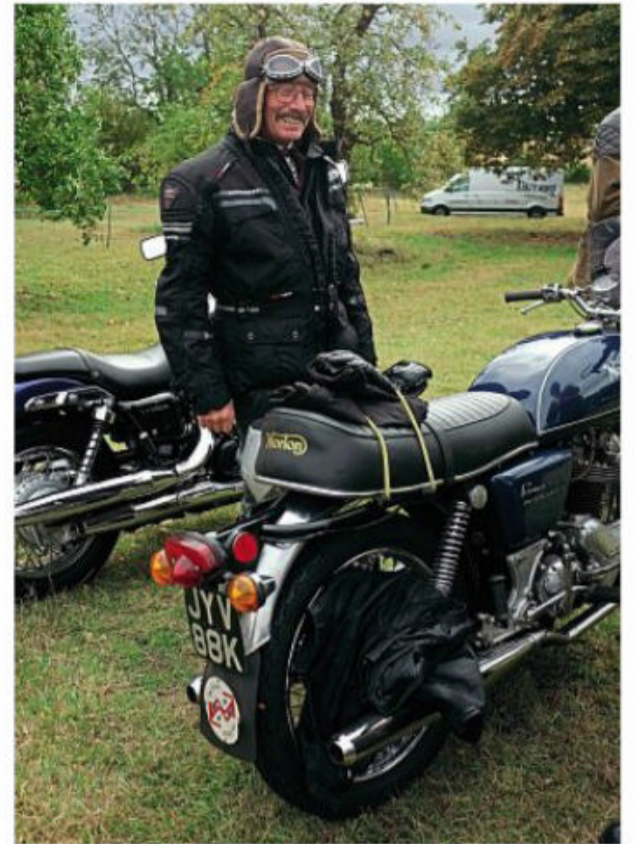
classic biker. Organised by the Somerset section of the VMCC, the autojumble encompasses three large indoor halls and additional outdoor space, with approximately 500 stalls selling motorcycles, parts, spares, clothing, tools, and all manner of accessories both new and pre-loved. Entry per person is £3. This is one of the best autojumbles in the country, and is the perfect opportunity to spend a day chewing the fat with fellow enthusiasts, tutting about the price of things, and waving something oily and saying: "how much for this, mate?". At least one member of the CBG team will be there, trying to off-load his surplus spares and he promises to even mark some of it up. The autojumble runs from 9.30am to 4pm. Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, BA4 6QN.

DECEMBER 2019

- **1 The 10th Salvation Army Southwell Toy Run Meet:** Market Square, King Street, Southwell, NG25 0EH. For info tel. John F Judson 07785 185544.
- **1 Bike Day + Ace Cafe Club Xmas Meet:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **1 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Glasson Dock, Nr Lancaster. Tel. 01772 782516.
- **2 DECEMBER ISSUE OF REAL CLASSIC**
- **4 VMCC (Dorset section) Lunch Meet:**

Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/

- **6 JANUARY ISSUE OF THE CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE**
- **7 DECEMBER ISSUE OF OLD BIKE MART**
- **7 Southern Classic Off Road & Racing Show & Motorcycle Jumble:** Kempton Park, Staines Road East, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex, TW16 5AQ. www.kemptonparkautojumble.co.uk
- **7 Sammy Miller Museum, Mission Not So Impossible - Santa's Toy Run:** www.sammymiller.co.uk
- **8 Bike Day:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **8 Paws 'n' Claws Pet Food Run:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **8 VMCC (Dorset section) Mince Pie Run:** see website for details dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/ Tel. 01258 860864.
- **8 'Normous Newark Autojumble:** The Showground, Drove Lane, Winthorpe, Newark, Notts, NG24 2NY. www.newarkautojumble.co.uk
- **15 Bike Day:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **15 Xmas Toy Run:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London,



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- NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **15 Xmas Carol Service:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **18 JANUARY ISSUE OF CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS**
- **19 JANUARY/FEBRUARY ISSUE OF CLASSIC RACER**
- **21 Scorton Auto & Bike Jumble:** Scorton, North Yorkshire Events Centre, DL10 6EJ. Tel. Bert 07909 904705.
- **22 Bike Day:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **26 Cold Turkey Meet:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **27 DECEMBER ISSUE OF CLASSIC BIKE GUIDE**
- **28 VMCC (Dorset Section) Breakfast Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/
- **29 Bike Day:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **29 Huddersfield Auto/Retro Jumble (Xmas Do):** Old Market Building, Brook Street HD1 1RG. Tel. 01773 819154. www.phoenixfairs.jimdo.com



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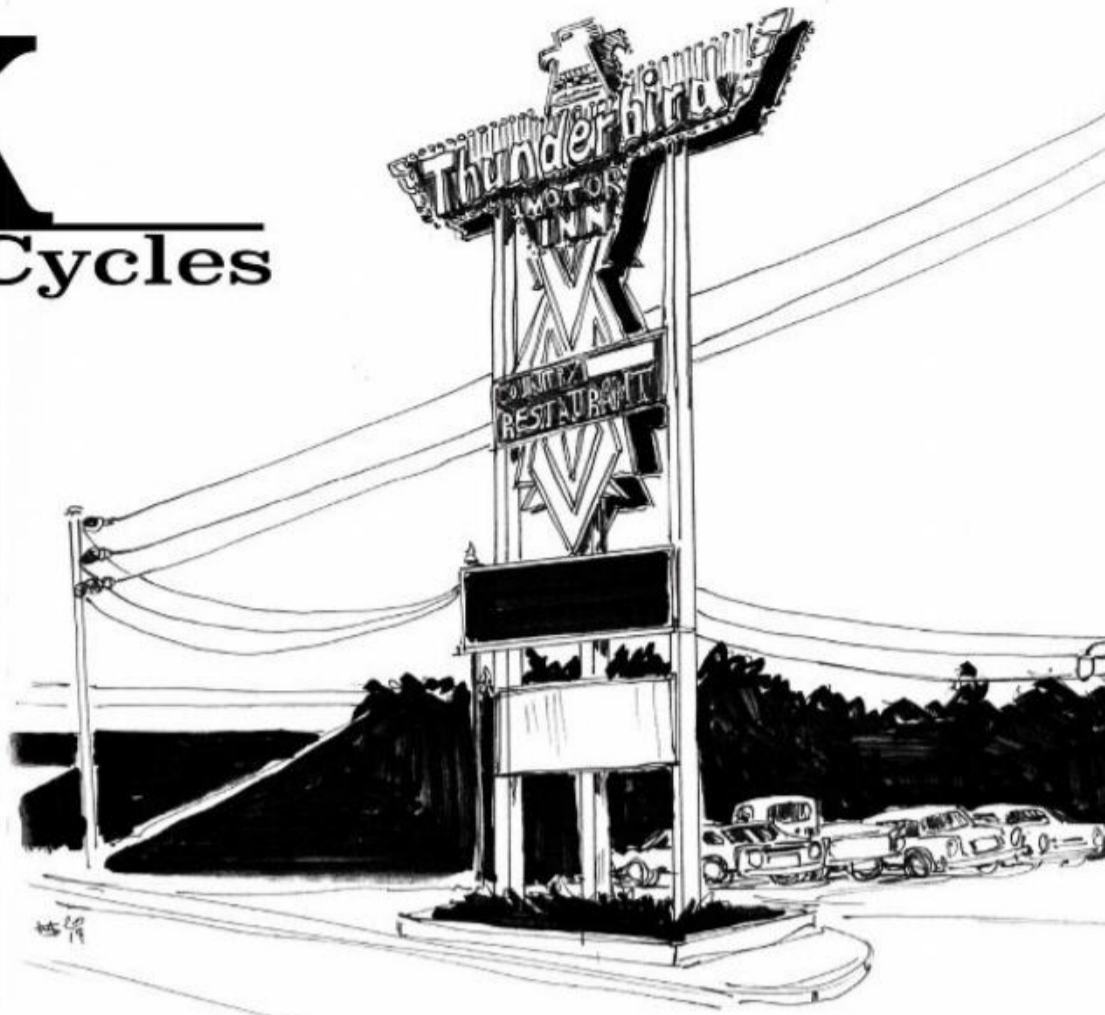
Sketchbook Travels:

STOCK

Motor Cycles

By 1949 Triumph viewed The United States as a very important market, sales of the Speed Twin had already showed that there was a market for lighter weight machines, lighter than the typical large twins that Americans were used to. The main issue people had with the speed twins was their capability on the longer stretches of road typical of large continents like the States.

Edward Turner had made several trips to the US after WWII where he would get the same feedback; the Speed Twin was light and just as fast as the bigger native motorcycles, but for longer journeys a 500cc capacity just wasn't enough. In typical Turner thinking he looked at what was possible with what they already had. He wasn't one to think of a whole new machine that required all new tooling and extra costs. Using existing stock and marketing it as a new product was key to keeping costs



1952 Triumph Thunderbird

Illustrations and Words by Martin Squires

and development time down. With capacity being the main issue, Turner looked at boring the T100 engine out to give 649cc, which was perfectly feasible without compromising the integrity of the barrel.



With the development of this new, powerful long-hauler underway, Turner was looking at how best to market this new machine to the US. Legend has it that Turner got the name from the Thunderbird Motel in Florence, South Carolina. With the Native Indian iconography of a supernatural bird associated with power and strength, it was a perfect name to ignite the imagination of the US market.

Once the development had come to a head, Triumph needed to prove that the Thunderbird could cover long distances at high speed. With Brooklands no longer operating, Triumph looked to Montherley just outside Paris in order to test the thunderbird at high speed over long mileage. As a publicity stunt, not only were the three prototypes run at the banked track, they were ridden from the Meriden works to the track - and back. Once at the track the three triumphs all covered 500 miles at an average of 90+mph with the final lap roaring up to the iconic ton.

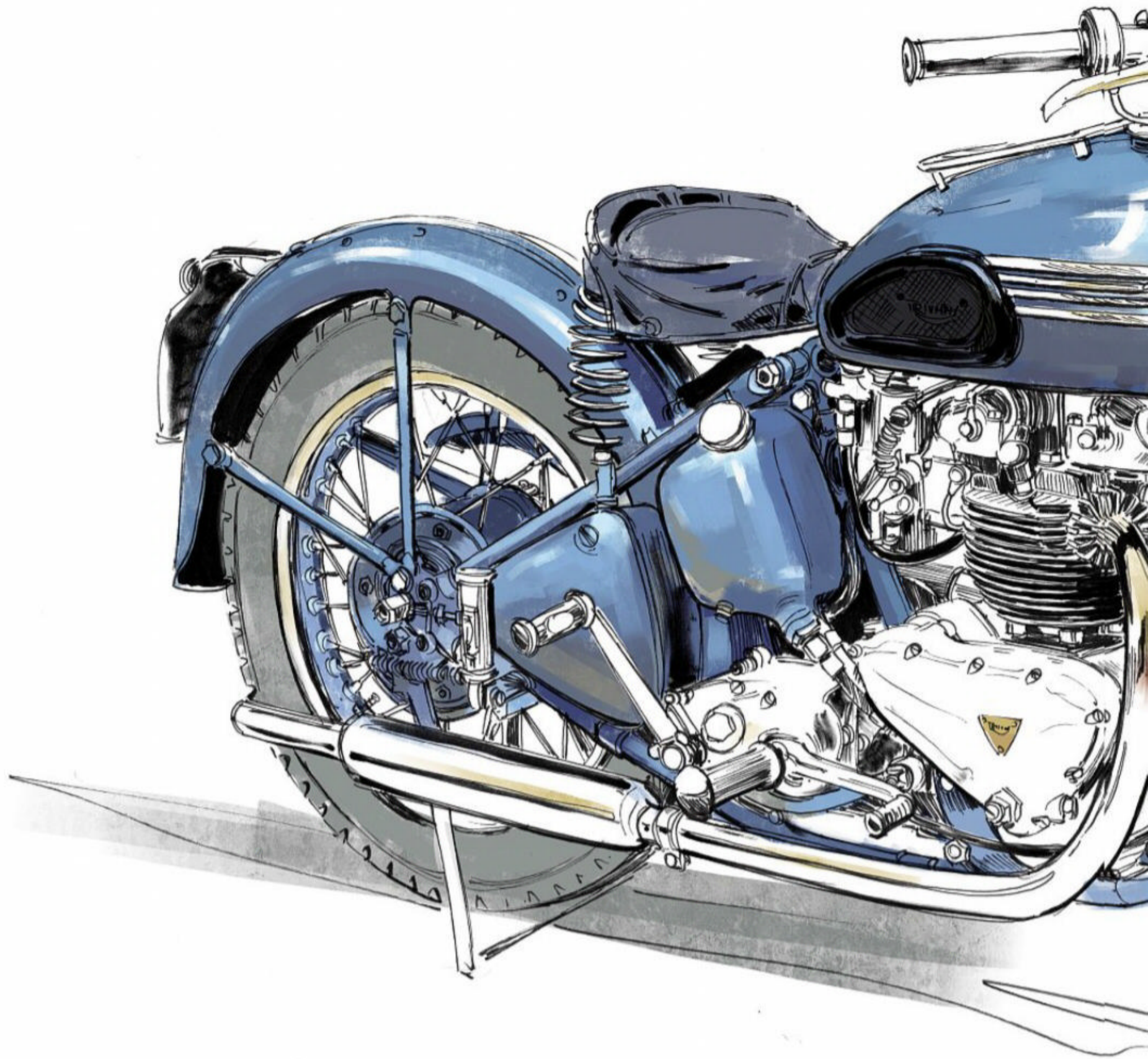
It was known from its launch in 1950 with the T6 model name, denoting the 650 capacity. The Thunderbird was a great success due to its speed, capable of 100mph and long distance capability. For this reason it was also used by Police departments worldwide. Known to the police force in the UK as a SAINT: Stop Anything In No Time! The police force used the lightweight high speed machine to keep up with the competition. Again, for the same reason, the Thunderbird became popular with the ton up boys.

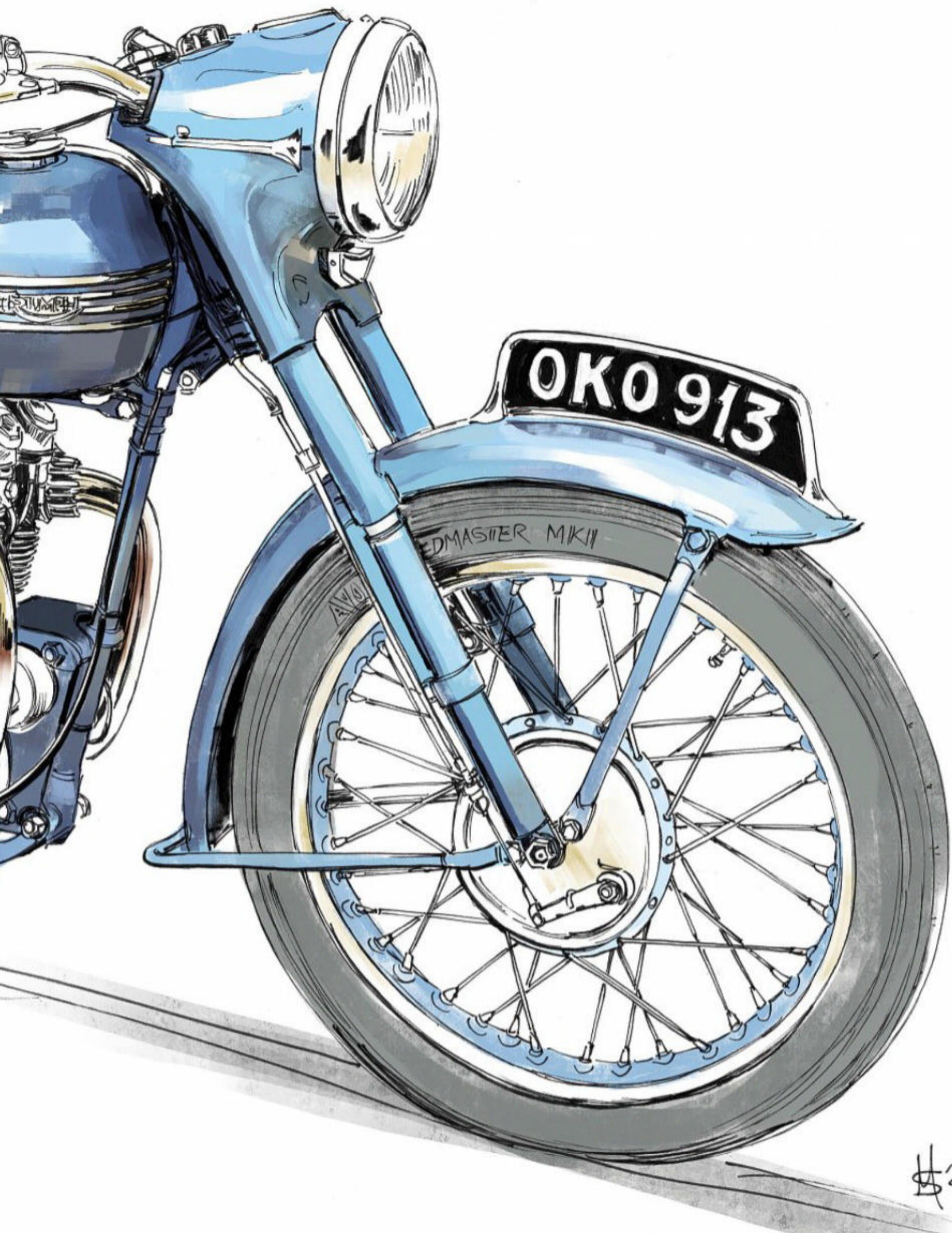
In *The Wild Ones* (1953), Marlon Brando rode a Thunderbird as the rebel rousing gang leader, Johnny Strabler. This iconic image bought the Thunderbird to the attention of a younger style-oriented audience. At the time Triumph didn't want to be associated with the film; not surprising as the film was banned in the UK for 14 years. Once Triumph realised the pulling power of Brando they capitalised on it by issuing an all-black version that became known as the Blackbird. Ironically by the time the film was finally granted an X-rated certificate, the Thunderbird didn't have the same appeal due to later bathtub stylings turning it to a more commuter leaning machine.

By the late 1950s changes were made to the bodywork to include fully valanced fenders and the 'bathtub' bodywork, enclosing the rear wheel. These made sense to the British rider who rode in the rain a lot, however for the American market had no practical need for this and with the loss of the sportier look the Thunderbird fell out of fashion. The American dealers were ordering more Triumph Bonneville's and stripping off the fuller body headlight and fenders and replacing them with TR6 versions in order to keep the sportier look.

The Thunderbird would continue to be made until 1966 with the new Unit construction engine being used from 1963. During this time it would always be overlooked by customers in favour of the new Bonneville. It is important to remember that the Thunderbird was the first 650cc Triumph to satisfy the American market and paved the way for later models in styling, performance and marketing.







References: TriTBird_001	Sketchbook Travels: STOCK Motor Cycles 1952 Triumph Thunderbird	Drawing No: 034
Artist: MARTIN SQUIRES Date: April 2019		Amendment: 0

1952 Triumph Thunderbird

In The Family

The Thunderbird featured in the centre fold is the 1952 variant. This is truly a family bike, bought by its second owner as his first motorcycle at the age of 16 in 1957/58. It was fitted with a dual seat to take his future wife to the dances, as well as frequent trips to the Ace Cafe to hang out with his mates and race on the A40. The freedom the Thunderbird provided created some strong memories for him but unfortunately it was regrettably sold in 1964.

Perry, the son of the family, fondly remembers growing up looking at a photograph of his father as a rocker with the Thunderbird, knowing his father missed the Thunderbird he wished he could get it back for him. Unfortunately Perry's father died at 70 and never got to see the Thunderbird again.

In 2014, whilst looking at some classifieds Perry saw the Thunderbird for sale. On contacting the seller it turned out it had been sold to a Japanese buyer... but if Perry could provide the photograph of his father with the Thunderbird it was his. So after 50 years the Thunderbird is back with the family reviving memories of Perry's father and preserving a part of history where the Thunderbird and its stories will be passed down from father to son.



The Instrument "Nachelle"

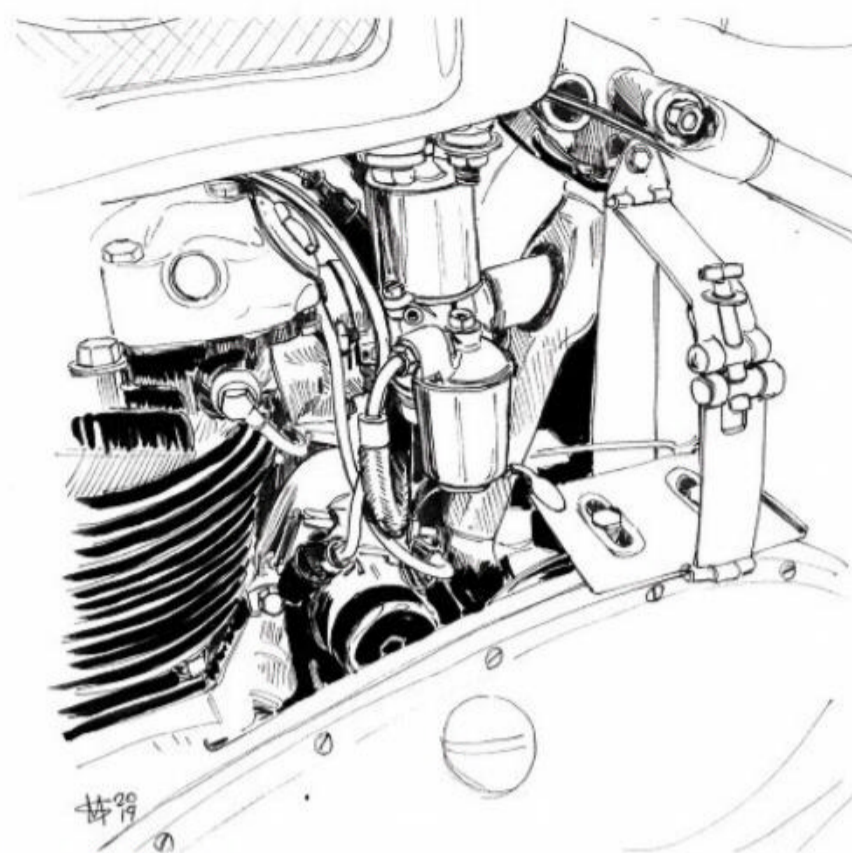
Designed in order to group all the instruments in a visible and usable position. All the instruments are rubber mounted on the streamlined panel, making them easier to clean and maintain.

The Sprung Hub

Edward Turner started working on the sprung hub design in 1938. His intention was to design a simple, low weight and low cost solution to rear suspension. Inspired by the hub suspension in the Gloster Gladiator made by Dowty, Turner designed a small plunger type suspension with 2 inches of travel to fit within the rear hub.

Originally intended for the 1940's Triumphs, the war delayed integration of the hub until 1946, with a mark 2 version introduced in 1951. The sprung hub would be Triumph's only rear suspension offered for their parallel-twin models up until 1955. Other than adding some rear shock absorption the sprung hub made it easier to incorporate rear suspension into existing rigid frames and offered an aftermarket choice for their existing customers. This made good business sense and shows how Turner was very in tune with how business was done for profit.

Taking apart a sprung hub is notoriously dangerous due to the compressed springs, it even has a warning cast into the housing. Mark 1 hubs had a grease nipple but the mark 2 was built without as the factory grease was rated as good for 20,000 miles. So restorers beware when taking that hub apart!

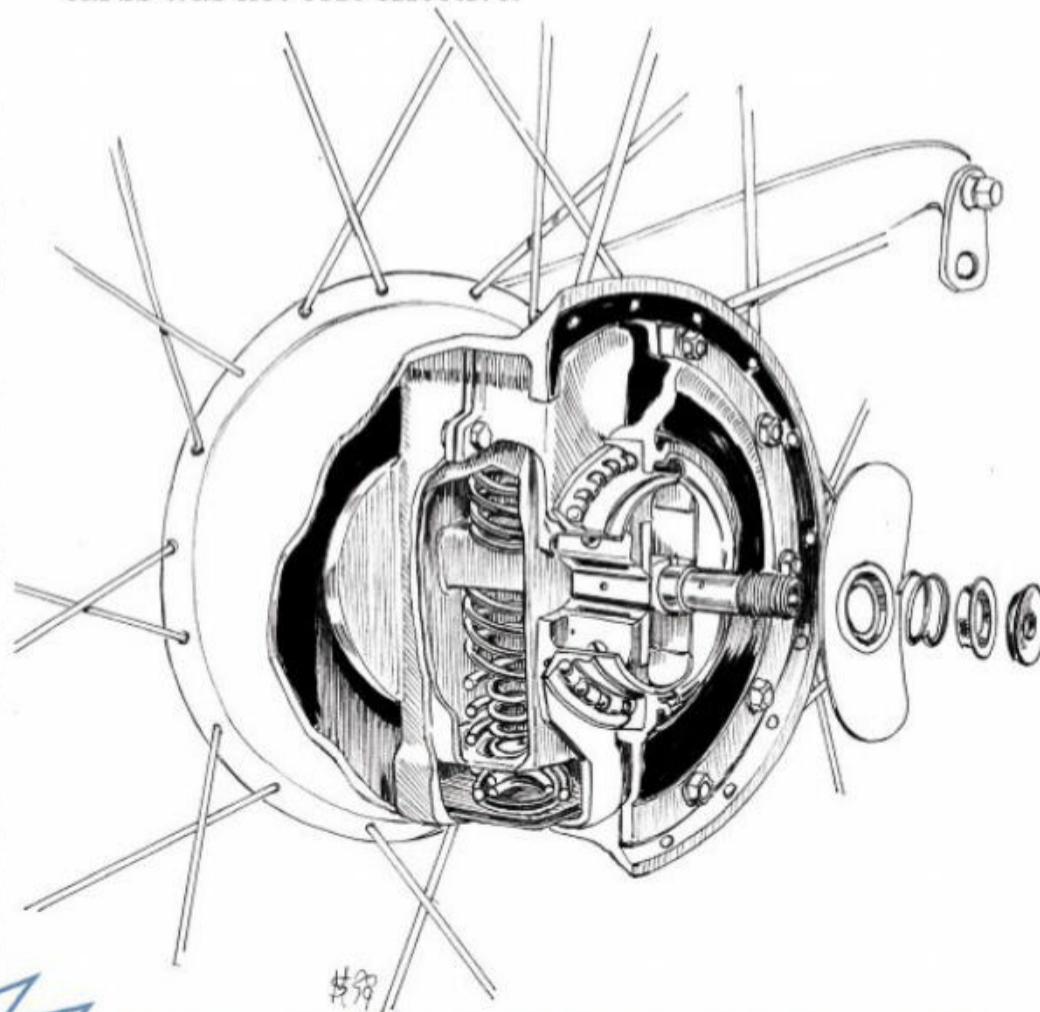


The SU Carb

One of the distinguishing things about the 1952 variant is that Triumph decided to switch to an SU carburetor. The SU Type MC2 carburetor was chosen for its fuel economy and smooth acceleration characteristics. The MC2 was devoid of any power surge which was present in the previously used Amal Monobloc. The delivery of mixture and resultant power was smooth and constant throughout acceleration.

In order to link the carb to the air filter a donut shaped lug was incorporated into the down tube, through which the connecting tube passes. This lug distinguishes the Thunderbirds built between 1952-55 from all other years.

Set up of the SU Carbs was something that couldn't be done by staff from the Triumph works, so a dedicated SU tuner (Jock West in this case) would have to be hired to come to the factory and tune the carburetors one by one before the Thunderbirds could leave the factory. This became one of the reasons why Triumph didn't continue with the MC2 as fitting and tuning the SU carbs was not cost effective.



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STEVE COOPER

ALL GEARED UP

Steve looks at gearing and how a small change can completely change your bike

“Repeated attempts the following day clearly demonstrated top was only viable with a serious run up in third and a following wind. Simply put, the bike was over geared”

HAVE YOU EVER LOOKED AT THE FINAL DRIVE gearing of your motorcycle or stopped to consider if it is actually working for you and your bike?

Yes, of course, obviously if it gets you around then it's fulfilling its basic function but is it working efficiently for you, in your locale, with all of its attendant gradients and/or flat roads? Does your bike actually rev out in top gear or is that final ratio little more than an overdrive?

If you own a large, powerful machine then best turn over. However, if you own a low(er) powered machine, then read on and potentially improve both your bike and your riding experience.

The concept of final drive gear ratios was brought home sternly to me one dark summer's night whilst trying to persuade an ancient MZ ES/2 Trophy up a long and increasingly steep dual carriageway. With only four pairs of cogs in the gearbox and a lowly 17.5bhp it was never the fastest out there, but when your ride actually judders to a halt and stops in top gear you do begin to wonder why it happened and what was the cause.

The reason was a combination of gradient, rider mass, available power, and, crucially final drive ratios. The bike was happy to run up the same hill in third and get me home but repeated attempts the following day clearly demonstrated top was only viable with a serious run up in third and a following wind.

Simply put, the bike was over geared. A curious MZ foible (there are dozens by the way) means that with an enclosed final drive it's not easy, cost effective or probably even possible to do the obvious trick of whacking on a bigger cog to the rear wheel. The MZ way is to run a smaller cog at the gearbox output shaft. Annoyingly no one had a sprocket with one or two less teeth and my only option was an insanely small sidecar cog which wasn't viable.

Unlike most normal bikes, the MZ ran a gearbox sprocket with a long splined collar integral to the cog, so something from another bike was never going to work. Eventually I found the correct pitch cog with the requisite number of teeth and found a foolhardy engineer who naively volunteered to bore a large hole in the new cog, machine the teeth of an old MZ cog, then marry the two together with weld.

The ES/2 Trophy ever after sailed up any gradient in top without issue but the engineer still swears about that East German sprocket that blunted several carbide cutting tips on his lathe!

Altering a rear sprocket's teeth quotient has always been the perceived way of adjusting a bike's final gearing, but it's not without hidden additional costs. Add three or four teeth and you may very possibly find you need a longer chain but go down just one tooth on the front sprocket and all you normally have to do is just adjust the chain – cunning eh? I did pretty much the same trick with my Yamaha YL1 which also only sports four gears and just one tooth down on the front cog significantly changed how and when top was used.

My Suzuki T125 twin consistently proved to be massively over geared as far as top/fifth was concerned. Knowing that most Japanese tiddlers of the era had maximum torque and power almost within touching distance of each other means gearing is hyper-critical. Just because the man in Japan specified 16T/39T cogs back in 1969 doesn't mean his logic remains today.

However, as I'm never going to be slimmer of the year and I want to be able to make more than stately progress in top, I resolved to rationalise my ratios.

Having sourced two smaller front sprockets for just over a fiver each it was simple to swap the existing/standard 16T out. A trial run with the 15T cog was a revelation; there wasn't much difference in the three lower gears but third to fourth was less of a jump and snicking up to fifth demonstrated the bike was no longer the asthmatic slug it had been.

Next up the 14T cog, and 'OMG' as the kids say! The Stinger could finally live up to its name. In reality what I probably need is a 14½ tooth front cog which is obviously unobtainable! Now I can sit and calculate the 'ideal' pairing based on my observations and experience, so once the maths are done it'll be either a 41T or 42T rear cog and I'll have spent the minimum dosh to get the maximum performance from the tiddler.

You too can optimise your final drive and grin like a loon! **CBG**

Steve Cooper once had a real job pretending to be an industrial chemist but is now a classic motorcycle journalist, serial restorer, editor of the VJMC's Tansha magazine and perpetually obsessed by Japanese bikes of the 1960s & 70s. He likes two-strokes so much he often smells of semi-synthetic 2T!



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PAUL MILES

REINVENTING THE PAST

Paul looks at the growing issue of genuine history mixing with Chinese whispers...

“I had to have it, of course and spent the next year spending wayyy too much time and money on it, including having the psychedelic paintwork (well, it was the 1970s, man)”

THERE ARE SOME AMONGST US WHO OWN very few motorcycles over the course of their riding careers, often keeping their beloved bikes for several decades. These ‘keepers’ survive several house moves and even relationships, only to be found advertised for sale when the long-term owner finally hangs up their leathers for that last time.

I suspect most people though will have owned a good few bikes over the years, and of them a small minority suffering from that greatest affliction – the curse of owning too many bikes. This acquisitive nature means no deal can be ignored, even if it means an extensive cabinet reshuffle will be required.

This curse (for disease is too strong a word) requires the serial owner to carefully curate their collection and ruthlessly cull as and when required, often selling on bikes that rational people would consider special or desirable.

Being so cursed, I’ve sold lots of lovely bikes over the years and from time to time, when browsing the sales sites and catalogues (purely for research purposes you understand and not to buy yet another bike), I’ve stumbled on one of my old bikes.

Now, I’ll confess to having owned something like over 400 bikes in my time, so even I’m unlikely to immediately recognise that scruffy RD200DX, bought in 1979, that has now been transformed into a perfect original-spec restoration, but in orange, not silver. And there it is, somewhere in the timeline, history has been altered.

It’s far more amusing (alarming?) when it’s an expensive or unusual machine, though, claiming a provenance which is just plain wrong or often, wholly fictitious. Take a café racer I’d once owned; let’s call it a *Desiderata Hondawacki* (*name changed to protect the innocent). I knew the bike from new, it was offered as a prize in one of the periodicals back in the day and was won by a friend of mine’s dad. He took my mate on the pillion to school and I distinctly recall it was the first blossoming of the thought that bikes were cool and something I should get involved in. Many years later, we were chatting about the old days and I mention the *Desiderata* and wondered where it was now, like you do.

“In my dad’s shed,” said my friend “needs restoring, but he’ll never get round to it.” Turns out it’d been crashed a decade earlier and my mate’s dad had bought some replacement forks and wheels from a road racer, plus some tatty glass fibre parts, with the intention of resurrecting this fine old girl. But never did.

I had to have it, of course and spent the next year spending wayyy too much time and money on it, including having the psychedelic paintwork (well, it was the 1970s, man) re-created using period photographs and a tiny scrap of undamaged glass fibre, the only survivor from the crash.

Once finished it looked the million dollars it seemed to have cost to rebuild, but was... dull to ride. Time and technologies wait for no rider and a big Jap four jammed into a glorified Featherbed frame, although once the last word in sophistication, now seemed horribly dated. I sold it at a huge loss, but reasoned it wasn’t being used, took up space and I’d just seen a nice Ducati...

About a year later I spotted it in a magazine. The chap I’d sold it to had quickly realised a profit and the latest owner had begun to take ownership of all the work I’d had done – as well as embellishing the history.

Five years later, it turns up again, this time for auction. Now quoted with an astronomical estimate, the history had further mutated and the poor old girl had apparently been built as an IOM racer (you’ll note the racing forks and wheels as also used by xxx). The ‘standard original nickel-plated frame finish had been replaced by chrome at the behest of said racer, as he preferred the style’ – it was black painted from new and I had it chromed, but let’s not let facts get in the way of a good story.

The multi-coloured paintjob was the upshot of a drunken wager, apparently. Weird, I recall it being a typical example of lurid Seventies excess. And so it went on, to the point even I began to question my recollection of events. It sold, at a high price, to an overseas collector and by now has almost certainly an information card stating it was raced by Ago against Marc Marquez at Fuji, or somesuch madness.

It’s a minefield out there, so be careful. Me? I’m off to buy some magic beans... **CBG**

Paul Miles is a lifelong Londoner who rides every day and regards a prewar classic as perfectly suited to urban commuting. A contact lens specialist by profession, he nowadays appears to be a full-time rider, breaker and fixer of old bikes. Entirely fails to understand the concept of patina or winter lay-ups.



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PAUL D'ORLÉANS

CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT

It's the new tech, same as the old tech. Paul talks evolution.

“There will always revolutions in technology that disrupt the creation and distribution of whatever we love, from telephones to motorcycles. Unpredictability makes most people uncomfortable”

THERE ARE THREE PRINCIPAL GODS IN THE Hindu pantheon, representing three elemental forces of nature: Brahma, the creative force, all budding abundance and optimism; Vishnu, the preserver, who keeps a steady hand on the wheel so Brahma's creations can develop and flourish; and Shiva, who kicks it all sideways, destroying everything in its turn, so there's room for new Brahma to make new stuff. The evolution of technology has elements of all these properties: sometimes, as in the 'disruptor' phase, combining Shiva's destruction of old industries and inefficient technologies, with Brahma's spearheading of the new and exciting replacement. Kodak and Polaroid fall, Apple and Google rise.

While we love the predictability of a steady state, there will always revolutions in technology that disrupt the creation and distribution of whatever we love. Unpredictability makes most people uncomfortable, but of course very little is predictable, and change is the only constant. Looking deep into the history of the motorcycle, we see from the very start (in the mid-1800s) how intimately tied new technology was to their invention.

When Sylvester Roper and Guillaume Perreaux built very small steam engines to attach to bicycles in 1869 and 1871, they were among the very first to create such a compact engine for useful work. Perreaux was ahead of Roper in theory, though, as his patents of 1867 designated an electric motor as a power source! We don't know whether one was actually built, but his steam velocipede used a newly-invented Michaux pedal-cycle chassis, while Roper's earlier steamer used a boneshaker chassis.

Perreaux was very much at the cutting edge, although it took another 14 years for the first electric vehicle to make a trial run, a three-wheeler built by Gustave Trouvé on a Humber chassis. It took 18 years for the first production internal-combustion motorcycle (the Hildebrand & Wolfmuller), and the industry moved, by fits and starts, forward into the 1900s. Unlike the nascent automobile industry, in which steam, electric and internal-combustion engines were on an equal footing until 1910, the compact power source possible with internal combustion made that technology dominant to this day. There were plenty of one-offs and low-production electric cycles though, starting

in the mid-1890s, when Humber and a couple of French constructors built electric cycle pacers for the bicycle racing boom. These were tandems with an electric boost, that were quickly out-paced by internal combustion machines that became semi-reliable circa 1900.

The rapid development of the Otto engine and a big push from the nascent oil industry, meant the internal combustion motor dominated transportation for over a century. Steam power faded away, but electric vehicles were always with us, as buses, trams and trains. The first production electric motorcycle was the Belgian Socovel of 1941, most of which were sabotaged in the factory as they were destined for occupying Germans.

Lots of factories tried electric motorcycles and bicycles from the 1960s onward, but the battery revolution of the mid-1990s changed everything, with compact NiCad and LiIon units making real power possible. This was quickly proved by the Killacycle dragster that used 990 electric drill batteries to hit 168mph in the quarter-mile. Since then, Panasonic has sold more than four million pedelec bicycles, there are four million electric scooters buzzing around China, and every motorcycle factory is scrambling to introduce a full-size electric motorcycle, now they have acceptable range.

But motorcyclists don't care: they don't like electric motorcycles. Ixion noted such resistance in the 'teens, as motorcycle technology evolved, and pioneer riders lamented the passing of their wobbly, fire-prone and difficult mounts, and the skills required to master them.

Every subsequent technological revolution has been met with resistance: telescopic forks and rear springing, Japanese production methods, aerodynamic plastic cladding, and now electric power. Each revolution saw factories close, workers lose their jobs, brands die. And, new factories are built, new jobs are created, and new brands emerge.

What to do as a lover of old motorcycles? Nothing has changed: we can still ride our bikes and buy gas and oil easily. Finding spares has never been easier, as is the access to information and other owners/enthusiasts.

We're in a golden age for using old machines, so my recommendation is to get out there and ride – it's still the best way to clear out the cobwebs and don't worry about the future. **CBG**

Paul D'Orléans is a writer, artist, sartorialist and photographer. He's best known as The Vintagent for his long-running blog and judges concours such as the Quail and Villa d'Este, consults for Bonhams auctions, shoots digital and tintype photographs, and is curating an exhibit on café racers at the Sturgis Motorcycle Museum.

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The Cyclecar

Three-wheelers had always been a part of the motorcycle world. Now, they have become popular with those who want motorcycle fun, without putting your feet down. But where did they come from?

WORDS BY OLI PHOTOGRAPHY MORTONS ARCHIVE

WHICH CAME FIRST, THE BIKE or the car? Neither. It was the cyclecar, or autocycle. The first powered road vehicle, Cugnot's "Fardier à vapeur" steam-driven artillery carriage of 1789 was a three-wheeler. As was the first internal combustion engine powered vehicle, the Benz Patent-Motorwagen, built in 1885.

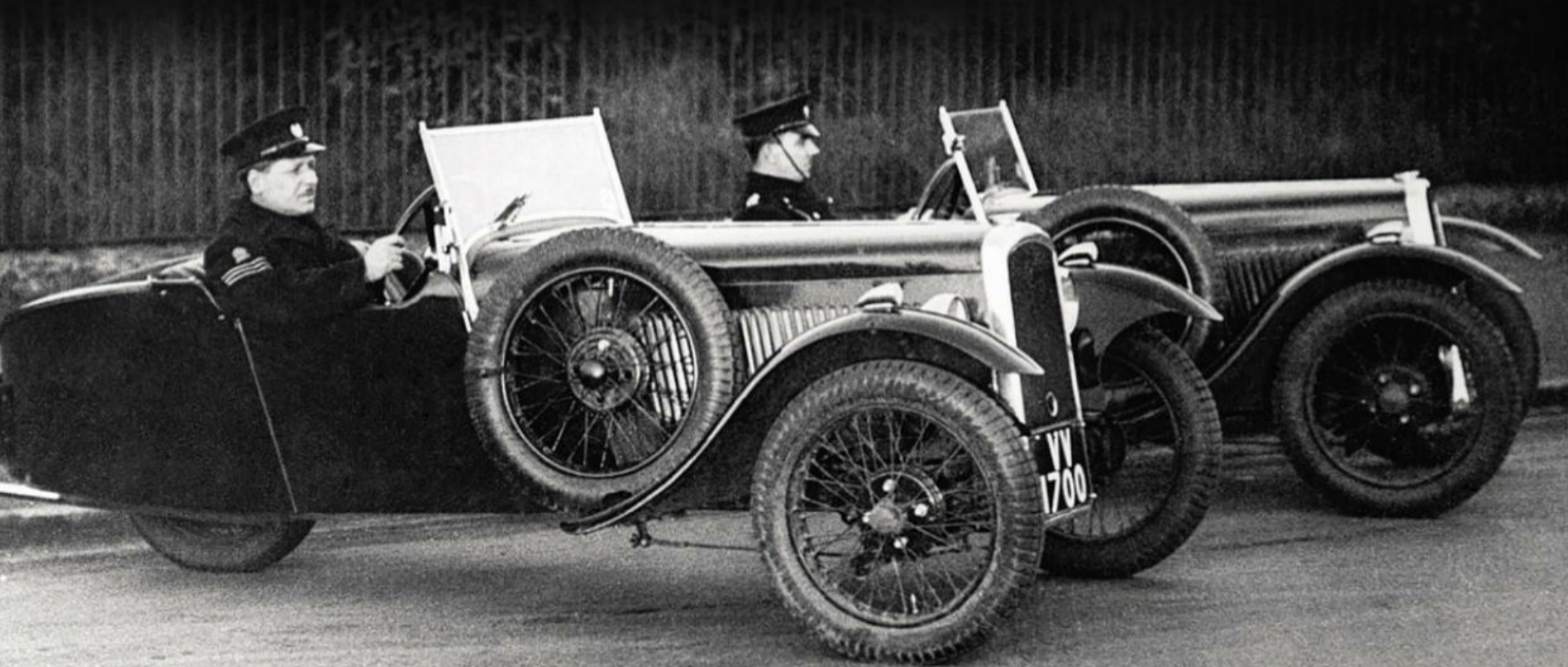
In the early 1900s there were several vehicles built following the pattern of the three-wheeled safety cycle – a relatively simple conversion of the basic pedal-powered design with an engine bolted above the rear axle, though it wasn't something anyone but the brave would attempt to ride at any speed. It was only when the likes of H.F.S. Morgan got the idea of reversing things, so the two wheels were at the front with a single wheel behind, that the sporting powered tricycle came into its own.

The first Morgan, a one-off 1908 single-seater sports special, was powered by a Peugeot twin cylinder engine. The chassis design predated motorcycle practice by around 30 years as it was fitted with a swing arm rear suspension system, with a pair of leaf springs to soak up the bumps. It had chain drives to two sprockets, one on either side of the rear wheel to provide the luxury of two-speed gears. There were also Morgan's own independently sprung front wheels. H.F.S. Morgan built several

three-wheelers before the outbreak of the First World War, including one that covered 60 miles in an hour lapping the Brooklands circuit in 1912. Morgan also turned out a few Runabout De Luxe family saloons, which looked like a conventional car with the rear wheel sticking out of the back. Like most civilian innovations, tricycle design stalled during the war but afterwards there was a huge demand for cheap personal transport and the three-wheeler, costing somewhere between a high-powered motorcycle and a small car, filled the gap nicely. When Morgan returned to production, they had JAP and Matchless V-twin engines on the sportier models through the 1920s and 30s. After 1945 the last V-twins went to Australia and production of Ford side-valve engined trikes continued until 1952.

The Inland Revenue helped sales of three-wheelers by classing the machines differently to the car, with lower Purchase Tax and a bill for road tax that was half that of a four-wheeler and there were several small manufacturers catering to the market. For many the autocycle was a stylish alternative to the combination. Some would come with middleweight motorcycle engines, while bigger manufacturers chose power plants specific to the task. BSA launched a range of front-wheel drive tricycles in 1930. Most early rear-wheel drive autocycles had suffered from an oily and unreliable drive train to

the back wheel, which would also suffer from heavy tyre wear and from the stress of being the driving wheel. Switching to front wheel drive improved grip and handling. The BSA tricycles had three-speed gearboxes and were either fitted with a Hotchkiss designed OHV 950-1050cc V-twin or an inline side-valve four engine. Like many 1930s three-wheelers the BSA models looked from the front like a conventional vehicle, yet they weighed not a lot more than a combination, especially the Standard model which had a fabric covered body. All but one of BSAs offerings were sporty little two seaters, though they did build a Family De Luxe four-seater with just enough room for two children in the back, one on either side of the rear wheel. Another war saw production falter again but when the conflict ended, just as after 1918, demand for reasonably priced transport, especially something with sporting pretensions, was high. The low-tax brackets remained an attraction, as did the economy the trikes offered during fuel rationing. Motorcycle magazines regularly featured road tests of three wheelers, and you are as likely to find a road test of a Bond or a Reliant in an old copy of *The Motor Cycle*, than of a 650cc Matchless or BSA. *Motorcycle Mechanics* was in those days known as *Motorcycle*, *Scooter* and *Three-Wheel Mechanics* and many of the period's biggest motorcycle dealerships also sold three-wheelers.





The reason was the curious way tricycles sat in the licensing regulations. You could drive one on either a car or motorcycle licence. With a motorcycle licence easier to obtain than a car licence, the opportunity to get out of the wind and rain was a tempting offer and it also suited those awaiting the arrival of a bouncing bundle of joy. Many a 650SS or Thunderbird would have been chopped in for a fibreglass-bodied Bond, Reliant or AC three-wheeler. These three wheelers returned to the old one wheel in front, two behind layout, which was much more unstable than vehicles with twin front wheels. Most of these 50s trikes were not built for speed and were simply utilitarian transport, with minimal trim. The Reliant Regal 21E of the 1960s was given the name because it had 21 'extras' including such luxuries as rear view mirrors, carpets and windscreen wipers.

Some manufacturers did persevere with the trailing wheel set-up, such as Berkeley, who built a three wheeled version of their four-wheeled micro sports coupes, fitted with British Anzani or Excelsior two-stroke engines. Vincent built a prototype trike by sticking the rear end, frame and engine of a 1000cc Rapide in an aluminium body with two wheels at the front. Bubble cars had trailing wheel set-

ups too. A discussion on the merits of the trike over the motorcycle or the combination in The Motor Cycle in 1958 concluded that additions like electric starts, improved weather protection and the ability to carry out a conversation with your passenger while travelling were the major advantages. The biggest problem for those trying to sell trikes was cost. Although the low purchase tax, road tax and miserly fuel consumption were an attraction, the cost of the three-wheelers was relatively high because, in the case of British firms, production was tiny and they missed out on the benefit of economies of scale, with a three wheeler not much cheaper than a Ford Popular. Imports of bubble cars suffered from hefty duties. The Suez crisis in 1957, which saw fuel prices shoot up and rationing introduced saw a brief resurgence in popularity, but after five months rationing ended and things returned to normal. The continued popularity of Ford's Anglia and the sudden arrival of the Austin Mini kicked the bottom out of the market and the only people left buying three wheelers were those on severely restricted budgets or those without car licences, or both. The



Bond Bug, essentially a shortened Reliant with space age bodywork, was the last major production three-wheeler to try for the sporting market. And this might have been the end for high performance on three wheels, until the arrival of the Triking in the late 1970s and of the Lomax Citroen 2CV powered kit in 1980. Since then the attraction of bowling along in a lightweight sportster has gathered pace again, and alongside the new Morgans and a host of Morgan-alikes there are more futuristic kits from Grinall and Tri-pod among others. Now offerings like the Can Am Spyder, a vehicle with twin front wheels that you sit on like a two-wheeled motorcycle, is attracting fans, including our own Frank Westworth, especially among those who want a motorcycle experience with high power and decent handling, but don't want or can't cope with the effort of keeping a big bruiser upright. The sporting tricycle has come full, tight, circle. **CBG**

Pembleton V-SPORT

Three-wheelers have always been a part of the motorcycle world. Now, they have become popular with those who want motorcycle fun, without putting their feet down. But where did three-wheelers come from? And how can you enjoy them now? We have a look back at the history of the cyclecar and forward to today's offerings...

I'VE SPENT THE LAST FEW MILES TRYING TO put into words the multitude of sensations I'm feeling – and failing. This is down to several excuses. I'm struggling to breathe, let alone think, thanks to the enormous beam I've been wearing for the last 20 miles.

The Worcestershire roads are in perfect harmony to a lithe, open car; and the

balance of car and bike, to me at least, is perfection.

The V-Sport is, like the Triking and Morgan that you can read about in the next few pages, a three-wheel cyclecar. It marries a brand-new Moto Guzzi V7 III engine to a Citroën 2CV gearbox, to give a gate-style gearchange like a car, with front wheel drive and therefore, two driving

wheels. So to the driver – or should that be rider – the controls are just like a car.

But then the bike influence comes in, with the air-cooled Guzzi engine sitting in your eyeline and the weight of a bike – 298kg – less than a loaded BMW R200GS – which you can feel from the moment you set off.

When the motorcycling press tested cyclecars, they were seen as cheap transport

WORDS BY: MATT PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHIPPY WOOD



Simple, yet elegant



Detail is impressive



Nicely contoured seating



Hand-shaped nose dome

that was better than an outfit. With the front wheel drive layout, the V-Sport has a good amount of space around you and a flat floor, as the 2CV gearchange, as per the donor, pokes out from the dashboard. This is no load-lugger – there’s minimal storage behind the seat and you’ll get quite close to your passenger. You can have a rack on the rear bodywork but how much room do you need?

The Pembleton was conceived by Phil Gregory, after his good lady noticed that bikes and three-wheelers went free on the ferry they were on. Phil has built several vehicles, including one of the fastest bikes up the nearby Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb – with his own engine!

After building his cyclecar with Citroën engine, gearbox and parts, he then went on to sell more than 500 kits to those who wanted to make their own simple, fun mode of transport, based on the old, rusting French chicken shed.

Then many years on, Phil’s son, Guy, built one for himself and liked the idea of making something, so father and son sat down, reengineered the old design and

worked out all the parts made by local engineering companies.

The current design has been modified and improved by Guy, and features a steel frame with simple, elegant aluminium bodywork, riveted together, which has more than a passing resemblance to early aircraft.

The engine gives around 50bhp, not much more than the original 2CV engine and certainly not enough to overwork the completely refurbished French gearbox. Special driveshafts head out to bespoke hubs and the spoked wheels, with inboard discs ala Formula one – and 2CVs; while the rear has a simple set up based on the 2CV with a horizontal suspension unit. All nice and simple, but as with most low-volume car manufacturers, options and customer requirements mean that rarely are two V-Sports the same.

Driving is easy. Although there are no doors, the V-Sport is so low most will be able to easily get their legs over the immaculate alloy bodywork and into position. It’s a bench seat, so no buckets to lower yourself into and the seatbelts, while coming from



The team!




the opposite side you are used to, are easy to find. Once you've mastered the accurate but close gearbox gate (Pembleton have worked hard and used rose joints to get a positive and easy to use change), remembering where first is (Citroën liked doing things differently) and where reverse is, the rest is easy. Pedals are wide-spaced just like your car, as are the controls and indicators.

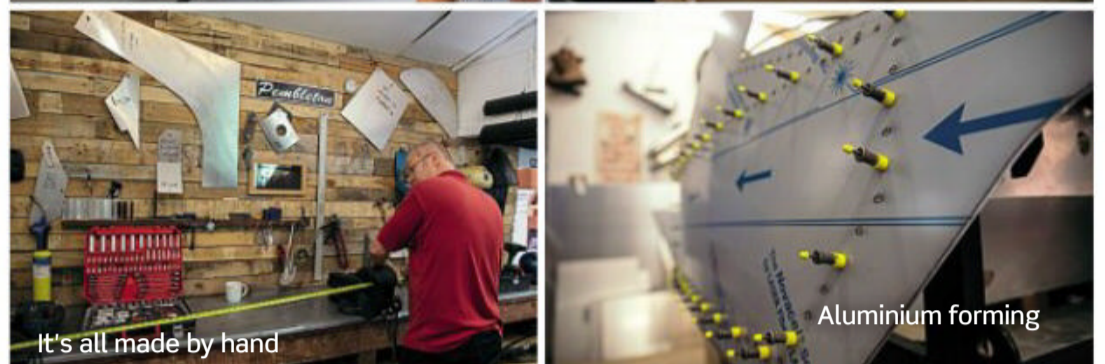
The modern V7 motor has the standard electronics so its manners are finishing school perfect. Except, that is, the exhaust sound. Because you are exposed to the elements, your soundtrack is that of the Moto Guzzi duet; but encouraging; it's not too loud. Every gearchange, every time you back off, or pull away, is an aural pleasure. And because you're out there with just an aero screen to protect you, the sensation of speed is more than most motorbikes.

Cyclecars may have been mundane transport originally, but they are now more exciting than many modern bikes and this excitement is carried through the corners, too. With skinny tyres and limited power working against you; the soundtrack of an overhead Spitfire and a wooden-rimmed steering wheel working with you, corners are as challenging as on two wheels. Grip isn't a given like in a modern sportscar with fat tyres and electronic nannying, but something you have to feel, plan and judge – like on a bike. With little weight, relatively low power and braking, the suspension can remain soft and compliant, adding to the sensations of cornering. You roll, you feel the forces acting on the car and you; continuing the bike-like feel. And with front-wheel drive, you don't have to worry about the rear kicking out.

The 50bhp gives little worry of torque steer, but the balance that the Pembleton guys have engineered in front to back is superb: bike-like in its intensity – and yet safer to explore the limits. Just watch out for potholes, because if you think you've missed one at the front, you'll just get it at the rear!

The Pembleton is now a fully produced car and starts at £21,995+VAT. It's great to drive, is authentically old in style, its simplicity is welcome in a world of ABS, power steering and brake-assist and it is beautifully hand-made. In an old wooden shed. You're welcome to most bike meets and so many people wave or at least smile as you go by. And you can talk to your passenger. Though I'd rather listen to the engine...

For more information, look at pembleton.co.uk 



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Triking

Type 4

WORDS BY MATT PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHIPPY WOOD

The Triking was born from a car designer's search for reliable transport. And evolution sees the latest model, the Type 4, here.



HAVE TO CONFESS, I LOVE TRIKINGS. AS A BOY I USED to play cricket occasionally in the village where the designer and creator of Triking, Tony Divey, lived. On the way up the hill after too many sandwiches to console a poor innings I would see him tinkering with this intriguing machine, and being into my cars and bikes, would always pedal slowly, taking it all in. Is it a car with one less wheel or a bike with too many wheels?

A few years ago I had the pleasure and privilege to have a go in the latest Triking, then the Type 3, with current boss, Alan Layzell, who used to work for Tony.

I drove the latest model, a wide-track Type 3 with the engine from a Moto Guzzi Griso eight-valve with my daughter Izzy and drove it from Norfolk across the country to the Prescott bike festival where we gave passenger rides up the hill climb to help raise a little for the charity. And then we drove home, so that's more than 300 road miles and a day thrashing up the hill climb, with no faults, rattles or issues apart from a little rain for the last hour, so we donned our helmets.

Rain only made my perseverance to have or even build a cyclecar more after that journey, the accuracy of the steering as it went up the hill climb, the definite



gearchange of the rose-jointed sequential gearbox and the cosy nature of the cabin were what I didn't realise was missing in my life.

The Triking basics are a steel spaceframe carrying a Moto Guzzi engine and gearbox (and a transfer box for reverse if desired) with a propshaft driving the 'Guzzi rear axle and wheel, or a wider option. The body is glass fibre, reinforced with Kevlar where appropriate for safety. You can choose standard or wide track front ends, which carry bike wheels and brakes. Weight is around 360kg for the Type 1,2 and 3, while the new Type 4 weighs 390kg. A Goldwing weighs 380kg.

The Triking has evolved over the years and Alan listens to the close community of Triking owners and those having a demo, to see what he could improve. Then there are the changes that the Guzzi drivetrain introduces, like the CARC rear end, single or twin shocks and so on, all needing tweaks to the design.

The Type 4 has incorporated all these, plus has added a little more room for the driver and passenger. There is now more width in the seating and more width and length for legroom, adding a little weight, width and length, but giving more people the chance to experience a Triking and in more comfort.

It was the new Type 4 demo we've tried here. It all feels pleasingly familiar, and everything falls straight to hand – essential in small cars when you'd struggle to swing a mouse, let alone a cat. The two gear levers give an early Land Rover feel, but there's no 3x3 low-ratio ability here. Because the Guzzi box is used, there has to be a second transfer box to select reverse. So first is away from you, then second to sixth is towards you, just like a bike. And then if you need reverse just come to a stop, pull the lever and you then have reverse. It works well and you quickly adapt. Though you could, in theory, use all six gears in reverse. Erm, not recommended...

The extra width of the Type 4 is pleasingly effective and not only do you have more room, but it is easier to get in. You sit in a bench seat, but because of the tunnel, the two occupants are very much in their own space, which also doubles up as holding you in situ around the corners! Alan has used a gorgeous, waterproof material in this car, which is a nice change from the leather you normally see. The Triking has more than 40 years in production, but are not resting on the heritage laurels – great to see.

Tony Divey, the founder, was a Lotus engineer and

TOP: Corners are where the Triking excels

ABOVE: An original Triking – same ethos as the Type 4, but today's car has moved on a lot

so while he wanted a Morgan for his regular jaunts to Northamptonshire or Oxfordshire to consult with various racing teams, he decided to build his own. That was 1978 and though transport, the Triking also competed in Classic Trials as well as racing. So the Triking has always had performance on its agenda – and you can feel that when you drive one.

I didn't measure it and I drove these cyclecars over a couple of months, but the Triking feels the lowest, with the most laid-back seating position, which puts you in a focussed mood. The pedal box is perfectly set up for heel and toe braking and the steering is so direct that only a kart betters it, yet it doesn't jump around in your hand. There's an urgency to a Triking, whether that's the gearing, the light weight, the power or a combination of all. And like the Pembleton, with that old-school V-twin with its low power up front, it gives me that Vintage Racing Club feel; that 'tally ho' sensation. Okay, I'll stop now..

The Triking has a more sporting feel to it compared to the others. That direct steering, the superbly balanced braking set-up, which uses the Brembo brakes from a Guzzi or new HEL calipers, the rifle-like sequential gear change and really positive, confidence-inspiring handling and perfect balance that together, gives an impression you are in a racing car. But one that handles real roads. This car isn't hampered by these strengths, but it does add a focus. Yet longer journeys are fine too, the engine and gearing are fine with sitting at cruising speeds and the superb windscreen adds practicality, reduces the fatigue of an aero screen and, in my eyes, doesn't distract from the looks.

Like Morgan, the Triking world is a close one, with meets, a great forum and tours. They've been sold around the world. And while Triking can build you a cyclecar, you can also buy kits and add a donor Moto Guzzi. Imagine the brilliance of driving a car you've built yourself into the already heady mix! And thanks to their diminutive size, you could achieve this in a single garage, albeit swearing a lot no doubt.

The Type 4 is better for many with more room and better rear suspension set-up. Personally I prefer the more intimate, earlier body styles; just like I prefer the standard track compared to the wider, better handling track and the four-valve engine to the eight-valve one. Yes, less power, less handling and less room; but for me that all adds to the experience. Like I say, it's just personal and for such a small company to offer so many options is fantastic and a credit to Alan.

I'd like mine in yellow. **OK**

For more information, see trikingsportscars.co.uk



CLASSIC BIKE · GUIDE

Christmas Gift Guide

Yes, it's that time again. Whilst we've become accustomed to Christmas carols being played in shops and on the radio since before the clocks went back, the run up to Christmas can nonetheless be an extremely stressful time. In particular, in finding ideal gifts for your nearest and dearest, and the feeling of impending doom at receiving dozens of pairs of socks, outrageous aftershaves that smell quite unlike anything else you've ever experienced and enough chocolate and salty snacks to give your doctor heart palpitations. So, we've made your life a hell of a lot easier with our exclusive Christmas Gift Guide! Check out some of these must-haves for classic bikers and leave the magazine open on these pages for all your loved ones to see...

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MORGAN 3

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT

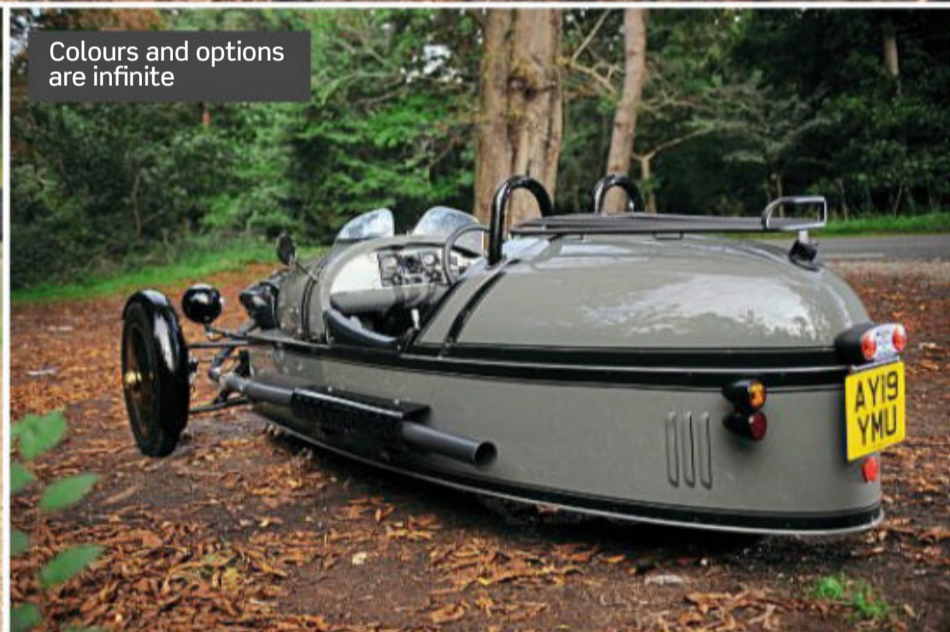
From the originator of the cyclecar, Morgan brings us the Morgan 3.



S&S engine wears JAP rocker covers



Colours and options are infinite



THE MORGAN 3 CAN TRACE ITS roots back to HFS Morgan's first vehicle, the Runabout, that he built for himself and what Morgan was founded on. Four wheels only appeared 20 years later!

Today's car has been around since 2011 and has a huge S&S 1979cc V-twin engine up front, driving through a Mazda five-speed gearbox, to a bespoke, British-made Quaife bevel box, which enables the rear wheel to be belt driven like Harleys are, like the original Morgan design.

Engines have gone through various states of tune and currently, thanks to Euro 4 are at 68bhp; though being S&S,

tuning parts are widely available and the Euro 3 engines had 83bhp.

The Morgan weighs 585kg (the Euro 3 cars weigh 50kg less), which is heavier than the other two cyclecars we've tried, but still featherweight in the car world. The steel chassis has aluminium body panels and the finish is just that little more polished than the others; you can tell this is a car put together by those used to getting it just right. Oh, and there are no colour choices – you can have any colour you like.

I knew the Morgan 3 was going to feel different; it has that tree-pulling S&S motor, a modern gearbox and is built

by one of the oldest car companies in the world. But I didn't quite realise how different, or why.

Starting at Crazy Horse, my local dealers (and what a dealership: Norton, Indian, MV, American Dodge cars, Morgans and more specials, customs and choppers than you can possibly imagine – plus awesome lunches! Blatant plug maybe, but I love the place) in Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, I instantly feel at home meandering through the overcrowded industrial estate roads like I would in a hire car. None of that old car, not-quite-sorted car feel where the clutch is too sharp, or gears a little tricky to find, issues.

Out of town and within minutes I'm completely relaxed. And here comes my first roundabout...

Dan Whiting, the friendly Morgan man at Krazy Horse, gives me a little pep-talk before I head off, especially reminding me about the skinny tyres. That first roundabout took any fears away; there's the sort of grip – i.e. limited – you would expect, but just power through and any understeer is cancelled out. Or, you can go in a little slower...

Out into the straighter roads that head through the woods and you can really open up the Morgan. Fifth gear will enable cruising at any legal speed easily, the limiting factor here is the wind in your hair and if you've ticked the 'sports exhaust' on the options list, noise. Lots of noise.

The gearbox is incredibly precise, easy to use and has a tiny throw from gear to gear, with a nice weight. I wasn't sure if it would feel too car-like, but you rest your forearm on the leather-covered tunnel and any gear change is just a small wrist flick.

I head off into the Badlands. Here, I find the Morgan happy place, twisty B roads. Up and down the 'box, the quite high steering wheel has you imitating a man reading the newspaper in the wind, judging the way ahead, and leaning, always smiling. Passers-by must think I'm mad.


Handling is like the other two in as much as the light nature allows lighter

spring rates, therefore softer damping and a more compliant, yet supportive ride.

Wheels are similar to the Triking and Pembleton but 19in at the front, which gives a slower initial turn in but a nicer ride and those all-important vintage looks. It also causes the only issue I found, which is for a small car the Morgan 3 has an enormous turning circle, or those large front wheels hit the exhaust. A re-routed exhaust could solve this, as a wider track, another solution, would make the car too wide. But I must stress, this is only a small gripe, you quickly get used to it. I also found the aero screens in the middle of my eyeline, but that's a personal thing – I shouldn't be so tall..

The finish of the interior, the fit of the body and the turn-key nature of the Morgan 3 makes this a super weekend toy for those who like the idea of a fun, if oddball vehicle, with all the dealer-support of a mainstream car or bike. And the Morgan world is one of the most active I know – the club is always up to something and even foreign jaunts are common place.

At just under £40,000 it looks expensive until you realise it's hand built by craftsmen, yet has back up and the resale value is second to none.

Many thanks to Dan Whiting at Krazy Horse for letting us drive the Morgan 3. They are the largest seller of Morgan 3 in the world and are truly enthusiasts! For more details see krazyhorse.co.uk 



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Am I in a fighter?

Try one without smiling – I couldn't!



“but just power through and any understeer is cancelled out. Or, you can go in a little slower...”

ARE 3-WHEEL CYCLECARS FOR YOU?



I WAS NERVOUS ABOUT PUTTING THIS feature into CBG, in case any readers thought it wasn't relevant. But cyclecars were always part of the biking world, and experiencing three of the British-made examples available today, you can see why.

Minimalist and in the elements, they also give the experience of riding a bike. They are lightweight, so they don't need masses of power and they all handle in a way that makes every drive extremely satisfying.

Pembleton, Triking and Morgan all said that it's predominantly bikers that understand cyclecars, whereas car drivers are not in their comfort zone. Consequently, they always seem to be made to feel at home at biking events. And it's a fact of life, that as we get older, so bikes can become trickier to handle.

A cyclecar gives you most of the feeling of riding a bike, you can tinker with them, adapt or personalise them, while not having to worry about balance, getting aching hips or knees over the seat or kicking the engine over. And for pillions used to feeling like a saddlebag, they are now up front with the driver, seeing your input and watching ahead, instead of the back of a helmet!

Negative points? A roof is as common as one on a bike, so you and your passenger have to dress appropriately, as you do on a bike. And you need to find a car-sized, albeit a small one, parking space. Storage is at a minimum, so a rack has to be fitted on the rear for touring; and as for potholes, miss with the front and it gets the rear.

These are not for everyone. You do stand out. You do get pointed at. I've found myself bypassing towns so I don't feel like

an animal in a zoo. Bikers have a small idea what that feels like, to not be one of life's sheep; the world's masses, but not like this. It's not a negative, but be aware you're going to stand out like you've got your mother's pants on your head.

This wasn't a comparison test, more an appreciation of an area of motorcycling that is still alive, but in the shadows; as it doesn't really know where it fits in. Instead of being cheap transport, it's now a fun plaything. They're all immensely fun. They all give as much satisfaction as a good ride out. They are all really good quality builds by sheer enthusiasts, who are only too pleased to help you.

For those that want the absolute bare basics, the Pembleton can be tailored for you, is light, well made and such a pleasure to drive, with front-wheel drive giving a familiar feel. The Triking can either be made for you or you can build it yourself which must be most satisfying and is arguably the most sporty here. The Morgan is the most expensive, most powerful, but also the most complete package, beautifully finished and with that dealer back-up. They all have their merits, so it's up to you.

I've spent my life riding motorbikes and still love them, big or small. But I really, really want a cyclecar. I've never grinned so much, enjoyed mundane journeys or felt so in touch with life as I do when piloting a cyclecar. Onlookers smile and wave while you're listening to the engine, revelling in the V-twin exhaust note and picking your line. And enjoying the sensations is amplified when someone is sitting next to you, enjoying it together. If you get a chance, you must try one. **CBG**

"It's not a negative, but be aware you're going to stand out like you've got your mother's pants on your head"



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New

RETRO



Royal Enfield Bullet Trials 500

THE WORD 'NEW' AND ROYAL ENFIELD Bullet seem somewhat funny when used together – a bike that has been in production for more years than any other motorcycle. The latest incarnation has been in production since 2009, which in today's fast-paced world is still something to behold.

Yes, it's no 'barnstormer' and no, it has not got the latest gizmos that most other bikes enjoy. But it does offer a true classic feel, combined with electric start, ABS brakes, left-foot gear-change for those used to modern machinery and it will keep up with modern traffic, providing you stay away from motorways, that is...

With their shiny new UK base in the middle of Leicestershire, the Indian manufacturer is on the up. The new 650cc twin

Interceptor has wiped the floor with established marques like Moto Guzzi and is selling so many bikes that even nearby Triumph are paying close attention to their rival. So, to play on this momentum, RE have brought out a new variant of the 500cc thumper, the Trials.

John 'Johnny' Victor Brittain started competing at the age of 17. His career is nothing short of spectacular, with more than 50 trade-supported trials victories and two Scottish Six Day Trial wins, with 13 gold medals in ISDT comps. It's a shame trials never attracted as much fame as other motorsports, or Brittain's name would be truly a household one. Sadly, Johnny passed away earlier this year so, unintentionally, this is a real tribute from the company whose bikes Brittain campaigned so well.

Let's get one thing straight – the new Trials 500 is not a trials bike, but more of a homage. The pale green frame (or you can choose red), single seat, slightly higher bars with cross-brace, upswept exhaust and light-trail tyres look the part, but at 192kg wet (423lbs) it's no racing snake. However, it does include a handy rack on the back; though if I got one I'd head for the diet cookbook of losing that rack, rear subframe, tool boxes and nacelle and head to the autojumble (or Hitchcocks excellent catalogue) for a smaller, alloy fuel tank, aluminium mudguards and bars and trials 'shorty' exhaust. Then add some proper knobbles ▶

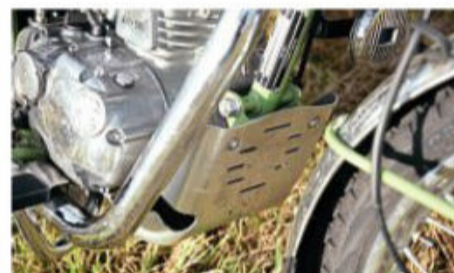
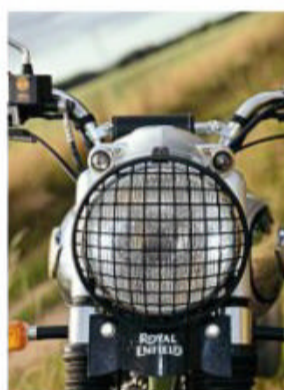


and we're talking! But, as it comes, what's it like? Looks are a personal perspective, but I like it. The electric start is reliable but I prefer to kick it over, as that helps to remind you that you're about to ride off on an old-style bike, one that could do with warming up and not be thrashed. Well, too much...

The gears and clutch are Honda-esque light and precise, while the throttle and power delivery is smooth from idle upwards. The brakes are puny but they work perfectly with the weight and speed and include ABS, while the suspension is the same as always; but with this machine, it just works. Road riding is amusing – you quickly find yourself using all the throttle, occasionally hitting the rather abrupt rev limiter before going for another gear. And I feel it has good gearing and enough power to carry a few less teeth on the rear for better touring ability, or even a sixth gear.

The only issues I had, and I stress this wasn't the best example I've ridden, being a press bike, were the vibrations through the bars at 60-70mph. Sometimes they were there, other times they were missing, so like I said, I think I had an abused one. Otherwise, I felt great riding a classic bike within the speeds of modern traffic without feeling in the way, and once I hit the city limits, the nimbleness of the Trials had me filtering with ease. Oh the smugness I felt passing all those 40k Euro boxes that shot passed me with my thud-thud Enfield and the traditional upright riding style. I'm sure my nose was held high...

But this bike is called the Trials, so let's head to the hills. Well, in Norfolk that means potholes and byways. If I was 'oop North', with proper trails, I'd have no doubt struggled. But dealing with unmade roads, farm tracks



What does a Bullet owner think of the new Trials?

Matt Henshaw owns a Nineties Bullet and he took the Trials out for a good ride. "I like the fifth gear – it feels the same, but I'm travelling 10mph faster than I would be on mine! Other than that, and the fact the gearchange is on the left, they both feel remarkably similar. I kept kickstarting it before I remembered the electric start... The brakes are better but still not too sharp, and I liked the saddle, which is comfier than I thought it would be."



and the odd bit of mud, it was surprisingly enjoyable. That lack of power helps you find grip, the soft suspension copes fine and there's a decent ground clearance. The tank is a bit of distraction as it's too wide, but I didn't notice the weight or even the lack of knobby tyres. Generally, it was fine and I had a hoot! Oh, and because the Enfield is so frugal, and the tank quite large, I hardly filled up. And the rack meant I could take my sarnies and a can of pop, find somewhere pretty and have a little break, safe in the knowledge that unlike most of my old-old bikes, it would start even when warm. I could even use the electric start (if no one was looking)...

The Royal Enfield 500 Trials costs £4699 on the road, the same as the Classic. This contrasts with the Bullet 500 EFI, which is £4199 on the road, and that will take a passenger, but not look as good. And then there is the 650cc Interceptor, which is £5499.

So, is it worth it? The finish in places is laughable; the exhausts are chromed, then riveted together and the rivets brushed over with a zinc paint to prevent corroding by someone in a dark room; wearing sunglasses. But other than that, it is much better than years gone by and I had a Suzuki over the winter that was rusty before I'd had it two weeks and that cost me much, much more. For the money, run in properly and looked after, I would love the combination of a cheap new Royal Enfield 500 Trials with all the reliability, warranty and, in general, keen, enthusiastic dealer network, with the excellent choice of accessories and extras you could get as and when, to make your bike exactly as you wanted it. Oh, and it's frugal too, so it could be a very cheap way to get to work with a smile on your face. **CBG**





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ROYAL ENFIELD

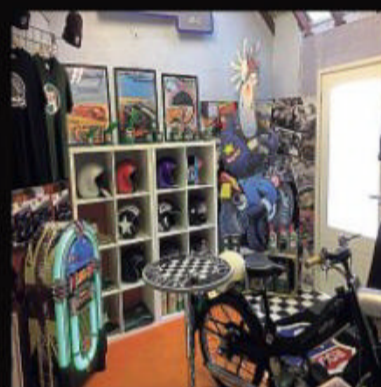
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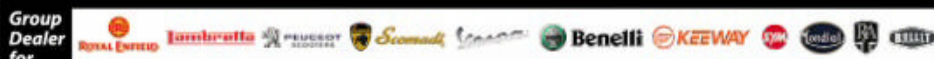


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CBG Workshop



OLI'S STARFIRE IS GETTING THERE. DON'T WE ALL KNOW THAT FEELING?

The Starfire has been waiting for a few finishing touches, chief among them being the arrival of the petrol tank with a nice new paint job.

The old tank was found to be very rusty inside and sprang a couple of leaks that were stopped with epoxy chemical metal as a temporary measure. There seemed little point in sealing it, as it was so heavily pitted, a tank sealant might not have stuck and only cutting the bottom out and having it properly welded seemed practical.

Fortunately, a replacement tank was found at Stafford last year and a long search ensued for a spray shop, all of which seemed to be either booked up for months, very expensive, or both. In the end the tank was handed over to the tender care of Vince at mental health charity Rusty Road 2 Recovery in Bridgwater, an organisation that helps people with depression or other mental health conditions by letting them work on old vehicles in a splendidly equipped workshop. Anyone who has worked on an old bike for hours knows how good for your soul it can be; sometimes at least.

Vince did a fantastic job on the tank, even reproducing at my request the minor blemishes that BSA had included in the original back in 1969. Also fitted was an original silver metalflake heat shield found in Ireland through a Starfire forum, a head steady and the right speedometer, the one originally fitted being a tiny item from the B50. The correct right-hand side panel was supplied by a bloke who heard me asking stallholders at the Netley



autojumble if they had one, and said he had one spare and posted it for, in classic motorcycle terms, peanuts. The panel needs painting white and the right transfers attaching.

There is just one fly in the ointment. The valve gear was very noisy when I got it, and attempts were made to reset the tappets, a curious business that requires turning the two eccentric rocker spindles. Disturbingly, it was found that there was no clearance at all on either tappet and on removal of the pushrod tunnel cover a C-shaped bit of metal that looks suspiciously like a top of a broken valve spring was uncovered.

The rocker cover will have to come off, the springs checked, and if it is a broken spring, the head will need to come off and the springs replaced. Oh well, it's not a huge job on a pushrod single and I didn't want to ride it in the winter anyway. Honest...



▲ RESTORED: TRIUMPH T110

All sorts of elektrikery involved in this T110 restoration



▶ NORTON CLUTCH WOES

Hutch sorts his Atlas clutch that someone broke...



PARTS BOOKS

Boring, but utterly valuable!

◀ RESTORED: BMW R60/5

Unbelievably immaculate



Workshop Essentials

Parts lists

EVEN IF YOU ONLY JUST SERVICE AND fettle your classic motorcycle, you will, at some point, require a part number for something. Contemporary bike shops don't stock what we want and those who specialise in our arcane hobby tend to be a lot more helpful if we can give them the magic codes.

If you've taken on a project with parts missing then you'll be potentially in need of a lot of components, and the way to properly nail this is to have a genuine factory parts lists. Before the planet went digital and prior to the advent of microfiche readers, the entire world's wisdom of motorcycle components was stored on paper in books. These well-thumbed mini-bibles were stock in trade for bike shops and divvied up the relevant numbers. If you have an old bike then, arguably, you need the appropriate parts book.

Yes you may find some scanned pages on the internet but can you guarantee it really is for your model? Will you take the word of a complete stranger? Having your own parts lists is so much more effective and reassuring.

Pretty much any parts list you might need is out there for sale, being available from Mortons archive and then there's the likes of eBay. So what if it does cost a tenner or two? Folk will pay more than that for a side reflector for crying out loud.


Understanding how the codes in parts lists work can also be key to buying unobtainable fixings. Bolt lengths and thread diameters are often hidden within those numbers.

With many current manufacturers it's quite likely that the part you want for your 40-year-old bike is still being made. Give your classic friendly dealer an old part number and they may very well be able to locate its modern equivalent. As

an example, who would have thought the first Yamaha R1 missiles would use clutch plates from an obsolete XS1100?

And if that part you need really is NLA (no longer available) then having its unique code is all you need to search on line. Hurl Yamaha 273-21337-00 at Google and learn that a throttle junction box support bracket was later used on the company's snow mobiles and subsequently on their lawn mowers!

Yes, the part number changes and the component's finish is different but at least you can find that missing part. Parts lists can get a stalled project back on course and broken engine up and running... which is why you need one for each and every classic you own.

■ Mortons Archive has a large selection of original parts lists available, to see if we have the one you need please contact Jane Skayman on 01507 529423 or email jskayman@mortons.co.uk 



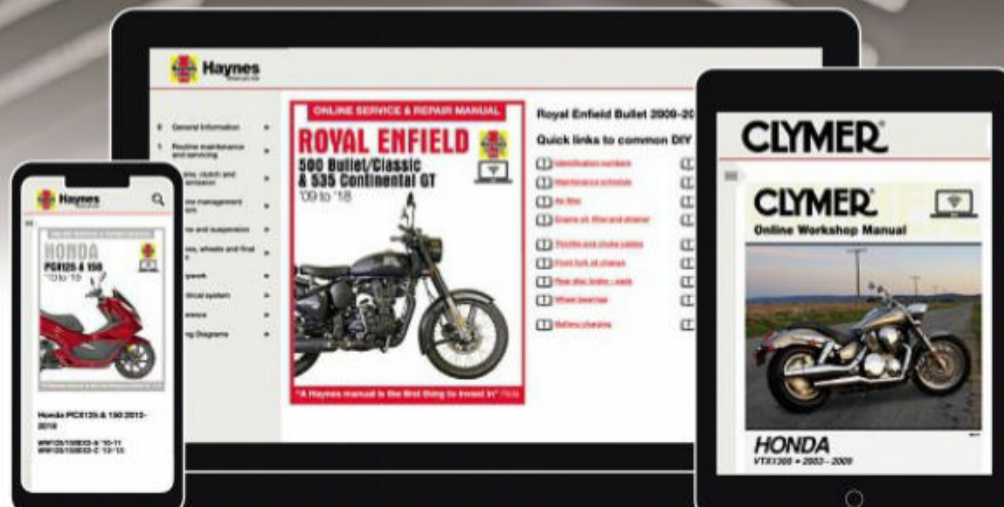
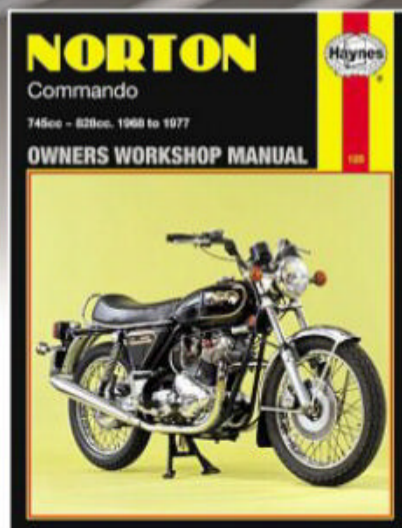


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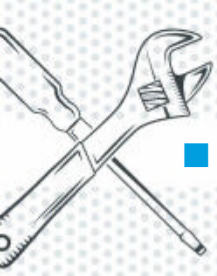
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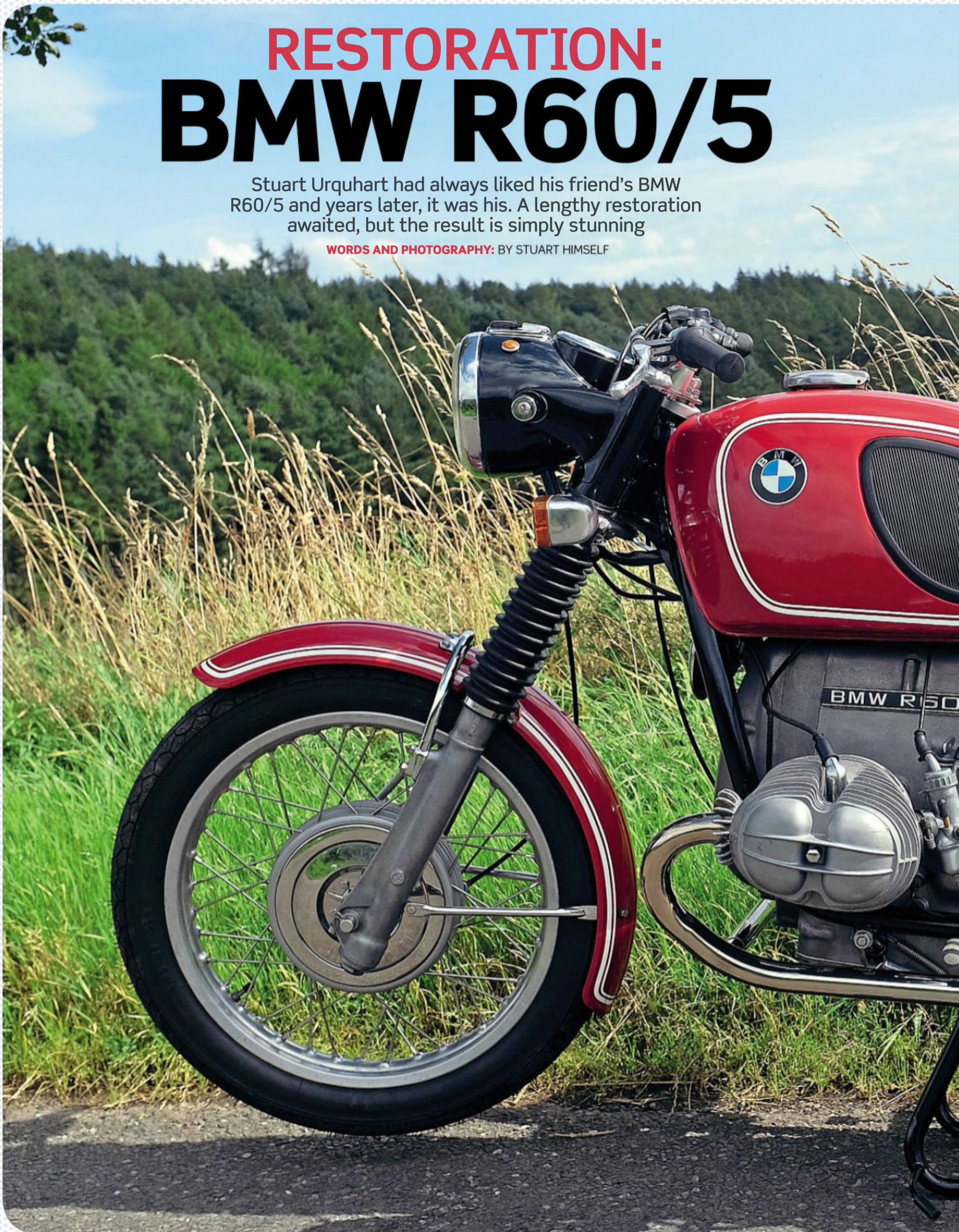





RESTORATION: BMW R60/5

Stuart Urquhart had always liked his friend's BMW R60/5 and years later, it was his. A lengthy restoration awaited, but the result is simply stunning

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: BY STUART HIMSELF





SERIES 5 BMWs 'FLOAT MY BOAT' AS THE saying goes. Back in the Seventies I thought they looked very different from other motorcycles of the era (Ducati 750 Sport aside). Of course I couldn't afford one as a penniless student, but I did have a Norton 750 Commando Roadster which I bought and restored with help from the bank of mum and dad.

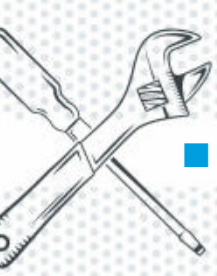
At twice the price of a new Commando, the refined ride of a BMW would have to wait another twenty odd years until I was earning a decent crust in the employ of Perth insurance giant, General Accident.

It was while living in Perth that I met BMW salesman Fred Scammell at a BMW club meeting in Ceres, Fife. We soon became friends and over the years I bought many boxers and K-series 'bricks' from Fred. But while I enjoyed countless BMW models courtesy of Fred's attractive deals, I always lusted after his own 5-Series 600cc boxer. To the extent that I made him promise me 'first refusal' should he ever decide to move it on.

Of course Fred never parted with his beloved boxer, despite constant ribbing from me. Sadly, in the spring of 2016 Fred passed away, ending my hopes of owning his boxer. However at Fred's funeral his wife brought up the subject, saying that Fred had always intended his R60/5 should come home to me, if I still wanted it. Several months later, I bought it.

When I got Fred's R60 back to my shed, the familiar sight of rusting chrome and oxidising alloy told the depressing story of decay. Many parts were missing, the seat had rotted, and both rear silencers were split and crumbling. The early Bing carbs were seized solid and the engine refused to kick-over, even with the spark plugs removed. On the upside, clean oil poured from the engine and gearbox when I removed their drain plugs.

I wondered what I'd let myself in for and I knew I was looking at a long and expensive restoration. So I confined the bike to a corner to await restoration... this usually happens during the boredom of a cold Scottish winter.



TAKE NOTES - RECORD EVERYTHING!

The following winter I began to strip the R60. Apart from the usual requirement for clean space, storage boxes and proper tools – my most important utensil is a digital camera. Equally important is making labels using an indelible marker and masking tape. Recording steps is invaluable during the strip-down and will save time and frustration at the rebuild stage, especially when memory has faded several months, or years, later. This crucial recording step cannot be over-emphasised, it's the joiner's interpretation of 'measure twice, cut once!'

Prepared thus, I set aside the loose petrol tank and seat. The exhaust pipe threaded clamps refused to budge when using the correct BMW tool, so I resorted to a blow torch and removed the clamps after heating them first. Little did I know then; but Fred's BMW was preparing for a protracted and frustrating fight all the way to the finish line.

By the second day of stripping I was down to a bare frame, harness, front end, engine and gearbox. At this stage I was astonished to have removed the majority of parts using only three spanners – namely a 10, 13 and 17mm open ender – surely worth a round of applause for BMW engineering and forethought? Two more days were spent removing and labelling electrical parts – especially the myriad of wires, relays, fuses, switches and instrument lights that lurk inside the R60's headlamp.

As I removed the forks and yokes, I discovered the steering head bearings and cups required replacing. However, removing BMW bearing cups are beyond the average home mechanic – being recessed and a shrink-fit into the steering column, with no protruding lip or collar to aid removal with a suitable drift. So I called my friend Dave for help – a pro mechanic whose technique was to weld a thin steel plate across each cup and allow it to cool. Shrinkage of the plate during cooling results in the cups popping off by themselves – marvellous to watch!

Dave also assisted in removing the engine and gearbox from the frame. Annoyingly, both cylinder heads refused to part from their barrels, so we removed each complete, to tackle separation at a later stage. The carbs were removed then submerged in a tub of diesel in the hope of freeing the seized slides after a good soaking. This worked, allowing me to deliver the contents for ultrasonic cleaning by friend Robbie of Abernethy Motorcycles.

But before the barrels and heads could be restored, I had to separate them. A club colleague suggested a clever trick: By inserting a stout timber post inside the barrel and head, the seal can simply be broken by repeated blows to the protruding post on a concrete



1: Doesn't look too bad, does it?

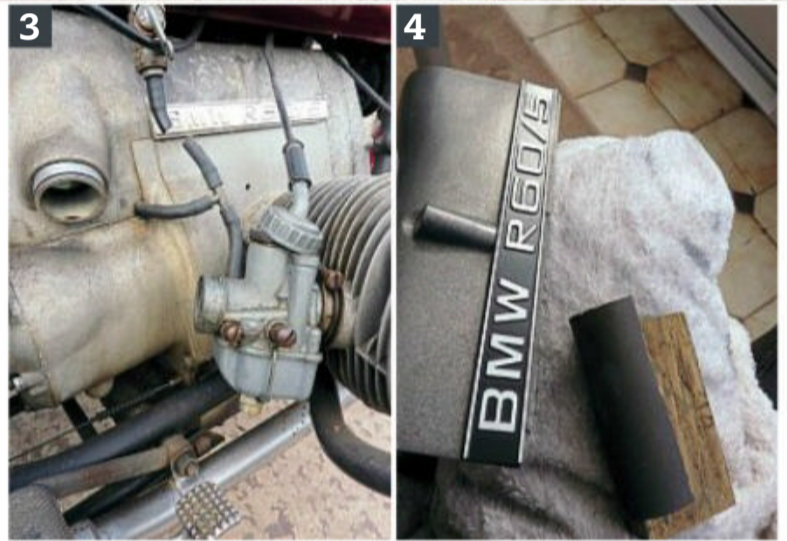
2: Replace or rechrome?

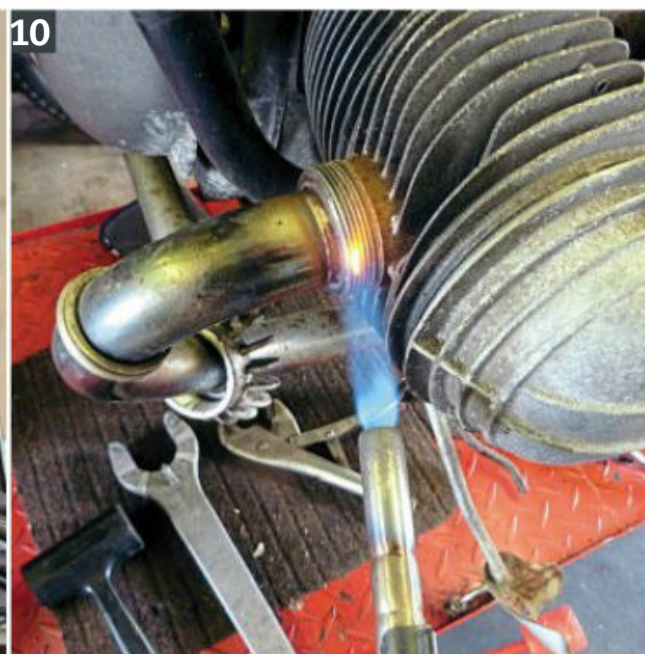
3: Carbs could be rebuilt

4: Attention to detail

5: Alloy rims were rebuilt by an expert

6: Methodical!





floor. This worked a treat without risking damage to the cylinder head or fins.

OUTSOURCE JOBS ASAP

It is good practice to place outsourced jobs early, such as professional wheel-building, powder coating, chroming and painting.

My hubs and recycled alloy rims went to local wheelsmith Barrie Brown of Windygates for rebuilding with stainless spokes. Barrie also vapour-blasted the rocker covers, heads and barrels to an amazing finish. The bare frame, sub-frame, swinging arm and other cycle parts were black powder coated by Coatech of Carnoustie. A boxed selection of rusting parts and brackets were sent to Agbrigg in Leeds for chroming. All my paintwork was handled by pro painter and friend Andy Wardlaw, who is a custom paint wizard and classic show winner. It is worth using accredited professionals, as the paintwork – especially the petrol tank, takes centre stage on any restoration.

IMPROVISE, PREPARE FOR SETBACKS

Before Andy could tackle my paintwork I had a rusting petrol tank to descale. A friend advised chemical treatment using Oxalic acid (yacht deck cleaner), which is apparently harmless when used on painted or electro-plated surfaces. But first the badly-rusted petrol tank's interior required serious scouring before trusting to chemical treatment. I use an assortment of loose nuts in paraffin, which is perfect for penetrating awkward corners and recesses inside the tank. At the end of the 'wash and tumble' the nuts can then be removed using a magnetic probe. I lost count of the number of vigorous washes the tank required before the emerging fluids ran clear – it was hard, physical work! The final step was to fill the tank with an Oxalic acid solution and leave it to soak overnight.

Next I tackled the rear shocks only to 'gag' at

7: Oxalic acid helped to get the inside of the tank clean

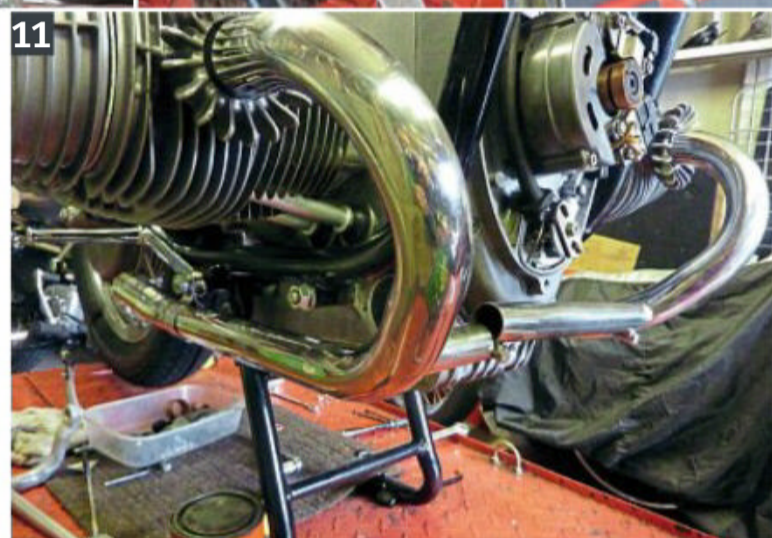
8: The hard work paid off

9: The two halves of the headlamp surround had such thick paint they wouldn't go together

10: We all love using blow torches

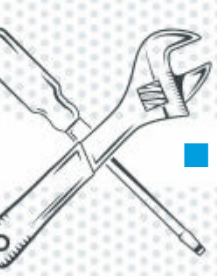
11: Lining exhaust up is fiddly but a sign the end is close

12: Simply beautiful



“my friend Dave – a pro mechanic whose technique was to weld a thin steel plate across each cup and allow it to cool. Shrinkage of the plate during cooling results in the cups popping off by themselves – marvellous...”





the cost of a BMW recommended spring compressor. I improvised by making my own using plywood end plates and threaded rods. Slow in operation, it nevertheless worked a treat! The damper units and springs were then sent to CoatTech to be silver powder coated.

THE ENGINE

Fortunately, the engine proved to be absolutely sound. Pistons, rockers, valves and guides also looked in excellent condition and only a decoke and valve regrind were required. The barrels were heated in an oven before the push-rod tunnels were extracted using a relatively inexpensive Motorworks tool. The barrels were then honed and polished by Engine Resource of Dundee, before being vapour-blasted with the cylinder heads.

As the gearbox was already on my workbench, removing the diaphragm clutch using four elongated bolts was the simplest of tasks. After locking the engine, the clutch flywheel can then be removed. The gearbox oil seal should be renewed, regardless of its condition.

COMING TOGETHER

Now that I was past the stripping stage, I indulged in the polishing of alloy parts – including the indicator bowls, front brake plate and rear drive housing. I then restored the engine’s starter cover by masking and painting each side’s model identification plate in satin black, before polishing and finishing the letters with 1200 grit emery paper.

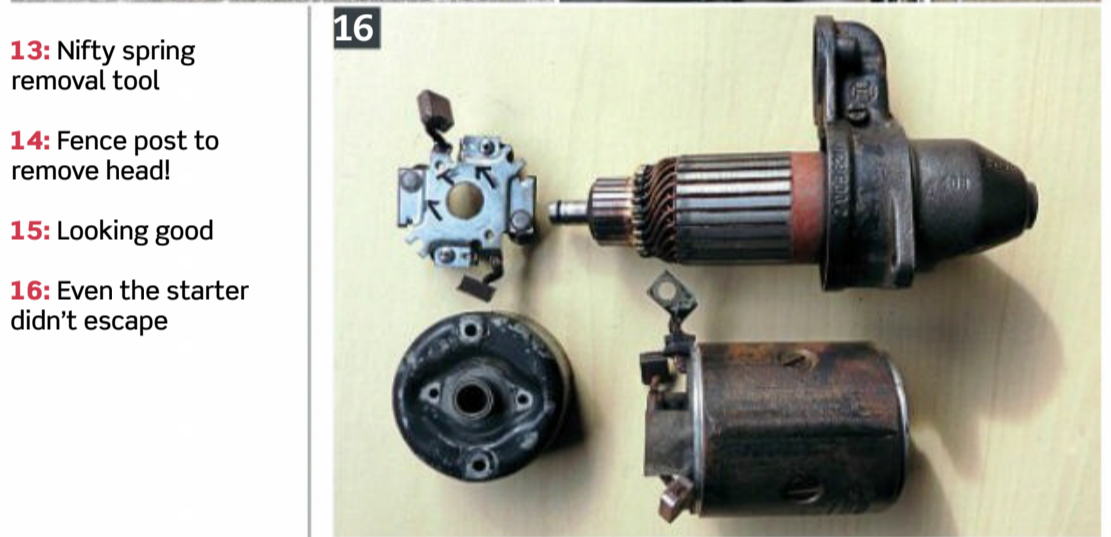
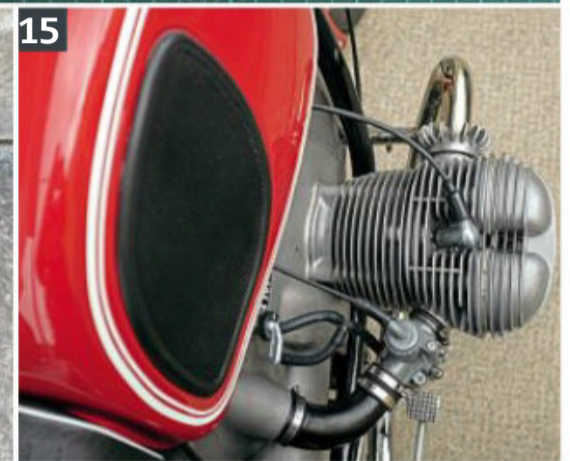
Refurbishing the starter was next on my list, as I’d already noticed the copper winding segments were caked in filth. Each segment must be scraped clean in turn – I use an old dental pick, which is ideal for the task. Next, the copper drum was gently polished using fine emery paper. The winding was then removed, cleaned and both inner bearings greased. I sprayed the outer casing matt black before the reassembled starter was successfully bench-tested by Stanford Motors.

The R60’s black paintwork arrived and I assembled the steering column with its new cups and bearings before adding the front forks and rear swinging arm to the frame. After refitting the new crankshaft oil seal, clutch flywheel and new clutch plate and diaphragm spring to the engine, another friend assisted in lifting the partly-built engine block into the newly powder coated frame – a crucial step that would allow me to add the gearbox, pistons, barrels and cylinder heads in time.

WORRYING NEWS

Then Andy called with some worrying news. While stripping old paintwork from the R60’s petrol tank he had discovered braising and filler around the left side badge area. This tallied with some deep scratches on the left side engine protectors and silencer and hinted that Fred’s bike had suffered a ding sometime in its past. According to Andy the damage might preclude the use of the original screw-on tank badges, however I was reassured that the finished job would be ‘as good as new’.

New Metzler tyres, rim tapes and inner tubes were fitted to the gleaming wheels and stainless spindles completed the rolling stock. I was thrilled to have a



13: Nifty spring removal tool

14: Fence post to remove head!

15: Looking good

16: Even the starter didn't escape

rolling chassis sitting resplendent on my work bench – minus its petrol tank, seat, headlamp and electrics.

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

The BMW (Denfeld) original seat was scrap, so I nonchalantly ordered a new seat from Motorworks, only to return it for the shorter style seat when I discovered my R60/5 was a short wheelbase and not a long wheelbase model – much to my education and surprise! This exchange wasted a fortnight.

Andy then delivered my paintwork – always a pivotal moment during any restoration. I hurriedly spruced-up the knee grips and glued them to the petrol tank before leaving it to dry in our conservatory. (Did you know that rubber parts can be made factory-fresh by rubbing with Swarfega?) Several hours later I returned to discover a kidney-shaped air bubble was growing on what I assumed was the repaired section of the petrol tank. Andy was very surprised, explaining that he cured the paintwork in oven temperatures far higher than my conservatory could ever reach. Andy sorted the petrol tank – however another two weeks of finger drumming crept by.

The repaired tank looked superb when I sat it on the rolling chassis. However, mounting the seat became a hassle when I noticed the newly powder coated frame was missing a rear seat mounting post. I made a dash to Stanford Motors who obligingly

“Did you know that rubber parts can be made factory-fresh by rubbing with Swarfega?”



17: Finish is incredible

18: An expensive bike when new

19: Hard work but worth it

welded on a bespoke post, after which the welds had to be touched-up with black enamel. But while attempting to refit the new seat, we found its female mounting brackets would not align with the corresponding male posts on the frame – so a custom set of brackets had to be made to attach seat to frame. This is a typical problem-solving exercise during a rebuild and you just have to grit your teeth, hold your cool, and get on with the job.

One of the toughest jobs was rejoining the wiring harness to the headlamp. Given its nest of labelled wires, idiot lights, fuse boxes, relays and ridiculously cramped hand space, rewiring the headlight was a tricky job indeed.

But frustrating as this was, mounting and rewiring the Jurassic five-part BMW headlight switch was a nightmare by comparison – anyone who has attempted the job will wince in empathy. Suffice to say it took me four expletive attempts to hold all the inner switch components under (spring) pressure, while at the same time bending back four outer chrome plate ‘ears’ that hold the whole plot together.

After the headlamp was fixed to the forks, I had another battle inserting the sealed beam unit inside the headlamp shell – there was just no room! So I spent another hour shifting and relocating wires to create space. But when the sealed beam unit eventually slipped inside its headlamp shell – the chrome rim refused to fit!

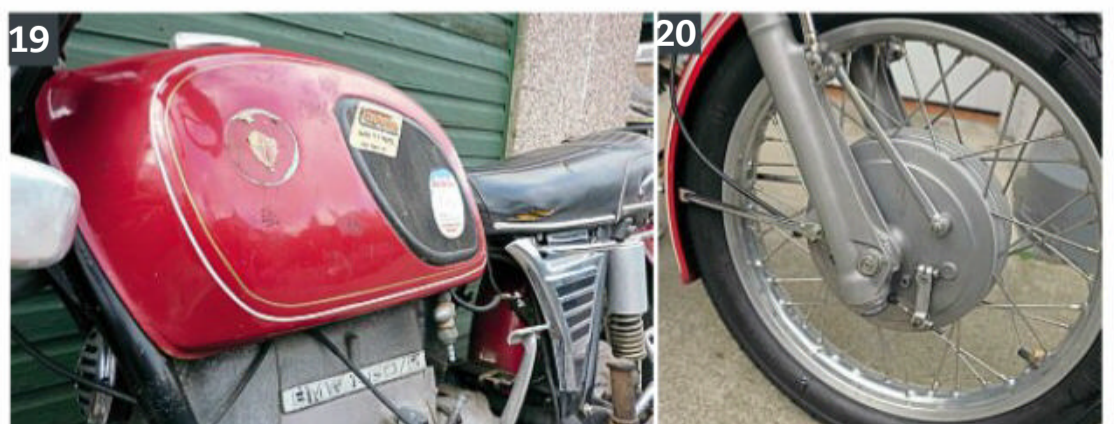
Readers will have already sussed that Andy’s thick black paintwork required sanding around the headlamp circumference to allow the shell and outer rim to clip together properly... but after much frustration and relentless sanding, the rim snapped shut!

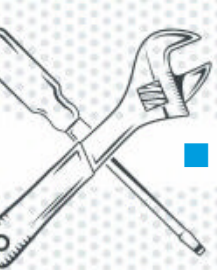
Last jobs were to fit the new HD battery, voltage

control box, starter and flasher relays, followed by the carbs and a set of new stainless exhausts supplied by Motorworks. Once again I found myself in a boxing match when the two front exhaust pipes would not connect with the system’s balance pipe. The problem turned out to be an off-centred outlet on the left pipe. The solution was to slacken off the entire exhaust system – then painstakingly ease together the misaligned pipes before bolting the system back together again. This sort of problem is quite typical of pattern parts today.

The clutch and throttle cables were reconnected and the Bing carburettors balanced. I fitted the petrol tank, new fuel taps and wired up the battery. Fortunately I had already fitted new points and a condenser when the engine was on the work bench – so timing the ignition was a simple job using a test lamp. A quick test of the headlamp and handlebar switches fired up the indicators and lighting in turn and a glance at the speedometer’s x3 warning lights signalled that oil, neutral and ignition were ‘all systems go’. A prod on the kick-start also produced some lovely blue sparks across the spark plugs. I replaced the plugs and flooded both carbs before stabbing the electric start button. The engine turned over vigorously, but refused to start. Over a dozen turns later, both starter and battery began to wane, as did my spirits. It was back to the drawing board.

Over the next few days I checked everything relating to fuelling, ignition and electrics but successive attempts to fire up the R60 failed – even the traditional trick of syringing fuel down the bores proved futile.





21

THE MAGICIAN'S APPRENTICE

Everyone I consulted about the problem suggested the ignition timing must be wrong, but I remained suspicious of the carbs. My only option was to call old friend and BMW guru Tom Gorrie for his expert assistance, and several weeks later he popped over (he's a busy consultant!). After we'd run through all the possibilities that could cause poor starting Tom declared: "It's the carbs mate!" I was somewhat relieved, but concerned.

I watched in awe as Tom screwed in both air screws then backed off the throttle stop screws. From his tool bag he produced a can of brake cleaner and sprayed several bursts into the carb intakes. I was instructed to hold the throttle half open while simultaneously hitting the start button. On the first turn of the engine there was a rumbling from below and a plume of blue smoke spiralled out through the open garage door, before the engine coughed, then died. Given my previous starting attempts I was astonished. 'She Lives!' I enthusiastically bellowed.

Tom again fidgeted with the air screws and throttle stops. This time he handed me the brake cleaner before he took control of the throttle and electric starter saying, 'If she fires, keep spraying the carbs until I signal you to stop.'

After several turns on the starter and several bursts of brake cleaner the engine began to splutter and cough, then suddenly, Tom had the engine revving sweetly and sounding much as a BMW should. The characteristic exhaust note took me back many years and I couldn't help but let out a delighted giggle. I glanced at both the charging and oil pressure lights and was relieved when both blinked out.

After fiddling once more with both carbs, Tom had the engine running sweetly and unassisted by brake cleaner. At tick-over however, one carb caused the engine to 'hunt' when covered by Tom's expert hand, and he promised to return with a vacuum gauge and balance the carbs properly. I was thrilled that after forty-odd years of rotting away in Fred's garage, his old P&J was running again. It was a heart-warming moment.

Days later Tom returned and accurately set up the carbs with his vacuum gauge. I now had a living, breathing boxer twin to enjoy.



22

21: Organisation and a light workplace help

23: Inspirational brochure photograph

THE TEST RIDE

Well, needless to say, my seven months' effort was rewarded with a smooth and gentle first ride. A warm engine starts immediately, but the early Bings require heavy flooding when cold and can take anywhere between three to seven prods on the starter to fire up the engine! (I'm told constant vacuum carbs are the cure, but I prefer to stick with the originals).

Comfort and civilised riding is any BMW's forte and Fred's restored R60/5 delivers in every way. She's also oil-tight. The front t/s brake is a belter; the rear is a little less accomplished. For a Seventies classic the suspension and handling is excellent and the engine pulls well for a measly 600. The sweet gearbox and light clutch also enhance the ride experience. Such is the stimulating ride I wonder how I've managed without a boxer twin for so long.

I am thrilled with the bike and it was well worth the fight – and the considerable cost of restoring it to the road. I like to think Fred would be pleased with his old P&J's transformation and I'm looking forward to miles and miles of smiles. **CBG**



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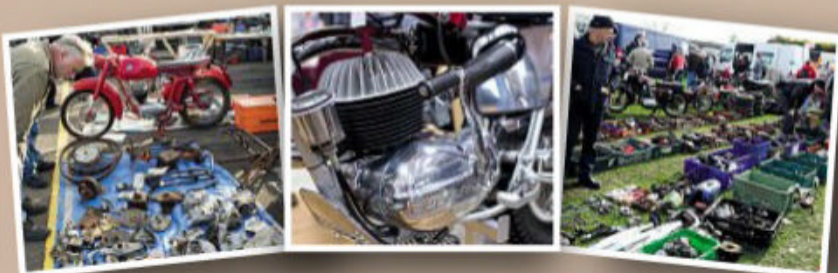
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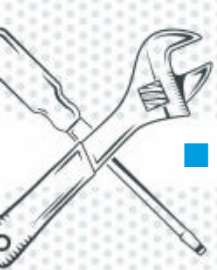
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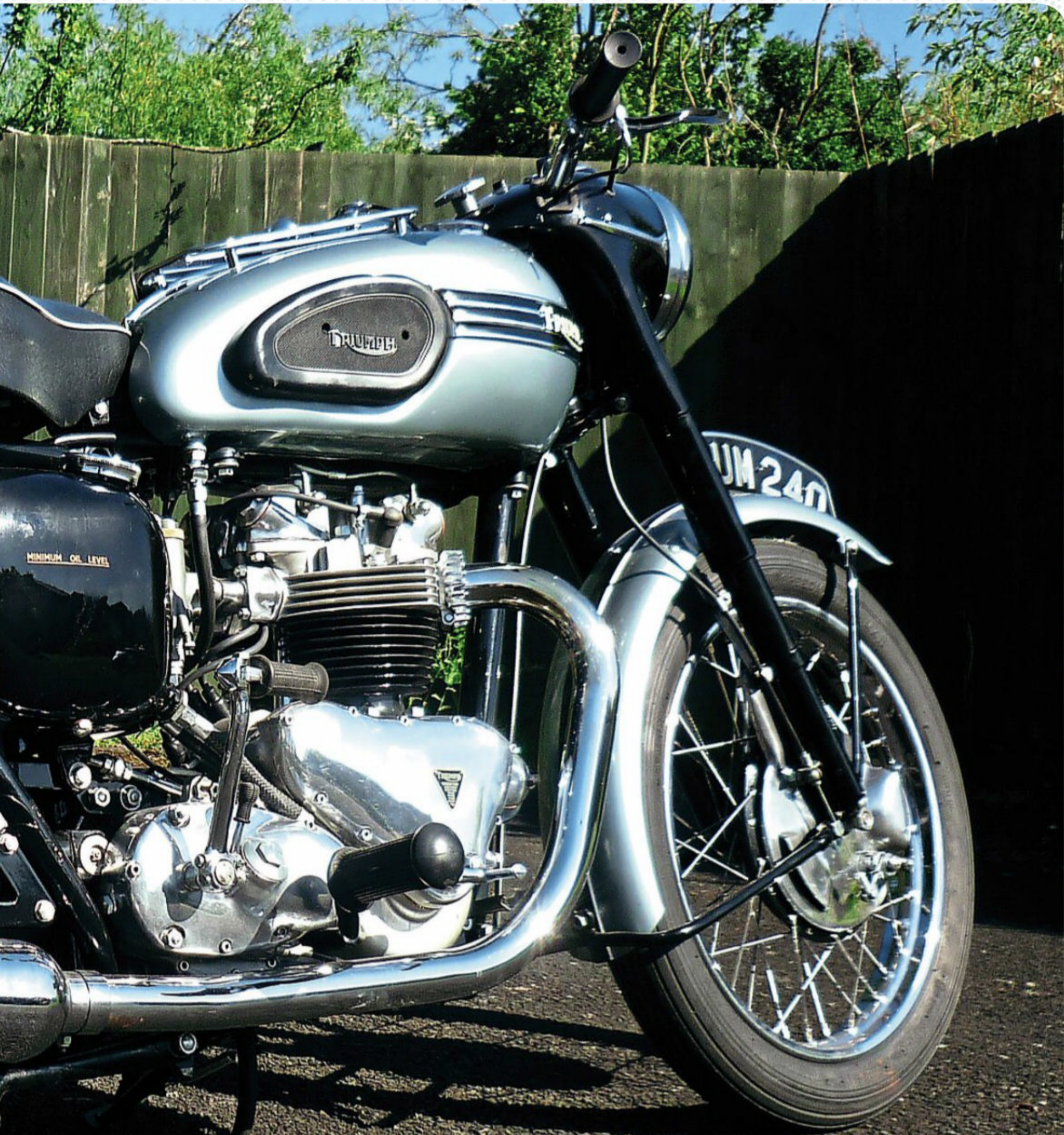
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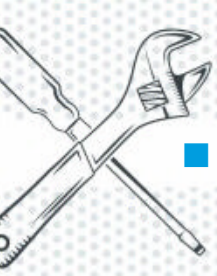
A handsome bike from any angle.
Correct suspension for 1965 too



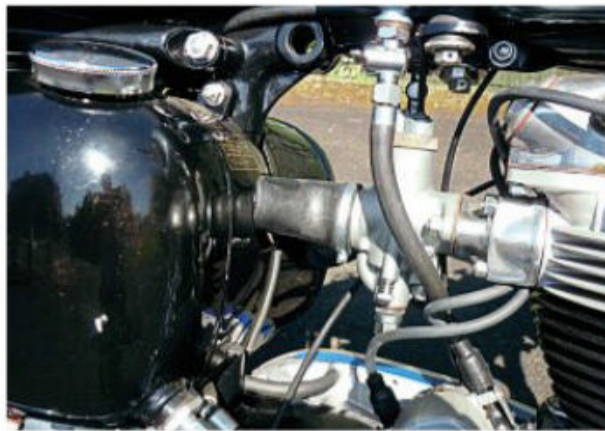
TRIUMPH TIGER 110

A 1956 restoration

WORDS AND PICS: ROBERT DAVIES. THANKS TO: GRAHAM HORNE



The later aluminium head with strengthening between the front fin area to reduce noise



Many twins lost their air filter and connecting tube years ago



New oil pipes and foot rubbers are a must for a good restoration - don't skimp.

INTERESTED IN RESTORING A CLASSIC Triumph Twin? If you are, the Tiger 110 is an excellent choice. Made between 1954 and 1961, it was reported by a magazine of the day to be 'versatile' - it was the outstanding quality of the Triumph T110 that was readily apparent to those members of *Motor Cycling's* staff, who took part in the test of this machine.

It was a high performance 650, designed primarily for the export market, and it is certain that everyone who had the privilege to ride the bike back in 1954, enjoyed that experience. Its arrival came just on the eve of the International Six days Trial, and it was deemed appropriate, that with the machine's quickly perceived reputation for 'nippy' performance, the model might well be employed in the press coverage of that event. And so it was.

However, as the decades have rolled on, those who profess to 'know' their Triumphs,

have concluded that this model is the best one Triumph ever turned out. Indeed, in the journalistic outpourings of the day, there was much emphasis on how fast the Tiger went - and it is a pretty fast machine, with a top speed of just over its namesake - 113mph - with the silencers unbolted, apparently.

So where does this model lie in the evolutionary process from Speed Twin to Bonneville? The original Speed Twin was much more of an original machine than the Bonny would ever be, for it broke the mould of all other twins that came before it, and its styling, by Edward Turner, was a big part of the appeal.

LUST FOR SPEED

But in the never-ending search for more power, the Thunderbird appeared to satisfy - for a short time anyway - the lust for speed that came especially from the US. In

a land where the smallest Harley-Davidson was the 750 W Series, the 500cc Triumph Tiger was regarded as a baby bike, and the Americans wanted bigger.

Launched in 1949, the Thunderbird gave them what their little hearts craved, but it wasn't long before they were clamouring for a bigger carb. The Thunderbird had the desired effect on Triumph's US fortunes, with sales nearly tripling in 1951; but no company could rest its future on one model alone. And lo, the company made the T110; mild tuning had done the job. With bigger inlet valves, 8.5-1 compression, and a sports cam giving up to 42bhp, the T110 was a winner. The package was improved by an 8in front brake, and a new swing arm frame - much more comfy than the old sprung hub or rigid rear end of its predecessors.

Always on the lookout for more power and speed, the Americans continually requested a faster twin carb engine, so Triumph responded in the R&D department, and one of the first things they had to improve was the crank. The old three-piece crank was at the limit of what it could take, so a much stronger, one-piece forged crank was produced. This became the reliable 'heart' of the engine that stayed with the T110 and its successor the Bonneville, for some years.

INCREASED OUTPUT

Once this was sorted, the company went on to increase the power output with a splayed alloy head, twin type Amal 6 carbs, E3134 inlet cam (around for some years) and 3325 exhaust. These things added altogether on one machine essentially made the prototype Bonneville that produced on test just over 48bhp.

Certainly along with an increase in power, came the little niggles that always accompanies something new; so the clutch and front brake were beefed up accordingly. Tests went well, with Percy Tait hitting 125mph on the MIRA straight.

Now, over 50 years later, this bike is well and truly in the 'classic collectable' bracket, and there are always examples (good and bad), for sale, and I can't see the modern owner taking a well fettled bike through a trials landscape - oh you would, would you?

But, if you're looking for a good-looking



An attractive but not very effective SLS front hub - well not after 90mph anyway



Lovely chrome on the Brituro silencers - shrouded shock absorbers as per year



Four bar badge is correct for the year

British machine with plenty of pep, then the Tiger 110 may be just the bike for you. Graham Horne has just restored one, and this is his account:

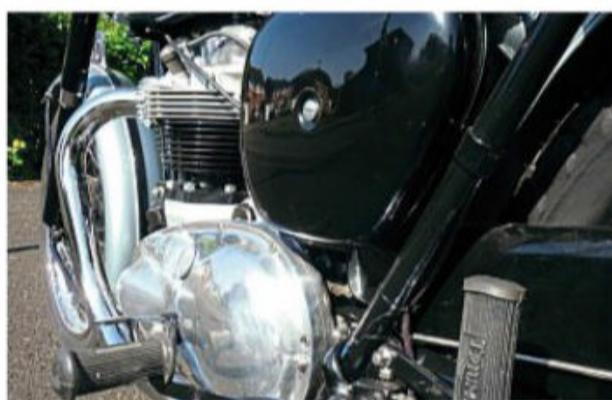
“A pal of mine was after a T110; this was in 2015, and he found a fairly rough example for sale in a magazine. The bike was in Chester, so we drove up from the Midlands and bought it – for the right price (be prepared to pay up to £3500 for a rough example) contemplating a full restoration. It hadn’t been used for some years, was liberally dosed with rust and had at some stage been ‘modernised’ – a word used here in the pejorative sense. It had the mouthorgan tank badge fitted – a definite ‘no’; a later front mudguard, fork bottoms and front wheel. These had all been well spotted at purchase, and would have to be replaced – if there was to be authenticity.

REPLACEMENT PARTS

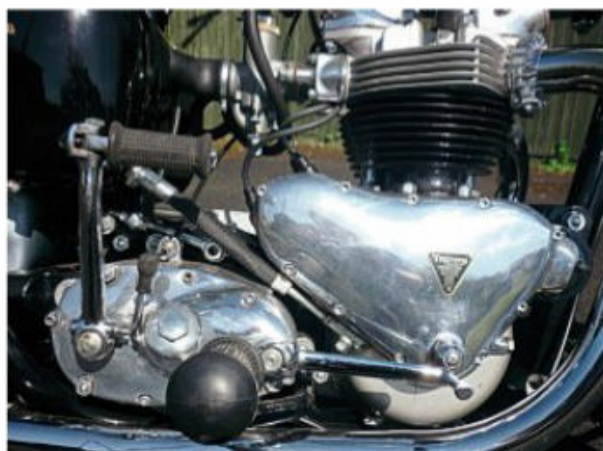
Once home, I started to strip the whole thing, and commenced looking around for replacement bits. I found a half decent correct fuel tank (£60) at a founders’ day rally – it needed work, but good ones are rare items – perhaps the most difficult part to source for the Tiger.

To go with the tank I needed the right four bar badges; they came from Ace Classics for £60, and I have always found AC to be really useful for Triumph spares, and to prove a point, they also supplied a good replica front mudguard, air filter and rubber filter connector.

Another useful Triumph spares company I use is TRi-Supply, and from them I had the exhaust pipes. New silencers were found at Brituro Exhaust in Birmingham – £80 each –



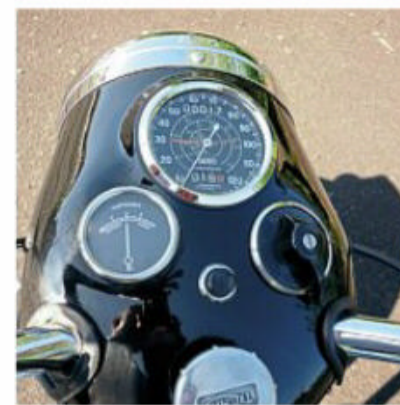
Primary drive side is just as attractive as the timing side, toolbox has powder coat under paint



Classic features of the Triumph timing side. Alloy head shows the extra metal between the fins



Rider's view. Did anyone use those luggage racks? Apparently, they did I hear – waterproofs and suchlike



The nacelle isn't everyone's cup of tea, but it does provide the minimum of information

they are well made and have a nice lustrous thick chrome finish. When all else fails for other bits, eBay is the place to go – it may well be your first port of call.

You can't sit around waiting for stuff to arrive, so once the engine was out, it went to a local workshop – we all have our own – for the usual crank regrind (-.20 thou) – rebore etc. I bought GPM (Italian) +.40 thou pistons and engine bearings from Motorcycle Accessories, Birmingham; and while all that was going on, I knocked out the swing arm bushes, sent all the black parts to Redditch shot blast for the powder coat, and then fitted new bushes and spindle. I know some guys put the old spindle back in, but why skimp on doing a good job?

Some items that were powder coated also came in for a coat of two pack paint, and that included the headlight nacelle, tool box, fork shrouds and mudguards, these components always look much better when painted; and if the paint does get knocked later, there is always the powder coating underneath. And while I think about it, I ought to mention the usual problems that come with the three-part nacelle. Firstly, it's an unusual occasion when one obtains all three items from the same place – I'm not saying it's impossible – but it is rare. Also I find that the nacelle has usually been bent out of shape over time – due to accident damage.


So, before they went off to the powder coaters, I used some gentle persuasion with a hammer. But, if you don't feel that you have the skills to do a good job of this, then

by all means hand them over to someone who can. I went to Central Wheels to have new rims and stainless spokes fitted to refurbished hubs.

MAGNETO

One can always fit electronic ignition, but I have found that a well refurbished magneto provides excellent service, but has to be done right. This one went off to Midland specialist Tony Cooper (Halesowen) because if a magneto is refurbished properly, a Triumph Twin will start and run smoothly for years. Often the shellac coating on the wiring breaks down, and the engine stops when it's hot. The disheartened owner finds that when the engine is cool again it starts and runs fine. So, if this is happening to your bike, get your magneto checked – by an expert.

The workshop manual, when giving advice for ignition timing, will declare that once you get the right-hand cylinder timed, the left will automatically be correct. This isn't always the case if the magneto isn't done to a 2 degree tolerance. One problem – amongst others – these Twins had, was with cracks appearing in the aluminium head, especially at the rear stud holes, and many will have been repaired more than once.

The remedy is to have steel inserts placed in these holes. Again you need a competent engineer who has done this kind of work before. And then, when all is in place, my final advice is stand back and admire. 



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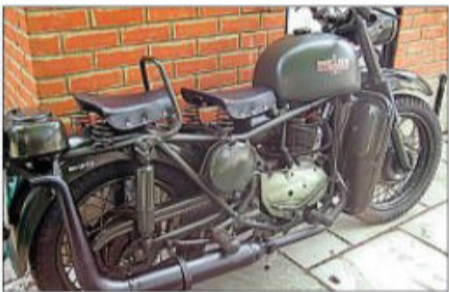
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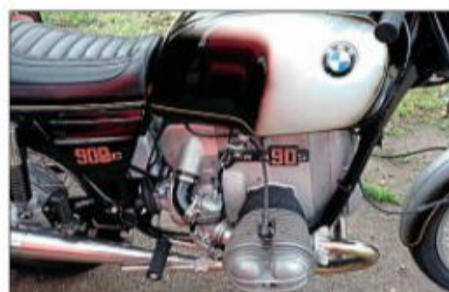
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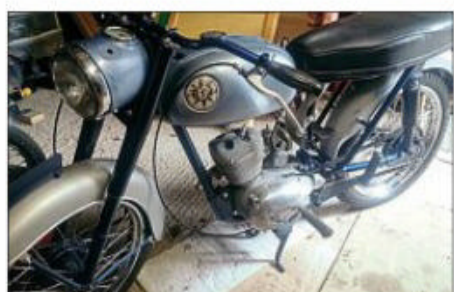
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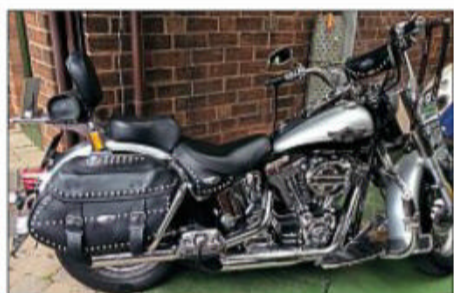
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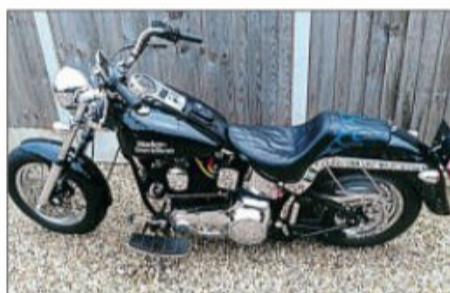
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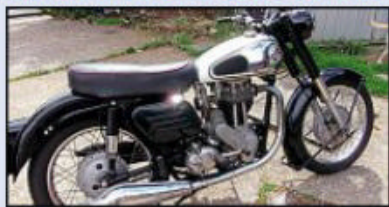


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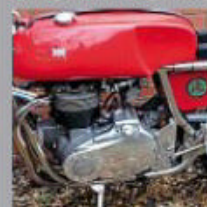
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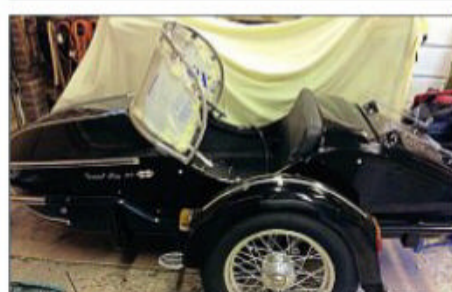
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CCM 350cc fun bike, 1989, only 50 of this model made, rebuilt Rotax 2 stroke engine, big end, mains and all gearbox bearings, powder coated frame, new swinging arm and steering head bearings, new mudguards, seat recovered, white power shock, Marzocchi forks, very light affordable CCM not registered but all numbers present, starts and runs well, needs finishing but all hard work done, ideal Vinduro, £1850. Tel. 07876 642107. Lincs.

HONDA CB125S1 1975, UK bike, ride or restore (or bit of both), serviced, newish tyres, brakes, chain, cables, bearings, battery, fork tubes, plenty of NOS spares also available, poor finish, no MoT/tax required, also available completely stripped/rebuilt 2nd S1 engine with 'big fin' 150cc barrel and re-con crank (£225 if separately sold), £900 all-together, interested in finding a Suzuki SB200 circa 1980-82? Tel. 07813 845894. Worcs.

HONDA XL185 1981, 35,000 miles, MoT, new tyres, good condition, but tank could do with a lick of paint, bike in regular use, just need bigger bike, £1200. Tel. 01633 882556. South East Wales.

KAWASAKI KZ440C 1981, MoT till 12/4/2020, very good runner, new seat, new rear shocks, new diaphragm in carbs, new master cylinder and some more new parts, £750 ono or swap for Honda CB250U or Honda Benly 200. Tel. 07766 863213. Staffordshire.

KAWASAKI Z750 B1 model, 1976, twin, £3000. Tel. 07752 543554. Birmingham.

MODIAL HYPSTER 125cc, 2017, only 600 miles, excellent condition, £1500. Tel. 02083 114230. London.

MZ TS250 Super 5 spares or repair, part dismantled, easily sorted, ring for details, £450 Tel. 01530 460573. Leicestershire.

PANTHER Model 100S, 1955, for re-build, mostly complete, has a few spares, old green log book, £2700. Tel. 01284 753974; 07783 277629. Suffolk.

ROYAL ENFIELD Bullet 350, 2008, carburettor model, old style looking, engine 2300 miles from new, black, chrome, years MoT, as new condition, £2400. Tel. 07791 936281. Kent.

SUZUKI BANDIT S600 1999, red, 7500 miles, good condition, Scottoiler, £1500. Tel. 01539 741341. Cumbria.

SUZUKI GS500FA 2005, only 10,500 miles, excellent condition, mag wheels, fairing, £500. Tel. 02083 114230. London.

TRIUMPH 1956 Speed Twin dismantled but all there, with two frames, engine and gearbox complete and untouched, Buff log book only, £3500. Tel. 01237 472734. Devon.

TRIUMPH 120R 1966, fully restored in 2012 by previous owner and fitted with a recon 1969 120R engine, (only covered 1256 miles since rebuild/restoration). It has electric start, new rear chain, colour change respray from original, new exhaust recently fitted by myself, have the validation certificate, £8000. Tel. 01772 635161. Lancashire. colin-norma@hotmail.com

TRIUMPH 3TA 1962, clean genuine bike, matching numbers, original reg with original green logbook, solid bike, new pipes & silencers, £3750. Tel. Geoff 07932 094979. Lincs.

TRIUMPH T120C (TT), restored, phone for details, £10,500. Tel. 01933 355996. Northants.

TRIUMPH TIGER CUB 1963, black and silver, sympathetically restored, loads of new parts very recent engine rebuild, valuable number plate, road fund MoT exempt, £3750. Tel. Brian 07877 421828. Derbyshire.

YAMAHA FJ1200 1991, 11 months MoT, new front brake discs, good tyres, good C&S, under 32T/miles, V5, £1250 ono. Tel. 07989 237837.

YAMAHA XT125R 2008, with V5, great engine, great gearbox, easy project or field bike, £595 ovno. Tel. 07772 797112. Derbyshire.

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BMW R75-R80 1972-1996, petrol tank with tool box on top, no dents, £250. Tel. 07572 581870. Staffs.

BSA A10 B31 etc, Norton Commando clutch conversion complete. Tel. 07811 271702. Caerphilly.

BSA GOLD STAR engine stand, £35. Alloy sump plate 10 finned, £25. Haynes manual BSA pre-unit, singles, 1954-1961, original, 1977, £10 excellent condition. Tel. 01276 932987. Berks.

EXHAUST CANS one pair GSXR1100 K/L/M/N, full power genuine Suzuki stainless exhaust cans, note: these are not standard, though they look like it, they are special cans. Tel. 07970 403617. Herts.

FAIRING: Police Avon Dolphin fairing, off 1967 Triumph 650, inc screen, it will need refurbishing, very tough material, screen may be salvaged, £30. Tel. 07768 976086. Lancs.

HONDA CB250 Clubman frame, forks, shocks and wheels, no V5 but have NOVA, buyer responsible for collection, £300 ono parts are in Northern Ireland. Tel. 07444 204625.

ITALIAN PARTS large quantity, Ducati, Benelli, Cagiva, Laverda, Morini, British, Japanese, BMW, MZ prefer to sell in bulk, consider exchange. Tel. 07833 906288. Essex.

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MOPED/MOTORCYCLE Stanley headlamp 'reflector' no bulb holder, but good condition, although GRP housing is scrap, 4-1/2" diameter, £5 + £3 p&p. Tel. Richard 01842 819969. Norfolk.

PETROL TANK 5 gallon Norton Manx alloy petrol tank to fit wideline frame, made by Holt works approx four years ago and never been used, fitted with alloy Monza cap and one fuel tap outlet 1/4 bsp, £400 ono. Tel. 07762 183552. Birmingham.

SPARES FOR SALE: Triumph pair of Burgess pattern silencers and downpipes, excellent condition, perfect chrome, £175 ono. Norton Commando Fastback, tail fairing, very good condition, £95 ono. Amal Mk1 concentric carb, 932-33 1" 1/4, good condition, £75 ono. Tel. 01883 348187. Surrey.

TRIUMPH Bathtub panniers, pair, req respray, new locks, offers, buyer collects. Tel. Jim 07710 853658. Surrey.

TRIUMPH pre unit T120/TR6 or T110 etc, pair front exhaust pipes in unmarked excellent condition, changed to Siamese system so now surplus, £80 the pair, will post. Tel. 01865 762859. Oxfordshire.

TRIUMPH T140V Bonneville, 1976, complete forks with yokes, steering head taper rollers handlebar clamps, decent condition, £250. Tel. 07973 968401. Yorkshire.

TROJAN MINI MOTOR engine, c/w carb, exhaust, generator, tank etc, needs recommissioning, £295. Tel. 07951 536578. Herefordshire.

TWO MAGNETOS one piggy back dynamo plus one plain needs o/haul but fairly sound, free. Also 60s-70s M/C magazines, all free to callers, donation to cancer research appreciated. Tel. 01938 552984. Powys.

VELOCETTE AND VINCENT PARTS: Venom/Viper electric starter kit Alton, new, never fitted, £1200. Oil tank anti-foam type, £150. Thruyton petrol tank new, £350. Vincent twin 1000cc set flywheels with conrods, £600. Set exhaust pipes and silencer in excellent condition, £400. Tel. 07584 824079. Oxon.

YAMAHA 250/350LC fuel tank with tap, superficial surface rust but sound, £60. Early R1 seat tail panel, £30. Lower l/h fairing panel, £25, all plus postage. Tel. 01793 616037; 07854 348947. Swindon.

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AUTOCYCLE OR MOTORBIKE project wanted, looking for me and my 10 year old boy, can be anything, running or not, in bits. Tel. 01872 241852. Devon.

BMW R90S wanted, ideally to restore or needing work, but anything considered. Tel. John 07836 758534. Durham.

BRITISH BIKE PROJECT wanted for my retirement, anything considered, big twin, single, two stroke etc, have cash and can collect. Tel. 07932 948153. Notts.

BSA A10 A65 or similar wanted for a restoration project, will travel. Tel. 07932 948153. Notts.

BSA BANTAM PROJECT wanted any model, in any condition, from D1 to B175, any spares too. Tel. 07538 696157. Midlands.

BSA GOLD STAR parts still wanted, DBD34 crankcases, DB32 exhaust cam, magneto drive pinion, cylinder head, good price paid for good parts and will collect. Tel. 07719 856049. South Yorks.

CLASSIC BIKE PROJECT complete or not, 'special' or standard anything considered running or not even completely dismantled, willing to travel anywhere and pay cash on collection, also looking for classic trail or motocross bike. Tel. 07931 557018; 01613 350497 evenings. Lancs.

CYCLE MASTER and any type of auto cycle wanted or parts. Also wanted NSU Quickly or parts and Puch Maxi or parts. Tel. 07790 168224. Warks.

DOES SOMEONE know how to replace a BSA C11 three speed kick start quadrant, happy to pay for help. Tel. Mike 07976 414531. Nottingham.

DOUGLAS 80 PLUS wanted any condition from restored to light/med restoration project, contact with price & details. Tel. John 01279 816807. Essex.

HONDA TL125 Trials bike wanted XL100/125 also considered any condition considered. Tel. Steve 01326 290092. Cornwall.

HONDA VT500 1989, workshop manual wanted please. Tel. 01763 208955. Cambs.

PANTHER MODEL 100S c 1960 registration, no. 85 THK, Essex, frame no. 27423, still exists? Sold some time ago for restoration, would be interested in possible purchase if considered. Tel. 01284 753974; 07783 277629. Suffolk.

SPEEDOMETER wanted for British bike, Smiths chronometric either 80mph or 120mph, one for repair ok. Tel. 07538 696157. Midlands.

WANTED NSU QUICKLY Puch Maxi, Cycle Master, Power Pak, Trojan, autocycles or just parts. Tel. 07790 168224. Warks.

WANTED PUCH MAXI Cycle Master, NSU Quickly or parts. Tel. 07790 168224. Warks.

WANTED SOMEONE to help or advise on the timing repair, or electronic replacement to my Triumph T110 which was working! Cash available, bike Nottingham central. Tel. 07976 414531.

WANTED TRIUMPH 650 1972, UK, 4 gallon breadbox petrol tank with welded seam down the middle, must be sound with no dings or bodes, all threads in good order, colour immaterial. Tel. Dan 07857 394762. Fife.

Miscellaneous

BELSTAFF MOTORCYCLE SUIT 1980s, original plaid lined Belstaff suit, corduroy collar and cuffs, jacket and trousers in excellent condition, size L, £250. Tel. 01462 440109. Herts.

BOOK "A SINGLE PURPOSE" by Jeff Clews, (Irish tel no has to be changed by using English prefix to first few nos). Tel. 04333 42972. Ireland.

BOOK: 1968 of the Triumph Twins (2) Motor Cycles History Development part one, 1955. Brampton Bros Birmingham old book illustrated catalogue established 1852. Single Motorbike trailer wanted cheap, area Bucks, Herts. Tel. 07788 768313. Bucks.

LEATHER JACKET with tassels small, hardly worn, £50. USAF green & camo jackets, shirts, poncho, badges, etc outdoor clothing & items ideal wildlife, books, mags, photos, etc, sell/swap for D. Lewis zipper gloves, motorway boots 10, jackets 'lightning', Belstaff 'trailmaster' 38-40", helmet sticker ACU, KNMV 75-80, medallions ACU, FIM, KNMV. Tel. 01277 200530. Essex.

MOTOCOURSE BOOKS x26 including rare early editions 78-79 & 80, good condition, £400 buyer to collect (Aylesbury) contact for complete list + 50 years of Moto GP. Tel. 07772 718367. Bucks.

NORTON MAINTENANCE MANUAL 1961-63 models and 1959, 50 ES2, 88, 99, 650 and Sports Specials, two books, BSA Gold Star spares, catalogue engine no DBD 34GS-3001. Velocette parts list models, KSS-KTS, 1932 and KTT, 1931, two books, phone for details and price. Tel. 07788 768313. Bucks.

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TRAILER FOR a single motorcycle that is no longer required, good condition, £70. Tel. 01538 756580. Staffs.

TRAILER: three bike galvanised trailer, new tyres, mudguards, lights completely, spare wheel, just serviced, tows well, 10" mini wheels, £300. Tel. 07768 976086. Lancs.

VINCENT & MV BOOKS mags, M.P.H.'s, collection mag articles, club info history, badges, DVD's, minichamp 750S new boxed, Assen TThat 70's rare, race videos, 2 Mcqueene posters, etc, sell/swap4 anything b/stone, Kraidler, Crescent, Euro race books, car mags any language. Tel. 01277 200530. Essex.

YAMAHA NUMBER PLATE on retention, RDB 350R, £1500. Tel. 07778 565047. East Lothian.

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FRANK WESTWORTH

BEING VOCAL ABOUT LOCAL

Local bike shops - use them or lose them

“In pieces. It’s blown up again. This is a delightful moment in any conversation, because a chap can ooze sympathy so insincere that it will grow mould and possibly glow in the dark. I listened, struggling to avoid bursting into tears ... of laughter”

A FREE LUNCH IS ALWAYS A GREAT EXCUSE FOR a hefty ride – even if I end up actually paying for that lunch, although I’m not entirely sure how it happens. Just got back. All aglow after a considerably bracing October Sunday rasping around the almost deserted and always entertaining roads of North Devon. Devon... a sort-of wild outpost between cultured Cornwall and sainted Somerset. Good spot up on the Atlantic coast for lunch, too. Stormy.

I’d joined up with another old bike fruitcake, and we’d agreed that due to the forecast climatic inclemency we’d arrive by car. This is a ruse, gentle reader. A ruse to acquire heavyweight one-upmanship by turning up aboard some wheezing horror, icicles dangling from every sodden extremity and then sneering until the other sheepish party pays for warming refreshment.

Of course Dave was on his Guzzi. It could have been a lot worse – he could have been aboard his 1930s Ariel, which would have gained him unlimited scorn points. I was of course also two-wheeled, but on a Triumph – a modern(ish) Triumph, which made us about even. He’d worried I might just turn up on the BSA and score a thousand ego points. Ah well...

Turns out that I had no excuse for not using the Beezer – apart from the minor technical infringement brought about by its not being registered in the UK. That’s a feeble excuse, but it is MoT’d and insured, running well, so the excuse is nearly valid. And Dave’s Ariel?

In pieces. It’s blown up again. This is a delightful moment in any conversation, because a chap can ooze sympathy so insincere that it will grow mould and possibly glow in the dark. I listened, struggling to avoid bursting into tears ... of laughter. Dave, you see, regales me endlessly with guilt-inducing homilies about how 1930s bikes (or 1940, 50s...) make excellent and totally reliable transport for leisured gents like us. I nodded. I managed to suppress even a snigger. Understanding and Sympathy are my middle names.

Why didn’t he get the shop to fix it? I managed to utter this nonsense query with nary a splutter. It was hard, but chaps should

be resolute.

Which brought our steamed editor into the conversation. Not that he was anywhere nearby, you understand, but because he’d been talking at length in the last issue of this August organ about local bike shops which can fix old bikes. He had, in fact, suggested a directory. This resonated with me – a lot. Without an excellent local bike shop, my delight in weary clunkers would have rattled to an end a long time ago.

Up in Shropshire, Church Stretton Motorcycles (no prizes for guessing their location) kept the small fleet of hideous ruins running and legal, then once we’d relocated to Cornwall’s gusty coast, Ace Mosickles of magnificent Bude stepped into the breach. Take a bow, guys – all credit where all credit is due.

For example: the Ace Bude chaps fixed the three-speed gearbox on our BSA B25SS in an hour. I’d failed to fix it in over a decade, although repeated failures had produced a fine stock of NOS BSA gearbox spares. None of which improved things. Skill fixed it. I watched. It was humbling. The gearbox now possesses the correct four ratios. Hurrah.

Editor Matt was completely correct to suggest a register of old bike shops – I expect that most of us know at least a couple, and there are a few in Devon and Cornwall. But... here comes the rub. I talk with the guys at Ace quite a lot – they fix my bikes a lot. And they also service them, MoT them and supply all my endless consumables – tyres, chains, brake bits, plugs, oils; a decent list. This is how local bike shops survive.

You might be amazed at how often guys roll up to ask them to fit a pair of tyres they’ve bought elsewhere, or to service their bikes using oils and filters bought cheap online. This makes local shops little or no money. And if they make no money, they close. It’s not difficult to work out, is it?

Those same chaps – and this is a recurring conversation – the same chaps who buy all their bits on eBay or at Aldi are the very chaps who cry the loudest about the disappearance of local bike shops. Shop local; you know it makes sense. And, as we do not say often enough: use it or lose it. You know it really does make sense... **CBG**

Frank Westworth is the editor of *RealClassic* magazine, the latest in a long series of publications that began in 1982 when he was bullied into producing *The Jampot*, the previously excellent magazine of the AJS & Matchless OC. He was also founding editor of *Classic Bike Guide* and has returned as a columnist as a penance. Or something. He has a mysterious obsession with riding obscure and elderly motorcycles, which he does very slowly...

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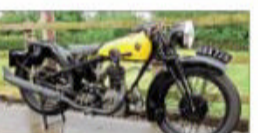
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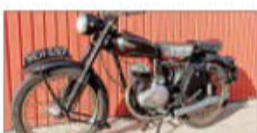
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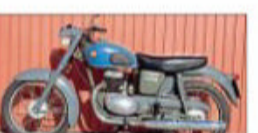
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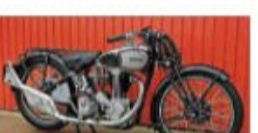
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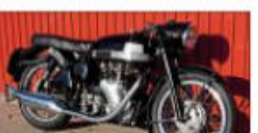
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