



Hailwood's race bikes

Mike's time with MV

Buying guide

AJS 250 CSR



CLASSIC BIKE • GUIDE

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FEBRUARY 2019

Biting the Bullet

Your guide to living with the Royal Enfield single



One man's perfect rigid



How to service your Enfield single



BROUGH SUPERIOR

Is the Golden Dream the most valuable bike ever?



WE RIDE

Triumph's Scrambler 1200



SERVICING

Norton Roadholder forks

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THE HARD WAY

- Ring an insurance broker that's not Hagerty. Spend half an hour explaining why your classic isn't just "an old banger".

- Politely decline home, pet and travel insurance. Patiently explain that you only need agreed value classic bike insurance. To get off the phone, promise to get a quote for your home "in the near future".

- Go out to the garage, pull off your bike's cover, snap several photographs. Email photos but hear back that "the photos are too dark" or "we need six and you only sent five".

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- Wait on hold half an hour while their staff reviews the information. Lose the connection. Ring back, get transferred to three wrong departments. Get put on hold again.

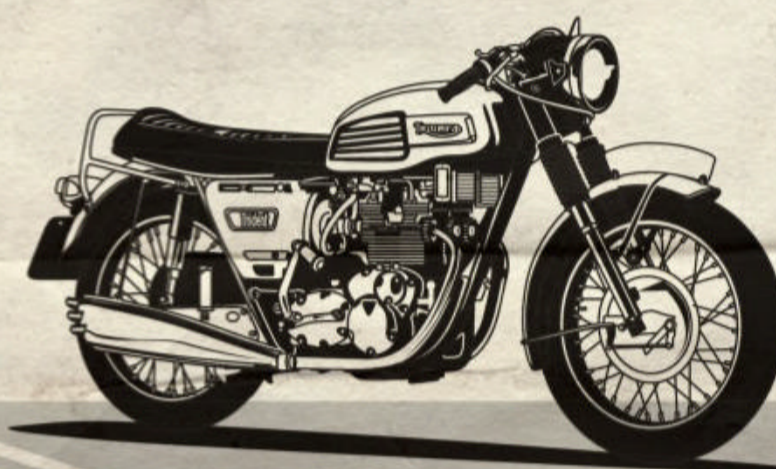
- The Agreed Value certification finally arrives. You begin looking forward to repeating the entire tedious, maddening process, fee included, if you want to increase your value again.



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Bullet train

FIRST CAME ACROSS THE ENFIELD, THEN Royal Enfield Bullet, in the Nineties, when popping in to see my friend and local dealer, Dave Wicks. He was selling the 350s and 500s to those that wanted a modern classic, those that didn't want to spend the kids' inheritance and those that wanted a cheap winter hack – the prices started at £2250 – brand-new. I ended up with a 50s 350 engine in an Indian frame for fun in the dirt and though that machine has gone, I still have an affection for the budget thumper.

The story of Royal Enfield is fascinating and with the new 650 twins looks to be on a whole new journey. But for this month we're looking at the right-hand gearchange, iron engine single; still fun, still easy to work on thanks to specialists providing all the parts you need and still great value. We have a comprehensive buying guide, a nice special one reader has built and how to service one. Hope you enjoy our Bullet train!

And now for something completely different (cue naked Python playing piano)...

"Matt – what bike are you bringing to work on at the Newark show?" Asked the lovely marketing people. It had, like many things these days, slipped my mind and been replaced by thoughts of warm fires, an excuse to lounge around, be rude to family and of course, sherry. I use the phrase 'work on a bike' at shows, but I never really get anything done as my time is spent wandering, being distracted by

intriguing bikes or chatting to owners, club stalwarts (who never cease to amaze me with their hard work and loyalty to their particular group) and of course, visitors.

In all honesty, that's the reason I have a bike stand there and, shall we call it, tinker. It's to remove barriers and have something on the bench that entices passers-by to come and chat with no fear of being sold anything. Call it analogue customer research.

The Carole Nash *Classic Bike Guide* Winter Classic, to give it its official mantle, has an unusual feel – more of a relaxed nature with no 'dress code'. Other shows have more glitz, more beautiful bikes and even auctions of bikes being turned into capital, or 'investments' (I despise that word – run it past trading standards – can you prove it is an investment? I'd ban it from all bike adverts if I had any say; or tell the truth and replace it with 'inflated by £1000'. Sorry...), whereas Newark is like the Bristol show, a more innocent appreciation of nice old bikes.

So, with that rationale in mind, I chose not the Norton, or the BSA or even the Honda, but the CZ to have on the stand. I have thick skin so I can take all the sarcasm, ridicule and banter that the Czechoslovakian commuter will rain my way. I put on my big coat and prepared.

The 175 Sport (Sport in CZ terms consists of some chequered tape on the tank) attracted so many conversations from visitors. I could have had a concours-



condition Vincent and been spraying it pink with a rattle can and had less interaction; it was fascinating and I learned so much. And it was very much appreciated. I have learned, just like going to a club meeting, many of those little gems that should help me on my way to getting the old Eastern-bloc ring-dinger back on the road.

It was also nice talking to so many readers, many of who liked the magazine, many had some interesting comments. It is tricky getting the right balance to please old and young, those with much experience and those new to classics. But throughout all this was one theme – we're not quite sure why, but old bikes are our lives. They make us curse, frustrate us and yet they make us smile. I hope it continues for some time yet.

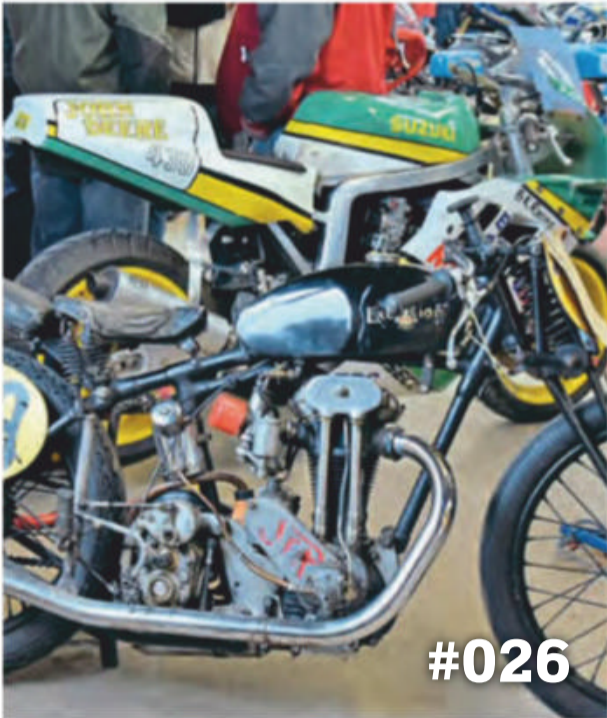
Be good

Matt Hull
 editor@classicbikeguide.com



#008

- 006 From the archive**
A wonderful glass plate photograph of Harry Collier on his Matchless
- 008 Machine of the month**
George Brough outdid everyone in 1938 with the Golden Brough – the most valuable bike ever?
- 016 Subscribe!**
Subscribe to *Classic Bike Guide* now and become the envy of all around you (This may not be based on fact...)
- 019 News**
Happiness for Moto Morini owners, auction news and more
- 022 What's on**
Get your big coat on and venture out
- 024 Your letters**
We reach all areas of the world!
- 026 The Carole Nash Classic Bike Guide show**
We take a look back at our season-opening show at Newark, and there's not a mince pie in sight
- 030 Steve Cooper**
Steve wants to save money. It must be his New Year's resolution
- 032 Paul Miles**
Paul heads off on his travels to the prewar world and girder forks
- 034 Paul D'Orleans**
Paul looks back at the history of the biker image
- 038 Buying Guide – AJS Model 14 250 CSR**
You were something if you had one of these as a kid
- 046 Buying Guide – Royal Enfield Bullet**
One of the longest-serving classic motorcycles of all time. Fun, easy to work on and cheap!
- 056 New Retro – Triumph Scrambler 1200**
Hinckley has created a two-wheeled, go-anywhere bike, and it's a beauty
- 062 Archive poster**
The enigmatic George Brough and friends with 'Old Bill'
- 064 Products**
Sockets, wax coats, gloves and spark plugs. What more do you want?
- 068 Enfield Special**
One man's foray into classics has created this fun-looking rigid Enfield. But it wasn't all plain sailing...
- 076 Hailwood's bikes – part six**
We look at Mike's MV days and his relationship with The Count
- 084 Service your Bullet**
We look at what's involved in servicing the venerable Bullet, what's needed and how much it costs
- 090 Triton build**
One man's mission to make a bike that's perfect for him and for reliable riding
- 098 Project Norton – part two**
Our forks looked like a simple job, until you lose some of the parts...
- 104 Reader Ads**
Spend that Christmas money – go treat yourself, you deserve it
- 121 Next month**
Next month we have some really special one-offs, like a Coventry Eagle, a Panther and a Honda Sealey. Plus we delve further into the Norton and have a go at Motogymkhana
- 122 Last word**
Frank is having a clear out. Or is he?



#026



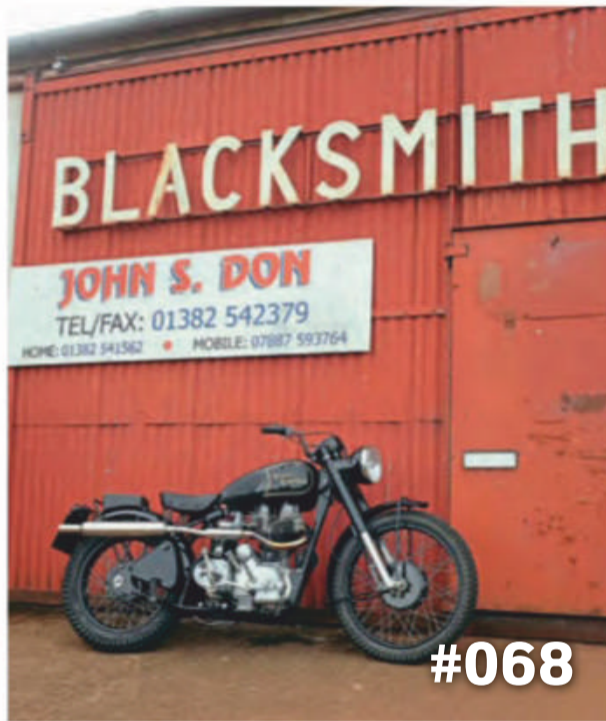
#038



#046



#056



#068



#076



#084



#090

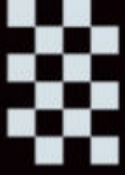


#099



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■ WHAT AN IMAGE THIS IS

Taken in 1911 at the TT, the bike is a Matchless with a JAP engine fitted. Ridden by Harry Collier, it finished second. The rigid frame with single-speed, overhead valve single-cylinder engine, belt drive (with spare tied under the seat), belt rear brake, toolkit (or lunch box?) nestled neatly between rider and flat tank and beautifully-swept handlebars all show what a TT racer looked like more than 100 years ago. It was just as well that the race didn't include time to lace those boots up!

Harry (real name Henry Albert) Collier was one of three sons of Henry Collier, founder of Matchless. Initially making bicycles at their base in Plumstead, London, Matchless soon started making motorcycles. After a few years Henry retired and Harry took over, with his two brothers, Charlie and Bert, managers too. All three were keen racers, happy to behold the Matchless name high. **CBG**





Motorcycles that **MATTER**

George Brough always tried to wow the world. The Golden Dream was his finest moment, but would also be one of the last





1938 Brough Superior Golden Dream

WORDS BY RACHAEL CLEGG PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY CHAPMAN

IT'S NOVEMBER 7, 1938 AND A SEA OF HATS IS flocking to the opening day of the Earls Court Motorcycle and Cycle Show. Even the Duke of Kent is making an appearance.

Visitors fill the floor, eager to see the latest offerings from Ariel, BSA and Norton, among dozens of other marques. This is the Machine Age, after all, and the Earls Court show is its crowning glory.

But there's one particular stand – 12a, to be precise – to which the crowds show particular reverence.

Here, the Rolls-Royce of motorcycle manufacturers, Brough Superior, displays its piece de resistance: the aptly-named Golden Dream.

It was, as reported in *Motor Cycle*, 'the sensation of the show'.

For starters, the Golden Brough is the only Brough not to be finished in chrome: it is, quite literally, golden. It's also the first time a motorcycle has been painted in metallic paint, which only adds to its spectacle.

And then there's the shaft-drive power unit: a horizontally-opposed four cylinder engine with the two cylinders on each side stacked on top of each other with overhead valve cylinder heads.

Crankshafts are geared together to allow sufficient cooling air to be distributed across the four stacked 71 x 63mm cylinders. The design is unusual in the sense that the pistons are designed to run side to side rather than in-and-out, as per a Volkswagen crank configuration, which is the typical boxer firing arrangement.

Indeed, *Motor Cycle* certainly picked up on the Golden Brough's unusual engine configuration. The report reads: "It may be true that 'all is not gold that glitters' but in this case even the gold finish is matched by the brilliance of a design of absorbing interest. The power unit virtually consists of two engines geared together with their cylinders set across the frame."

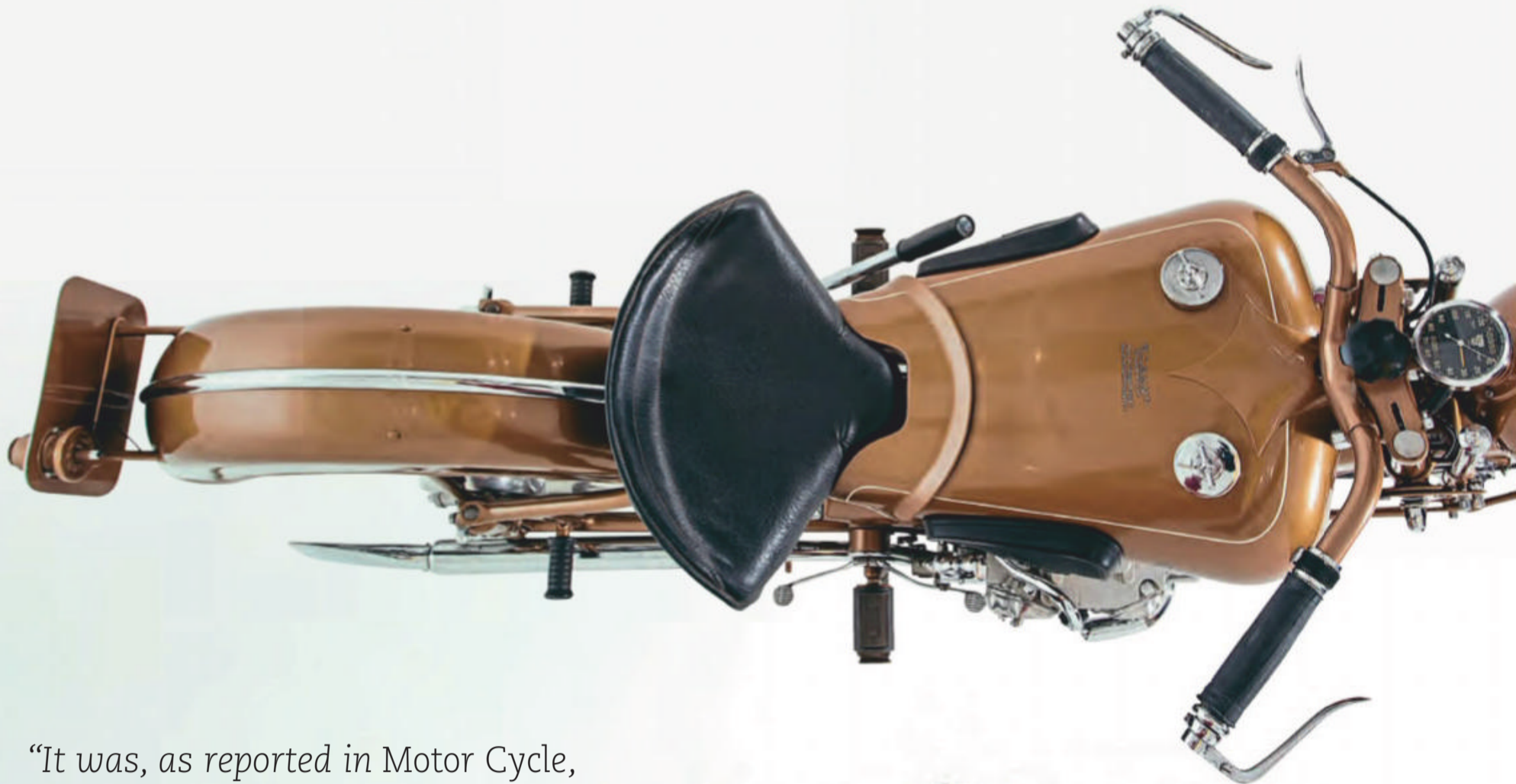
The report also noted the machine's ball-mounted head lamp, concealed toolbox and rear wheel suspension.

Put simply: *Motor Cycle* couldn't shower enough praise on the Golden Dream.

But the machine's origins were controversial. George Brough lavished the Golden Dream's media accolades but remained tight-lipped about the original design concept of the flat-four motorcycle.

Then, in 1956, it emerged that the original design proposal for the Golden Dream had come from a certain Capt Palethorpe.

Palethorpe – a keen hydroplane enthusiast – conceived an engine that could be used in a motorcycle and a hydroplane and proposed the concept to George Brough as a means of spreading development costs between Brough's motorcycle interests and Palethorpe's personal passion, hydroplanes. ▶



“It was, as reported in Motor Cycle, ‘the sensation of the show’. For starters – the Golden Brough is the only Brough not to be finished in chrome: it is, quite literally, golden”



The prototype Brough engine was manufactured by Sharland Motors, who also manufactured Palethorpe's hydroplanes.

The prototype Dream was soon ready for testing. This initial engine was long-stroke and manufactured purely for analysis using forks and a frame available at the time. But it proved unsatisfactory.

George Brough then decided to manufacture his own transverse flat-four version – only this time it would be a short-stroke – and then presented the revised Dream as an in-house concept.

Brough's short-stroke engine was produced with help from development engineer and two-time TT winner Freddie Dixon and H J Hatch of Burney and Blackburn Ltd. Hatch was the brains behind the Excelsior Mechanical Marvel, the 1929 Lightweight TT-winning machine, named so because of its complex valve gear, and the iconic AJS 7R racer.

Hatch proposed the new short-stroke engine layout as a flat-four comprised of a pair of contra-rotating crankshafts.

But in spite of the Golden Dream's crack team of engineers, TT stars and Brough factory support, the Golden Dream could never quite fire on all four cylinders.

Only after the Earls Court show could Brough Superior get the machine running reliably, albeit

at much slower speeds than those proposed. The Golden Dream – despite its media accolades – wasn't living up to its name.

There was also another obstacle to the Golden Dream's success: the onset of the Second World War. And as such, the machine was never refined nor did it ever go into production.

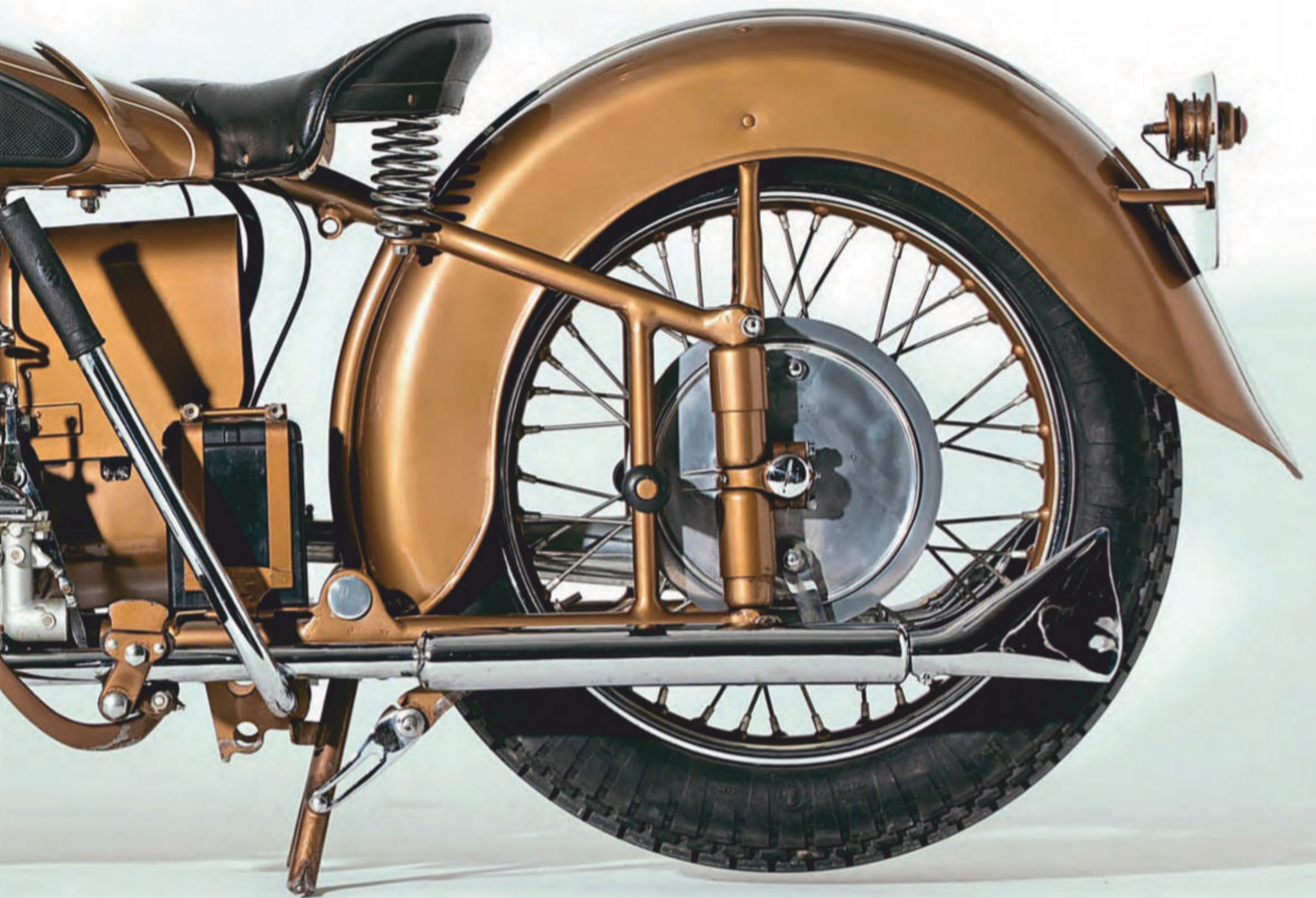
And this makes the National Motorcycle Museum's Golden Brough all the more special.

The Dream's position in the NMM says it all. Raised on a plinth slap-bang in the centre of Hall Two, the Brough stands stately, even majestic, among its two-wheeled counterparts, leaving no doubt that these were the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles.

But it's not just its Brough Superior branding that makes the Golden Brough so special. When the museum's chief restorer, Colin Wall, was restoring the machine more than 30 years ago, he spotted something stuffed inside the cylinder that caught his eye.

"The museum's owner, Roy Richards, bought the Golden Brough after it had been standing in the foyer of the Brough factory for years and it was looking a bit tired and worse for wear.

"So I took it away to restore it and when I started to take the engine apart, I noticed a part was missing. It looked complete from the outside but internally it



“We can assume that the Golden Dream has to be up there among the most valuable motorcycles in the world”

wasn't. As I started taking off the cylinder heads to expose the barrels I spotted an old piece of paper. I took it out, unfolded it and across it read 'bollocks', written in nice handwriting.

“Whether one of the mechanics was having a laugh and wanted one of his colleagues to find it, I don't know.”

But National Motorcycle Museum director James Hewing thinks otherwise.

“The Golden Brough was Brough Superior's piece de resistance. They had the best mechanics working on it and it was the star of the Earls Court show in 1938.

“So the fact that this machine – Brough's best ever bike – wasn't going to go into production was very sad, especially for the mechanics who worked on it. Things were never going to be the same again once it was clear that war was imminent. And to put it into further context, it was only 20 years since the end of the First World War, the memories of which were still very fresh in people's minds.”

The bizarre note only adds to the Golden Dream's intrigue. Brough Superiors are renowned for commanding huge sums in auction – in 2015 a 1938 Brough Superior 750cc BS4 sold for £331,900. Likewise, an SS100 would sell for the price of a decent family home. But SS100s are relatively common: the Golden Brough is not, as Bonhams' motorcycle expert Ben Walker explains: “The Golden Dream would be one of the ultimate, if not the ultimate, Brough Superior to have at auction. George Brough – to his own

admission – was not a very modest man and stated that this motorcycle ‘has been designed by the world's most enthusiastic designer-manufacturer-rider team in collaboration with other famous internal combustion engine experts’ and it surely must have been one of his ultimate creations.”

However, it is not known how many Golden Dreams exist. According to Brough Superior registrar Mike Leatherdale there were just two Golden Dreams made and only one painted gold, which is in the NMM – the other was painted black.

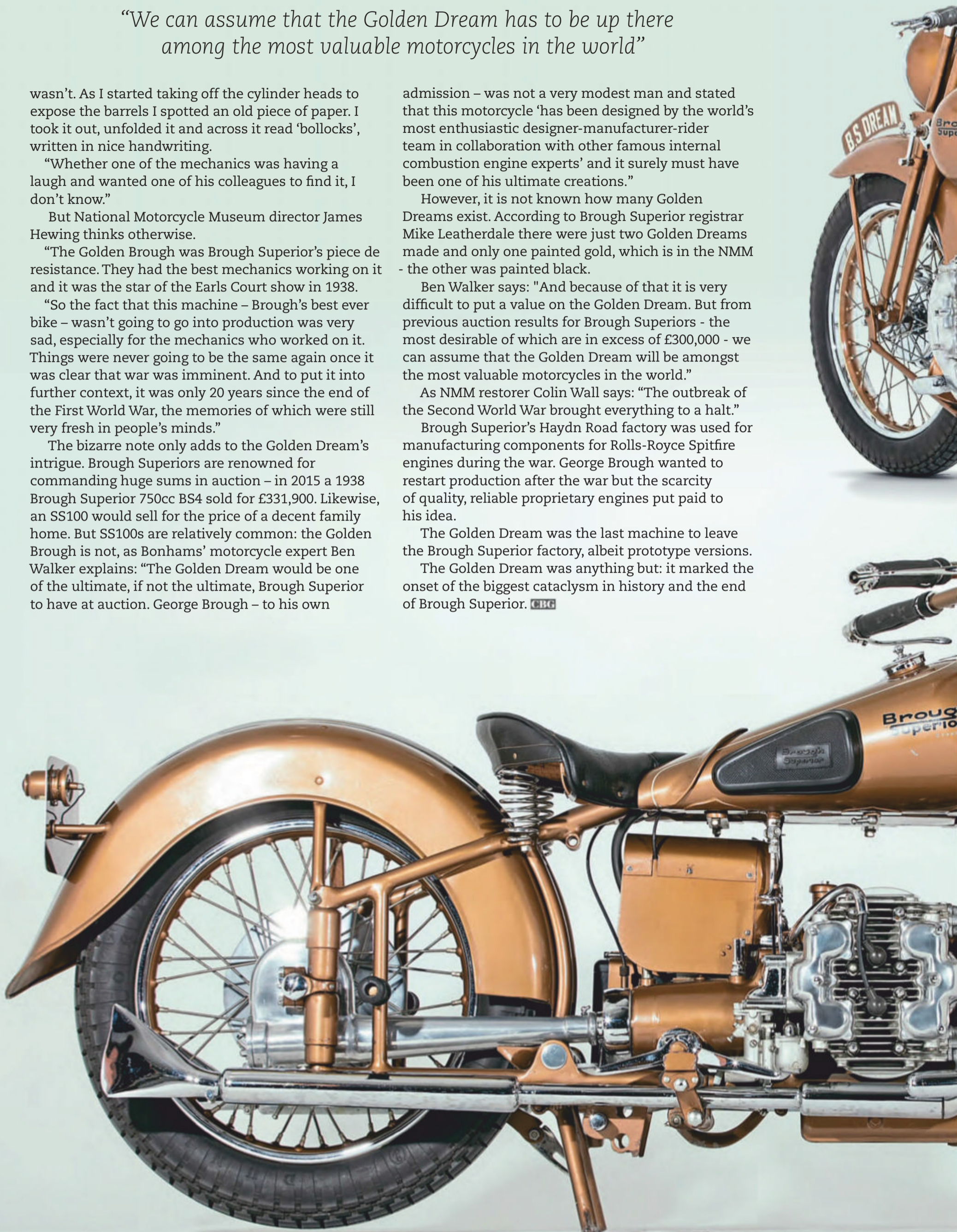
Ben Walker says: “And because of that it is very difficult to put a value on the Golden Dream. But from previous auction results for Brough Superiors – the most desirable of which are in excess of £300,000 – we can assume that the Golden Dream will be amongst the most valuable motorcycles in the world.”

As NMM restorer Colin Wall says: “The outbreak of the Second World War brought everything to a halt.”

Brough Superior's Haydn Road factory was used for manufacturing components for Rolls-Royce Spitfire engines during the war. George Brough wanted to restart production after the war but the scarcity of quality, reliable proprietary engines put paid to his idea.

The Golden Dream was the last machine to leave the Brough Superior factory, albeit prototype versions.

The Golden Dream was anything but: it marked the onset of the biggest cataclysm in history and the end of Brough Superior. **CBG**







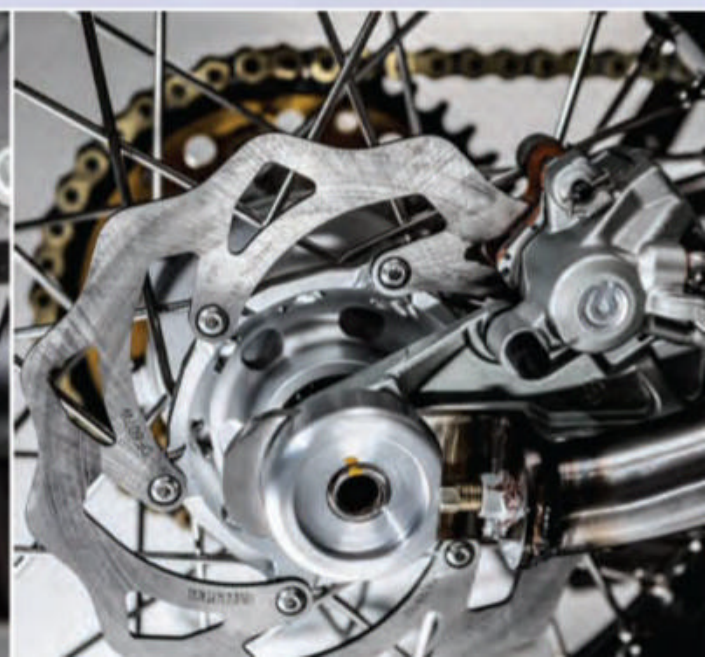
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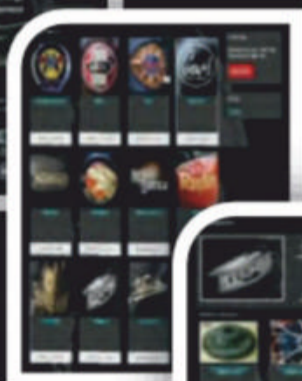
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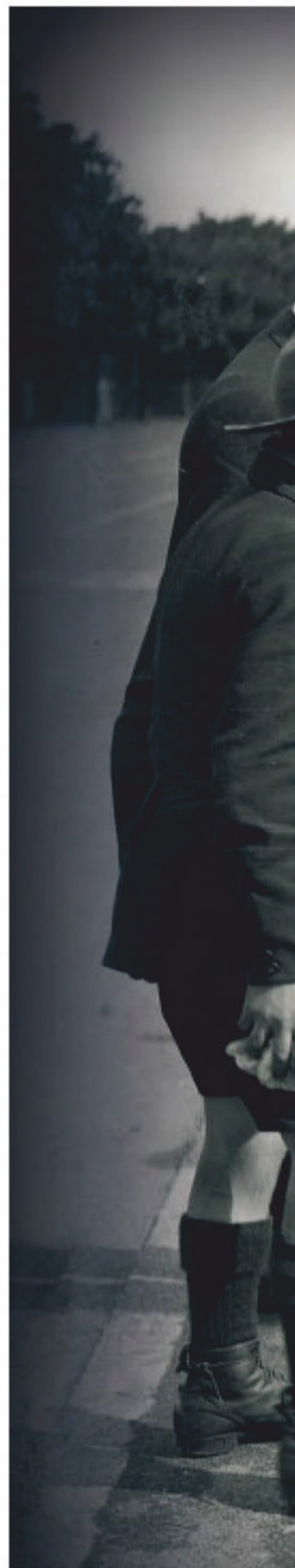
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Moto-Morini spares operation moves to West Yorkshire with Mdina Italia

CLASSIC ITALIAN SPECIALISTS

Mdina Italia have taken over the Moto-Morini spares operation from long-established specialists North Leicester Motorcycles (NLM).

NLM were the major source of UK spares and advice for the much-loved Morini v-twins and other Morini models.

Mdina Italia have a well-established Ducati, Moto Guzzi and Laverda parts business. Based in Baildon, West Yorkshire, Mdina Italia has been

supplying motorcycle spares to customers across the globe since 2007. They now have all the Morini parts located on site and are beavering away tidying and organising the data to import into their own accounts and webstore, which should be live as *CBG* hits the newsstands.

The plan is to create a basic online catalogue initially with the system developed to contain parts pictures and details. In the meantime, as long as owners know the part number or have a

description then they will be able to buy what they need.

Andrew Jones of Mdina Italia said: "I believe there could be more Morinis in the UK now than were originally officially imported. We've taken all the spare parts. In total we have collected 10 van loads and spent five days just putting it all on the racking. It has been a big job."

The takeover follows the semi-retirement of Stuart Mayhew, who founded NLM nearly 50 years ago. The

motorcycle sales and service business of NLM has been taken over by his son Chris and rebranded as Lusso Veloce.

Lusso Veloce will specialise in historic and Italian Motorcycles and vintage cars. It currently lists two Mike Hailwood Replicas, a Honda RC30 and a pair of Bimotas among the classics on its stock list.

Visit www.mdinaitalia.co.uk for Morini spares, and www.lussoveloce.com for machine sales.

Guzzi launch V7 race series

MOTO GUZZI WILL be holding a new 'Fast Endurance' series in Italy in 2019 featuring the roar of v-twins.

The new single manufacturer series has been organised with the Italian Motorcycling Federation and dedicated to those who want to test themselves on track and inhale the atmosphere of classic racing.

The competition will involve two-rider teams on Moto Guzzi V7 III Stone bikes with a specific kit fitted to each bike.

Moto Guzzi Fast Endurance is not only aimed at riders of varying ability, but also and particularly at young motorcyclists who want to test themselves on track for the first time.

The format of each event involves a 60min

fast endurance race, with an evocative Le Mans-style start, with bikes lined up on one side of the track and riders having to run from the other side before jumping on board and there is also a mid-race rider changeover.

The Moto Guzzi Fast Endurance trophy is open to all riders in possession of a racing licence issued by the Italian Motorcycling Federation. The Moto Guzzi Italian sales network takes care of fitting the dedicated Moto Guzzi V7 III Stone kit required for participation. There are unlikely to be any British racers but a visit to a meeting hosting the races is a must should you find yourself in Italy this summer.



Bonhams to sell Black Lightning and George and Mildred's Brough

ANOTHER AUCTION RECORD could be broken when the first production Vincent Black Lightning racer ever built goes under the hammer at the Bonham's sale in Las Vegas.

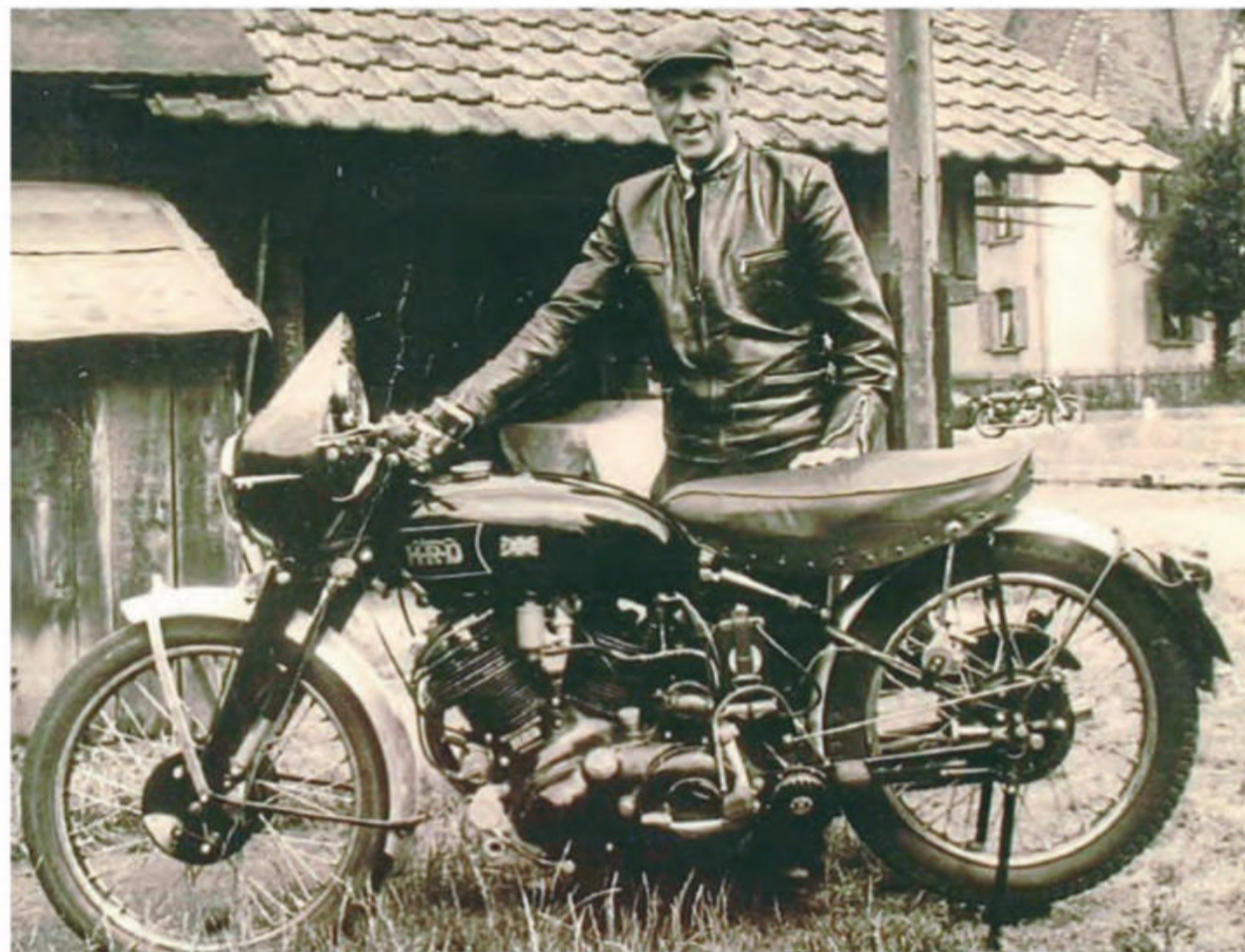
The fully restored Vincent Twin went under the hammer at the massive auction of classics that includes everything from Cushman scooters to two machines once owned by Steve McQueen. But it is the Black Lightning that is expected to break the records. In a sale last year, a Black Lightning sold for £740,000, although this year's machine has a guide price of £320,000.

For British buyers Bonhams are currently accepting consignments for their sale at the Stafford International Classic Bike Show in April. The current listing for the Stafford sale includes a number of Brough Superiors, one of which found fame as the sidecar outfit used in the TV sitcom *George and Mildred*.

Bonhams will also be offering for sale the

Sant Hilari Collection of off-road machines. The collection comprises more than 100 important competition machines covering marques such as Gilera, Moto Guzzi, Kramer, Husqvarna, Maico, CZ, Jawa, Suzuki, Yamaha, Honda, KTM, Bultaco, Motobi, Ossa, MAV, SWM, Moto Villa, Beta, Anvian, DKW, Cagiva, Greeves, Tri-BSA, Sachs, Fantic, Cannondale, VOR, Aprilia, Husaberg, Kawasaki, Montesa, Macal, Ducson and Ducati.

The bikes will be offered on the first day of the two-day sale on Saturday, April 27.



The entire collection will be offered without reserve. The seller amassed this incredible collection of machines over a lifetime spent as both a competitive rider and a works mechanic for several top-flight teams.

The collection charts the development of many manufacturers including several prototype examples. James Stensel, Head of Bonhams Motorcycle Department, commented: "We at Bonhams pride ourselves on catering to every aspect of the motorcycling world, and competition machines play an integral role within it. So many of today's best riders cut their teeth on competition motorcycles, and it is a corner of the market sadly often overlooked despite its passionate international fan base. We look forward to welcoming like-minded enthusiasts and collectors to our Spring Stafford Sale for another two-day motorcycle bonanza."

Those wishing to sell at the auction should contact Bonhams soon as the last date for consignment is February 27. Visit www.bonhams.com

Save now on motorcycle tour packages to France and Spain

BRITTANY FERRIES ARE offering 20% off motorcycle tour packages for those who feel a trip across the English Channel or the Bay of Biscay are in order, but you only have a few days left to book and secure the discount.

The tour packages start at £205 for a three-night B&B stay exploring the D-Day beaches of Normandy, to seven days in Spain enjoying the area's

culture, history, scenery and wine – or all four, from around £900 per person.

These are unguided tours, and the cost includes the ferry crossings and accommodation.

The trips are designed for motorcycle, rider and pillion passenger. The 20% discount is available until February 5.

Visit brittanyferries.com/bike19





3X Motorcycles takes over Mash distribution in UK

A NEW IMPORTER has been appointed for the retro brand Mash with Dorset-based 3X Motorcycles becoming the official importer and distributor in the UK.

The French brand, based in Burgundy, started designing motorcycles at the end of 2011, becoming a leader in the French market in the 125cc segment. Since then the range has been evolving and expanding to multiple models and capacities from 50cc to 400cc. A new 650cc Mash is due to appear later this spring.

Mash motorcycles first arrived in the UK in 2015 and have built a dedicated following among buyers who want a classic-style motorcycle with modern refinements like electric starts and ABS brakes. HQB, who were the UK importers, ceased trading in November leaving owners in the dark over spares supply and warranty claims.

Frédéric Fourgeaud, Mash Motorcycles' president said: "We are very happy to appoint 3X Motorcycles as our distributor for the UK. Their experience and know-how will allow a great level of support to the dealer network

and a perfect experience for our customers."

3X Motorcycles have been trading for more than four decades, already import Peugeot scooters and Rieju motorcycles and have been a Triumph dealership since 1990. They will provide full support for Mash owners through the dealer network, supplying new bikes and genuine parts, managing warranty claims and finance deals, and offering technical assistance.

Richard Davies, managing director of 3X Motorcycles, is excited about the future for Mash in the UK: "We have four decades of experience of distributing European brands, so our operation is the perfect springboard for Mash to reach its full potential over here.

"Their range of classically styled 50cc, 125cc and 400cc geared bikes is perfect for the growing retro market and sits comfortably alongside Peugeot scooters and the sporty Rieju lightweight motorcycles. We're in the process of contacting existing Mash dealers to arrange meetings to share our plans for the Mash brand and update them on the new models due for this year."



Stuck on you - the new Limpet smart alarm

IF YOU WORRY about bike security, a new 'smart' motorcycle remote alarm system called The Limpet is coming.

The Limpet comes from Geotekk, a British-based startup focused on combating bike theft.

If a motorcycle with the Limpet fitted is moved outside of a certain preset perimeter, an alarm will sound and a strobe light will flash, while the owner will be notified that their bike has been moved via a text message.

The Limpet is designed to be attached to a bespoke throttle lock on motorbikes and secured by an electronic solenoid operated by a mobile phone app. The Limpet is fitted with GSM and Bluetooth connectivity and an encrypted app allows you to access the system remotely.

Geotekk founders James Sheppard and Matthew Leach were inspired to develop the new security device after they became victims of bike crime. Sheppard said: "Bike theft is an increasing problem, with criminals going out with wire cutters or angle-grinders to saw traditional locks off bikes. Statistically a lot of bikes are stolen close to the owner's home, so getting that alert in the crucial first few moments could allow owners to stop the theft."

The Limpet is attached to a motorcycle either through the throttle lock or a universal base plate attachment. The Limpet is transferable between motorcycles, bicycles or any other valuable item that has a base plate attached. There's also an emergency signal send that will notify a designated number if the rider needs assistance, which is handy if you find yourself stranded in an area your mobile phone does not cover.

The product is set to hit the market in May 2019 and can be pre-ordered. The motorcycle pack, consisting of a Limpet, base plate and throttle lock, can be ordered now for a special offer price of £129.99. Visit www.geotekk.com

Fancy a day out?

JANUARY 2019

- **31 Taverners VMCC, Talk TBC:** Enderby Sports & Social Club, Leics, LE19 4QF. Tel. Mark Wills 07972 875687.
- **31 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Blue Anchor, Bretherton (£6 nosh-up). Tel. 01772 782516.

FEBRUARY

- **1 MARCH ISSUE OF THE CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE**
- **2 FEBRUARY EDITION OLD BIKE MART**
- **2/3 The 39th Carole Nash Bristol Classic Motorcycle Show:** The annual show season moves up a gear with the arrival of the Bristol Classic Motorcycle Show. Local motorcycle clubs will go all-out to impress, and the show brings in thousands of people over the two days. Sharing space with the retailers in the main show hall will be the machines of dozens of private owners offering up their pride and joy for public scrutiny. Taking up most of the outdoor space at the show, and inside the large Edmund Rack Hall, the autojumble is usually the first stop for most visitors as soon as they walk through the gates. The 2019 show will also host several Sunday-only autojumble plots. There will also be the opportunity to pick up a bargain with the Charterhouse Auction on Sunday offering up everything from concours classics to rusty relics. Visit charterhouse-auction.com to preview the sale. We'll be there too, with one of our writers working on his machine on the Mortons stand. Feel free to come along and tell him what he's doing wrong. Tip – the in-house restaurants are cheaper than the outside food vans, if you can find a seat. Bath & West Showground, A371, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6QN. www.classicbikeshows.co.uk

- **3 Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **4 FEBRUARY 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
- **8-10 Motorcycle Fest, Lisburn, Northern Ireland:** This is Ireland's biggest bike show and will include entries of classic and vintage motorcycle clubs who will be having a hall of their own to display their bikes and an autojumble. There will also be stands from top motorcycle manufacturers who will be exhibiting their latest ranges of road bikes, quads and motocrossers. Outside activities will include Supermoto racing, drifting and stunt shows. The show is at Eikon Exhibition Centre, Balmoral Park, Lisburn, County Antrim BT27 5RE. Visit motorcyclefest.tv
- **10 Sunbeam MCC Gordon Jackson Trial:** venue to be advised. Tel. Neil Sinclair 07885 660939. Email sinclairndlp@hotmail.co.uk
- **10 Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **10 MAG 'Fred Hill' Memorial Ride-Out:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **10 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** GB Antiques, Nr Lancaster. Tel. 01772 782516.
- **10 Poachers Pre 65 Trial:** Grasby Quarry, between Scunthorpe and Grimsby Lincs DN38 6AQ.
- **14 Taverners VMCC, Noggin & Natter:** Enderby Sports & Social Club, Leics, LE19 4QF. Tel. Mark Wills 07972 875687.
- **15-17 Carole Nash MCN London Motorcycle Show:** The world's leading manufacturers

and thousands of bike fans all heading to the capital, it promises to be bigger than ever. Among the machines on display this year, there'll be a public debut of Triumph's new 1200cc Speed Twin and some of the latest models from giants including BMW, Ducati, Honda, Kawasaki, Yamaha and Suzuki. ExCel London, One Western Gateway, Royal Victoria Dock, London, E16 1XL

- **16 Santa Pod Stunt Fest:** An afternoon of awesome stunts and displays for all the family, featuring some of the top UK stunt riders and drivers. Main stunt attractions from 12 to 3.30pm, gates open from 10.30am Santa Pod Raceway, Airfield Road, Podington, Wellingborough, Northants, NN29 7XA. Family tickets cost £35. www.santapod.com Tel. 01234 782828.
- **16 Scorton Auto & Bike Jumble:** Scorton, North Yorkshire Events Centre, DL10 6EJ. Tel: Bert 07909 904705.
- **16/17 Classic Dirt Bike Show:** This show, sponsored by Hagon Shocks, will welcome two legendary off-road champions as the guests of honour. Multiple world, indoor and British trials champion Dougie Lampkin will be a star guest at the popular off-road show held at Telford International Centre, as will BSA works team motocrosser John Banks, who won four British championships. Dozens of clubs and private owners will be showing off their off-road machines at the show, while hundreds of traders will be offering dirt biking kit from new bikes, parts and accessories to riding gear and even project bikes if you're up for a challenge. Plus, why not have a rummage in the autojumble, starting at 9am, or get your hands on an off-road bargain. International Centre, Telford, Shropshire TF3 4JH www.classicbikeshows.co.uk
- **17 Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **17 Huddersfield Auto/Retro Jumble:** Old Market Building, Brook Street HD1 1RG. Tel. 01773 819154. www.phoenixfairs.jimdo.com
- **20 MARCH ISSUE OF CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS**
- **21 CLASSIC DIRT BIKE ISSUE 50**
- **21 MARCH/APRIL ISSUE OF CLASSIC RACER**
- **21 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Brinscall (meet behind swimming baths). Tel. 01772 782516.
- **23 VMCC (Dorset section) Breakfast Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events
- **24 59 Club Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com



- 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.

■ **24 'Normous Newark Autojumble:** The Showground, Drove Lane, Winthorpe, Newark, Notts, NG24 2NY.

www.newarkautojumble.co.uk

■ **24 Taverners VMCC, Sporting Trial:** Eaton, pre-65 inc girder rigid class. Tel. Mark McEvoy 07973 142440.

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

■ **28 Taverners VMCC, Film Night:** Enderby Sports & Social Club, Leics, LE19 4QF. Tel. Mark Wills 07972 875687.

MARCH

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

■ **1-3 The Carole Nash Irish Motorbike and Scooter Show:** Head down to the RDS and share a brilliant biking weekend with more than 27,000 motorcycle and scooter enthusiasts at the Irish Motorbike and Scooter Show 2019. Across three action-packed days you'll be spoilt for choice of things to see and do, including taking a stroll around the Classic and Retro Zone hosted by London's world famous Ace Café. Main Hall, RDS, Merrion Road, Dublin. Admission: €15 (advance) adult any day.

■ **2 MARCH ISSUE OF OLD BIKE MART**

■ **3 Sidecar Sunday:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com

■ **3 Malvern Drive-In Classic Car & Bike Autojumble:** Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcs WR13 6NW. Tel: 01484 667776. www.classicshows.org

■ **3 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Hebden Bridge (meet by canal). Tel: 01772 782516.

■ **4 MARCH 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

■ **9/10: Scottish Motorcycle Show:** The Scottish Motorcycle Show is a haven for anyone with a passion for motorcycles north of the border. New models from manufacturers will be on show and there will be exclusive offers from the dealers on new and 2018 motorbikes. Bag a bargain in the bike jumble and browse the retail village where a host of traders will be able to fit you out with new leathers, boots or helmet. Take a ride down memory lane in the classic

hall where you can find Scotland's biggest collection of classic motorcycles spanning over 80 years. There will be around 450 classic motorcycles on show. Visit www.scottishmotorcycleshow.com. Tickets cost £17 per adult and accompanied children (under 12) can attend free of charge. Car parking costs £5 per car per day. Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh, EH28 8NB.

■ **10 British & Classic Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com

■ **10 Poachers Pre-65 Trial:** One of a series of trials run by this club, they get a turnout of more than 50 bikes each time, from restored classics to updated machines. A day at the trials watching people do impressive things on old motorcycles is never a day wasted. Nettleton Top, near Market Rasen, off B1225 www.poacherspre65trials.co.uk

■ **14 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes, Crook of Lune picnic site, near Caton.** Tel: 01772 782516.

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

■ **17 The 27th Shropshire Vintage and Classic Bike Show:** This show returns after an unfortunate cancellation caused by 'the beast from the east' last year. Also known as the Wistanstow Classic Bike Show this event has attracted an astonishing roll call of guest speakers, thanks to show originator Ron Maund. These have included big names such as Phil Read MBE, Tony Rutter, Tommy Robb, Percy Tait, Stuart Graham and Pip Higham. The appeal of the show is the very friendly, community-spirited village feel combined with the array of vintage and classic bikes on display together with an autojumble. And you can experience some of the best riding roads in the country. Email: wistanstowbikeshow@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07792 983020. At Wistanstow Village Hall, Wistanstow, Shropshire SY7 8DQ

■ **17 Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, 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 Straightliners:** Santa Pod Raceway, Airfield Road, Podington, Wellingborough, Northants NN29 7XA. www.straightlinersonline.co.uk Tel: 01484 718164.

■ **17 VMCC (Essex Section) Cobwebs Run:** Writtle Green car park. Tel: Paul Fletcher 01245 321573.

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

■ **23-24 Manchester Bike Show:** EventCity, Phoenix Way, off Barton Dock Rd, Trafford City, Manchester, M41 7TB Tel: 01484 482005. Email: info@manchesterbikeshow.com www.manchesterbikeshow.com

■ **24 Overland & Adventure Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com

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

■ **24 Sunbeam MCC 80th Pioneer Run:** Epsom, Brighton. Tel: Ian McGill 01293 771446. Email: pioneerorganiser@gmail.com

■ **24 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes, Burnsall (meet by small cafe car park).** Tel: 01772 782516.

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

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

■ **27 VMCC (Essex Section) Midweek Run:** Tesco car park, Maldon. Tel: Clyde Cardy 01621 855899.

■ **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, Plume of Feathers, Weedon Bec, NN7 4QR.** Tel: 01604 499858.

■ **31 South of England Classic Show & Bikejumble:** South of England Showground, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TL www.elk-promotions.co.uk

■ **31 Great Spring Autojumble and Show:** Strathmore Hall, Forfar Mart, Market St, Forfar, DD8 3EZ. Tel: 01738 551308.

■ **31 Poachers Pre 65 Trial:** 10am start, Poachers Bag, Smiths Farm, Withcall LN11 9RL www.poacherspre65trials.co.uk

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Letters

Letter from America

I am a fan of old bikes, though I don't have anything older than the 1960s. Most of my ownership has been Japanese street bikes, but I have owned Enduros too. I've owned an OSSA and currently have three Yamaha 250/360 two-stroke off-road bikes, including a 360 I've owned since 1972 and used as a commuter, an enduro racer, a hare-scrambles bike and an off-road playbike.

One of my friends, whose parents owned British dealerships going back to the 1950s, and who raced successfully, as did his four brothers, has a history with BSA. I'm including an ad which ran in USA motorcycle magazines showing two of the brothers, surrounded by their trophies, and featuring two race bikes.

The racers are Tom and Norm Robinson of Spencerport NY, USA. Norm is in front of his BSA 250, and Tom is in front of his BSA Hornet.

Fast forward many years. Tom operates his own machine shop, and Norm with his girlfriend operates a restaurant in western NY. Both still have deep interests in motorcycling, and they have many old bikes. Tom was able to track down his old BSA Hornet which has been restored and updated with more modern brakes, wheels and suspension. Classic bike fans may recoil in horror, but he has all the OEM running gear and they could swap it over at any time.

Here is the ad and some

photos of the bike as it is today. Yes, it's the same bike as in the magazine ad. They used to add some identifying strikes into the frame in an inconspicuous location, and when he located the bike, he looked for, and found, those punched-in characters.

So, how cool is that? A bike they originally owned as a BSA dealer, which was successfully campaigned, and which later returned to their ownership.

I also included a photo or two of Norm's BSA Gold Star which he restored, and exhibited at 'Riding into History' in St Augustine FL in 2018.

Last is a photo of one of my bikes, a 1993 Yamaha V Max with 10,000 miles, bought from the second owner, and which needed repairs consistent with long periods of being idle. All work was done by me, and it runs well now, with help from my friend Steve who is a shop owner in Dania Beach Florida.

Philip Bachers



GIANT AUTO & BIKE JUMBLE

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Buying Guide – BSA A65
New Classics – Triumph Thruxton R



AUGUST 2018

■ BSA Royal Star
Wheels and Waves
Honda CBX – the restoration



SEPTEMBER 2018

■ Bedfordshire bobber
It's Beezumph time!
Triple-pronged attack!



OCTOBER 2018

■ The ultimate replica
Young guns - Malle Mile and Cafe Racer Cup. BSA B31 restoration



NOVEMBER 2018

■ New Royal Enfield 650 twins
New Retro – Ducati Scrambler
MV Agusta 125 Sport



DECEMBER 2018

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■ **RIGHT:** Checking out a Gold Star in the autojumble

■ **BELOW:** Sometimes the smartest bikes aren't in the show, but in the car park... like this fine BSA Victor Special



Our show!

The Carole Nash *Classic Bike Guide* show at Newark is always a good way to rid yourself of the Christmas bloat

WORDS AND PICTURES BY OLI

THOSE OF US WITH A PASSION FOR all things two-wheeled often revel in our reputation for rebelliousness and a refusal to follow the herd. And rebelliousness doesn't necessarily mean strutting around in black leather and denim or in getting your knee down. Sometimes it manifests itself as standing on an agricultural showground in January, rummaging in a plastic crate of oily rocker boxes.

Such matters occurred to me during my journey to Newark for the Carole Nash CBG Winter Classic. The trip was punctuated by a radio news commentary that indicated that the country was still in the Christmas period doldrums and nothing of any note was likely to happen until the following Monday. As I came towards the end of what was a tiresome tour of the English Midlands' less attractive ring roads, a journey which in January is best achieved in a tin box with four wheels, heated seats and a certain ability not to fall over when presented with a slippery corner, I mused that the only thing of importance that seemed to be going on in the world was the filling of a group of large agricultural sheds with motorcycles, and then inviting people to come and look at them.

An early start on Saturday morning was planned and despite arriving 45 minutes before the gates opened, a rapidly growing queue was forming as the dedicated enthusiast and the bargain hunter jostled

for position. Newark doesn't have a big autojumble of the kind that the other shows boast, but there's always a bargain or two waiting for those with short arms and deep pockets.

Each classic show has its own atmosphere – there is the overwhelming size of Stafford, the collision of hipster London with the hardcore classicists of the Home Counties at Kempton Park, and the all-round purposefulness of Bristol.

Newark has its own thing going on too. People shaking the tinsel out of their systems, happy to get all that tiresome celebrating out of the way and getting on with the important business of classic motorcycles, chewing the fat over the various models on show while devouring left over mince pies and complaining about forking out for a cuppa.

The bikes on show were interesting, not just because of the quality of the builds, but because of the many and varied models in question. There was a Motobis and a handful of Aermacchis, but a relatively small number of the highly restored flat-tankers you can see elsewhere. There were hand-built Francis-Barnett trials bikes, but not a Vincent to be seen, while Best in Show was an immaculate Honda VF1000 four, the whiskers still in place on its tyres.

Newark also attracts some of the clubs and attractions that you might not expect to bump into at a classic show, such as the Suzuki Bandit Owners and

Old Skool Suzuki as well as an entire shed packed with scooters which featured internet station Mod Radio pumping out a soundtrack of northern soul and ska which was competing with the howl of racers firing up in the neighbouring hall.

In the main hall there was plenty of good-natured competition among the big clubs. There was a fine display of BSA Gold Stars, a wide variety of 1960s Italian classics from the Italian Motorcycle owners' club and a row of immaculate racers from the CRMC. Winner of the trophy for best stand was the UK two-stroke club, which was packed with sports mopeds and RD Yamahas, in a display which also included a fine Scott twin.

Morph from the Two-Stroke Club has a strong affection for Newark. "It's just right, busy but not too busy, with enough room for people to stand around and look without getting in people's way. At Stafford, which is of course the biggest and best, there's just lots of people shuffling past because it's so busy and we get people crowding round the stand three deep. That's great, but here at Newark you can chat with us, and you'll often see groups form at random. They'll start chatting about the Fizzy they used to own and end up making new friends as a result. Having it right after Christmas really helps this atmosphere develop."

The club's gold-trimmed stand is organised two months in advance with an appeal for bikes. "It's funny that people



There's always time for a cup of tea on the British Classic Club stand



1



2



3

- 1: The greatest grid line-up? The CRMC display
- 2: Inspecting the world's shiniest Gold Star
- 3: Roy Wood's prize winning Velocette KSS
- 4: The IMOC display had the best Italian middleweights from the 1960s and 70s



4



Best in Show - a 1983 Honda VF1000R



Centrepiece of the UK Two-Strokes stand was this very trick RD350LC

think they need a perfect bike to show, but they don't. That's not what we're about." Any prize money from a show win is spent on more lights, flags, banners and trim to make the club's next outing even more spectacular.

With an HQ just 45 minutes from Newark, the journey isn't a tough one for the two-stroke club, but others come much further. The British Owners' Club (Essex) brought a fine collection of Velocettes. Roy Wood, whose 1937 Velocette KSS won Best Prewar to his surprise and delight, joked: "We like coming here. It's friendlier than it is down south. We come every year and vary the theme each time. It might be eight or nine different Triumphs, or like this year a row of Velocettes. We're all about restoring and riding, about camaraderie and taking the mick out of each other." The club organises its own ride outs and took 66 British bikes to the Enfield Pageant of Motoring last summer. It has around 220 members, with most owning more than one British classic, so they had plenty of bikes to choose from when planning their trip to Newark.

"We just enjoy motorcycles. At Enfield we had one old boy who was so delighted to see our bikes his daughter came up afterwards in tears because we had made her dad so happy. And if it makes someone happy, that's alright by us."

In the hall next door, the Suzuki Bandit club had a line-up of standard and

customised 600cc and 1200cc fours. Is the Bandit a classic? Well, it's 25 years old next year, and a significant motorcycle as it's the last carburettor-equipped Suzuki four. Mo Stannard from the club was another traveller a long way from home, bringing his 600cc custom built quad from Scotland. "I'm a Suzuki trained technician and the Bandit is the best-selling motorcycle Suzuki made. They're bulletproof and simple enough so that anyone who likes a little tinker can customised and improve them easily. They're just put together with nuts and bolts and are easily repairable."

One of the bikes on their stand had 50,000 miles on the clock with never a spanner laid upon it. Mo was another rider with a particular affection for Newark. "We love coming here. We're just passionate about bikes and the people involved with them. We come to shows like Newark to support the people who do all the work to keep them going. Without the bikes and without the shows there wouldn't be anywhere for people to meet us."

What else were you able to do at Newark? You could be amused by the tales from special guest and GP legend Freddie Spencer or could marvel at what the Poachers Pre-65 Trials club members could do with a Francis-Barnett Falcon. You could try out the latest developments in electric scooters, piloting a vibration-free and completely silent Vespa. If you were daring, you could try weaving through the

cones in the Moto Gymkhana, though it was unlikely you'd manage it as effectively as the team riders. Or you could collar the editor of this very magazine as he tried to get his CZ 175 going.

And, of course, there was the opportunity to spend money. There were myriad cheap helmets, mostly in the wrong size, tools and nuts and bolts by the tonne and all the usual attractions... though I don't think I've ever seen an artisan bakery at a bike show before.

There were also a few interesting motorcycles on offer – a 95% complete Triumph Adventurer 500 twin showed how sought-after these last Meriden 500s have become with its £6000 price tag, there was a very smart prewar Triumph Tiger 70 bitsa off-roader for £4000 and a slightly dog-eared Laverda 3C 1000 for £5000. Easily the smartest bike on sale was a lovely maroon BSA Bantam 125 D1 – learner legal and ready for use, the little plunger framed gem was a very reasonable £1750. Well worth picking up, contact Martin Hargreaves Motorcycles of Cleethorpes and snap it up if it hasn't been sold already.

As Sunday evening approached and the crowds began to thin, and as those on the club stands began to collect up their flasks and leaflets and the traders began to pack up their stock, there was an atmosphere of anticipation at what the riding year to come has to offer as we left this friendliest of shows. **CBC**



Road race legend and special guest Freddie Spencer wonders what on earth editor Matt is wearing...



1



2



3



4

1: First and second place private entries - a Triumph Trophy and a Suzuki twin

2: Despite appearances this Moto Gymkhana rider is not about to fall off

3: Not your average Moto Guzzi - this big wheeled scooter was found on a Greek island in this condition and brought to the UK



5



6

4: The Honda CBX club is always noted for the technical sophistication of its collection of six-cylinder superbikes, with this example picking up Most Technical Interest

5: This Manx Norton was placed fourth in the 1961 Manx GP, ridden on the track until 1970 when it was finally deemed uncompetitive and dumped in a chicken shed. Recovered in 2008 it's on the track again in 2019

6: Best restoration - a transformed Parilla recovered from a rusty Stafford autojumble relic



A surprised and delighted Roy Wood with his prize-winning Velocette KSS



Best Vintage, a French-made belt driven Dollar



STEVE COOPER

STEVE GETS ALL SENSIBLE?
It must be all those mince pies.
And his shares in stainless steel...

“Stainless steel fixings are cheap... stupidly so. If you’re struggling to find the dosh to rechrome a bike’s worth of the shiny stuff, why not put as much as you can in a well-labelled box and then spend a fraction of the plating costs on some stainless steel?”

HAVING PURCHASED A BLUETOOTH compatible record deck has allowed this aging loon to drag out the vinyl collection from the loft and play some albums I’d genuinely not listened to for decades. Tucked away on Queen’s A Night at the Opera is an album track that also B-sided the tremendously successful Bohemian Rhapsody. I’m In Love With My Car was written by Roger Taylor and contains one of the best lines of any pop song: “Told my girl I’ll have to forget her, rather buy me a new carburettor”. And if any lyric sums up our strange infatuation with the infernal combustion engine, then this is probably it.

Quite simply the vast majority of us are all too easily obsessed by that bike on the lift, the engine on the bench or a pile of tat on the floor. When the bug bites it’s far too easy to become fixated, consumed or infatuated by the job in hand. If you’re not careful, significant others can get left by the wayside, family members begin to believe you’re a shed dwelling troglodyte and you end up spending far too much dosh on that project. In fact, many a relationship has ended upon the broken spokes of one too many restos or a family budget whittled away on what many see as pointless baubles.


If you’re restoring, renovating or resurrecting a bike, it is all far too easy to lose sight of the bigger picture, frittering time and money away on what is, after all is said and done, a serried collection of metal, plastic and rubber. Even if we self-impose a budget on a given project, we all know we’re really only lying to ourselves – very few ventures come in below target. Ultimately, it costs what it costs and we’ve all heard that old adage – pay cheap and pay twice. The reality is that every task/job/bike comes at a certain price and there are very few genuine bargains out there. However, there is a way to spread the expense and get that old classic back out there on the road. Well, I’m assuming that’s

what you’re aim is? If you were after building a show-winner on a shoe string, I’m sorry to be the one to tell you... but it ain’t going to be happening!

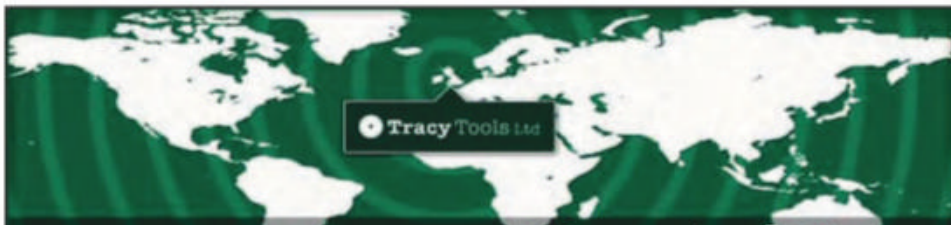
Okay, back to the plot and the science of eking out the money. First off, stainless steel fixings are cheap... stupidly so. If you’re struggling to find the dosh to rechrome a bike’s worth of the shiny stuff, why not put as much as you can in a well-labelled box and then spend a fraction of the plating costs on some stainless steel? The bike goes back together allowing the project to progress and you can have the chrome stuff sorted when your budget allows.

It’s stupidly easy to bling up commercially obtained stainless with a file, some wet ‘n’ dry and some polish. Who knows? You might even prefer the corrosion-free option. A bike that needs hundreds of pounds of chrome work normally sits untouched for ages, yet with stainless you’ll be making genuine progress. Swap out stainless for chrome as and when and then use the cheap stuff on the next project. If you don’t ride in winter, why not get the ends of the wheel spindles chromed over the dark months when the bike’s not being used? Two short lengths of steel rod off eBay will stop the wheels falling out. The same modus operandi can be applied to handlebars, brake arms and even mudguards. Replate when you won’t be using the bike, not when the sun’s out.

It’s very easy to lose heart on any project but instead of setting yourself unattainable goals, why not do stuff in bite-size chunks when the mood takes you? Changing two wheel bearings, another in the sprocket carrier and annealing a pair of head gaskets was an hour’s work recently for this old duffer. It sorted out a handful of jobs I’d been steering shy of at the end of every weekend workshop session because I was either out of time or patience.

Instead of throwing money at a problem or working harder, it often pays to work smarter. 

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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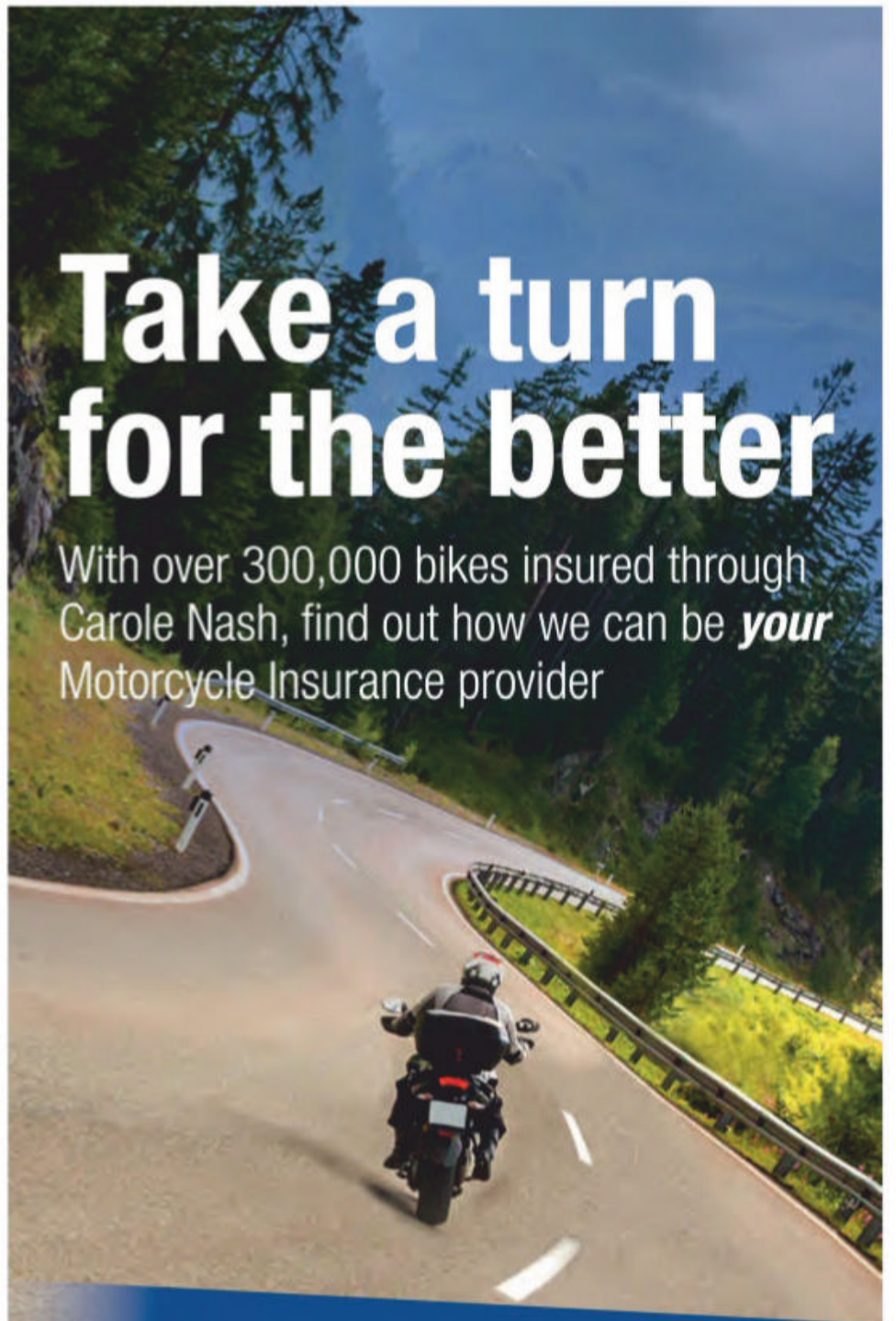
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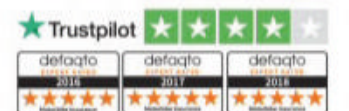
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PAUL MILES

NEW YEAR, OLD BIKE

Paul has decided that 2019 will be the year in which he is charmed by the world of girder forks – and all that goes with such prewar two-wheeled travel – as long as there’s an engine.

“...and I would contend that there is no bike ever made that wouldn’t be improved by the addition of a half-fairing, but that’s a discussion for another day.”

I AM RESOLVED. IT HAPPENS EVERY YEAR, TRY NOT to be alarmed. While its true that I don’t really have an ‘off’ season and I ride pretty much all year round, I’m typing this on New Year’s Day, a time for looking forward coupled with a desire not to repeat the mistakes of the previous 12 months. From a motorcycling perspective that means checking tyre pressures before setting out, ensuring you have enough petrol to get home again and remembering that British bikes require different spanners, cables and spares to the Japanese and European stuff.

So, in 2019 I am resolved not to be caught out yet again sitting at the roadside trying to remove a punctured wheel on a Yamaha using Whitworth spanners, or desperately trying to persuade an oversized metric Allen key to turn an imperial fastener that will then allow me to adjust a slipping clutch; a process that also often involves finding a rock to use as a percussive tool. And that’s just two of the, ahem, roadside mishaps that make classic motorcycling such a worthwhile and fun pastime. Possibly.

I will achieve this state of mechanical nirvana and not repeat the mistakes of last year by seamlessly integrating it into my plans for the main riding season. Looking back over the years, it appears that I subconsciously select a sort-of theme for the year. Life has been very kind to me and I’ve been fortunate to be able to indulge my passion for everything two-wheeled (with an engine!). Oddly enough, its usually space rather than money that’s the limiting factor in many cases. Some seasons have been spent pretty much exclusively riding two-strokes, when other years its been Italian V-twins or café racers; you get the idea. As it happens I’ve always had a special fondness for the latter and I would contend that there is no bike ever made that wouldn’t be improved by the addition of a half-fairing, but that’s a discussion for another day. Lest we forget, there were even the Wankel years, but I’m drawing a line under those dark, distant times.

2018 saw the scales fall from my eyes with regards to vintage bikes (pre-1931 in VMCC parlance), something I’m keen to explore further. Therefore, 2019 will henceforth be known as the year of the girder fork bike in Dr Paul’s eclectic shed, which sure beats the Chinese year of the pig, at least for me. Admittedly, some of my old

bikes can be swines to start, but I’m refusing to go there as I sit, stuffing Maltesers and drinking the last of the festive sherry, awash with only pleasant thoughts.

By limiting myself to girder fork machines, I’ve eliminated, at a stroke, many of the potential perils and pitfalls associated with riding classic motorcycles. Just imagine, for a whole 12 months I won’t need to worry about leaking fork seals, worn shock absorbers or loose swinging arm bearings. You see, these very old bikes just don’t have them! With a frame that’s barely more sophisticated than a bicycle, there’s virtually nothing to go wrong. The brakes are invariably awful, so attempts at improving them are destined to end in disappointment. In which case why bother? They can be ignored too! Electrics, then? Well, if it’s pre-1928 or thereabouts, most bikes don’t have any! Gas lighting was the norm back then, and your ‘audible warning device’ is probably a bugle horn with a rubber squeeze bulb on the end.

Perhaps you can now begin to see the appeal. With lights undeserving of the name, you will no longer feel the urge to venture forth after dark, eliminating the risk of night-time breakdowns. Smooth roads and moderate speeds become all the more desirable as you lack the power for motorway riding and your ‘suspension’ comprises almost entirely of two saddle springs. No longer will you ride in fear of the sneakily hidden speed camera or face the terror of a high-speed tank slapper. Yet, that doesn’t mean they’re not fun to ride, 50mph on a flat tank vintage three-speeder with no brakes or suspension and ultra skinny tyres is at least as exhilarating as 150mph astride a modern superbike.

And of course, I’ll only ever need the one toolkit. A few Whitworth spanners, flat blade screwdriver, spare spark plugs and tiny Tecalemit grease gun will see me safely home, barring catastrophic failure.

It’s really good to see the pages of CBG regularly featuring reviews and ‘how to’ articles on postwar classic British bikes, many of the other magazines having taken the path of least resistance by showcasing only relatively modern stuff. Perhaps your New Year’s resolution should be to try and get out on one and who knows, in a few years I might even be joining you on a vintage flat tanker run! 

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

THE DARK RIDER

Paul looks at the way motorcycling has been portrayed in the past, and how it has spent years trying to change the image of 'The dark rider'

“Following their lead, poster artists from the 1920s onward conjured the power of a silhouetted rider as a symbol of god-like speed.”

WHEN WE RIDE, OUR SHADOW CHASES US, ITS darkness our two-dimensional projection, distorted and flat. So it is with the myths surrounding motorcyclists in the western world, where the shadow of the Dark Rider has embedded in the public's psyche for generations. Riders are often portrayed as Satan's mechanical henchmen, obnoxious yobs, or, at best, inclined to suicide by a cocktail of asphalt and hurtling steel. This wasn't the case before the Second World War: motorcycles only acquired a touch of evil via the subtle sensitivities of artists at first, then through the far less subtle machinations of the press, who sold a lot of ink portraying bikers as trouble.

In 1909 the futurists first clocked the psychological impact of a rider on a noisy machine, grasping thrills for both rider and observer. Motorcyclists transformed into Centaurs and sang unhinged odes to Speed, with bikers the perfect harbinger of a mechanical-organic future. Futurists like Filippo Marinetti saw past the unreliable, fire-prone, wobbly bikes of the day and grasped what was to come... and they were right, albeit as mad as a box of frogs. Poster artists from the 1920s onward conjured the power of a silhouetted rider as a symbol of god-like speed. Regardless that riding a 1920s bike on the unpaved roads of the day was hardly hurtling, a rider plus motorcycle equalled magic.

Motorcycles in films before the Second World War were merely kinetic props, for moving the action and for great comedy with Buster Keaton and George Formby. Only one film from the first half of the century peeked beneath the surface, to discover the potent cocktail of danger and eros within: 'Impatience' (1928), by Belgian artist Charles Dekeukeliere. 'Impatience' is the original 'Girl on a Motorcycle' film, and the 1966 film of that title owes it a debt, as a few of its scenes are a direct lift from the avant-garde film of 40 years prior. It took a while to find a copy, but now you can watch it on TheVintagent.com: heads up, it's an art film, with one of the credited 'actors' being a set of abstract blocks. Regardless, the message is very clear: bikes are sexy, and dangerous.

It was 1949 before another artist nailed down the Dark Rider phenomenon in film. Jean Cocteau, the Surrealist poet, artist, film director and opium addict, cast a pair of motorcyclists as Death's henchmen in his film 'Orphée'. Cocteau

adapted the Greek Orpheus myth in the setting of a ravaged postwar Europe, with Death a beautiful princess chauffeured by Rolls-Royce, while her murderous helpers rode 1940 Indian Chiefs. The approaching roar of their motors meant someone was about to lay sprawled on the pavement, bleeding from the mouth while the riders in silhouette roared away.

'Orphée' is famous for its in-camera special effects, but there was no need to costume Death's henchmen in anything but standard 1940s riding gear: leather helmets, shaded oval goggles, dark wool shirts and trousers, gauntlet gloves, and wide kidney belts. Cocteau grasped how motorcycle gear could be a tool for intimidation, which almost certainly dated to the German occupation of Paris during the Second World War. Courtesy of Hitler's propaganda machine, the whole world saw BMWs escorting Nazi brass down the Champs-Élysées in 1941, and witnessed something newly menacing on two wheels. The Dark Rider, indeed.

All motorcyclists intuitively feel their visual impact on pedestrians or drivers. As the futurists noted, we become centaurs: half-human, half-roaring mechanical beast. If we're honest with ourselves, there's a thrill in that dark power... which some riders embrace as a lifestyle. The alchemical transformation of a rider on a motorcycle, and the erotic bond of human/machine, is part of what makes riders mesmerizing to watch. But there are two sides of the motorcycle coin – the bright side being the thrill of feeling fully alive on two wheels, with the shadow being the lure of menacing power.

That shadow was exploited fully, but less poetically, in the American media of the 1950s. First with the hyperventilated, faked-up coverage of the Hollister 'riot' of July 4, 1947, which inspired a story in Harper's magazine, 'Cyclist's Raid', by Frank Rooney. That was adapted into the granddaddy of all bad-boy flicks, 'The Wild One' of 1953. A chain of slander grew, embellished by the press, politicians, crappy movies... and bikers themselves, eager to wear the 'outlaw' badge. In the 1970s, Harley-Davidson embraced this image in marketing, boosting sales with a dollop of badass, though today they're finding it difficult to square an electric future with bandanas and three-day stubble. Then again, perhaps electric bikes, being silent hooligans, will someday erase the myth of the Dark Rider.

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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- Get some quotes – how much are parts, how easy is the bike to work on and how much will it cost to insure?
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AJS 250CSR

A teenage tearaway from AJS

WORDS BY OLI PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY CHAPMAN





WHAT IS IT?

An early 1960s learner
250



GOOD POINTS?

It's a sporty lightweight with a decent turn of speed, lots of charm and several innovative features



BAD POINTS?

Missing bodywork can be hard to find, and constant engine modifications can make working on it a challenge without the appropriate manuals

HOW MUCH?

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SEPARATING TEENAGERS FROM THEIR WAGE packets has always been a significant part of the economics of motorcycle manufacturing. Until 1961 UK teenagers could happily tie L-plates to whatever lump of two-wheel iron they could get, but the Government spoiled their fun by introducing a 250cc capacity restriction that year, partly because of the number of helmetless youngsters ending their short lives tragically on bypass burnouts. This meant that manufacturers had to come up with motorcycles with a capacity of 250cc that were a little more glamorous than the more workmanlike small capacity machines they had been selling to commuters. Fortunately, most bike builders had been warned and were well prepared for this restriction and had started to come up with suitably smart offerings that would satisfy teenage desires.

Associated Motor Cycles came up with the Norton Jubilee twin and the 250cc AJS Model 14 and Matchless G2 Lightweight singles. These singles were introduced in the early summer of 1958 and sold alongside their more traditional G3 and Model 16 350 Heavyweight singles which had been the mainstay of the range since the Second World War.

There were teething problems, and the first Model 14/G2 models suffered from a poorly designed bottom end. The front forks and brakes came from AMC's Francis-Barnett and James ranges that weren't up to the job. AMC quickly fixed the weak bottom ends and from 1962 replaced the forks with sturdier AMC Teledraulics and with British Hub brakes. These 250s, and the Matchless G5 and AJS Model 8 350s sold

alongside them were dubbed the Lightweights, despite not being terribly light. Sports and scrambler versions of the 250cc models coded the 14S and G2S and 14CS and G2CS were sold. The sportier road bikes then borrowed the CSR model code from their bigger twins which stood for 'Competition, Springer, Road', perhaps in an effort to gather some reflected glory. For most young riders of the 250 CSR meant Coffee Shop Racer.

The engine of the CSR looked modern, but under the casings it was a different story. Although it appeared to have a gearbox and crankcase that were all part of the same unit, it used two separate casings. The gearbox was mounted in a circular shell which was secured by two steel straps. To adjust the primary chain the two straps were slackened off which allowed the gearbox to be rotated, with the result that there was no need for an internal primary chain tensioner as the tensioner is external to the box and rotates with it. The downside was that the gears were situated at the top of the gearbox, which needed three pints of oil in order to ensure these gears were properly lubricated.

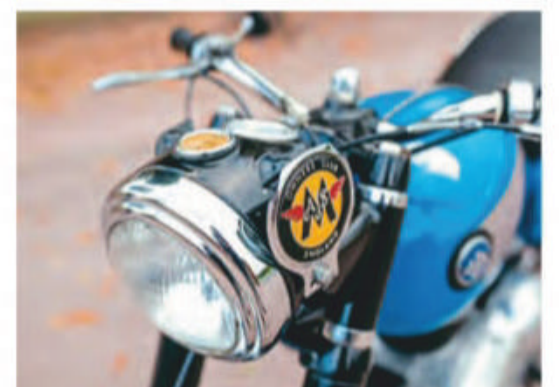
There was no external engine oil tank either, instead the AMC engine had a tank fitted inside the timing cover that held two-and-a-half pints of oil. While this wasn't a large capacity tank, it meant there were no external oil pipes, which reduced the amount of leakage. It did mean that the oil did not cool in use, which in turn meant that frequent oil changes were needed. The design of the engine uses a principle known as *désaxé*, in which the cylinder is positioned with its centre slightly offset from the centreline of the crankshaft. This reduces friction and piston slap. Kawasaki use it today on the ZX10R, and Yamaha on the MT-09.





The cylinder head had the inlet and exhaust ports at an angle of 21 degrees, rather than in line with the frame. This gave the incoming fuel a swirl effect and allowed the use of a short camshaft at the rear of the cylinder block with followers and two pushrods running through a tunnel on the right-hand side of the engine, the exhaust pushrod being much longer than the inlet item. The valves were operated with hairpin springs, though the last models had now-conventional coil springs. The points were under a circular cover on the right-hand side and were driven by the camshaft, while there was an alternator on the right. The electrical system was basic, and as reliable as that offered by any British manufacturer of the period, that is, not very reliable at all. Some owners would convert the machine to 12-volt, a good idea in any case, fit Triumph or BSA type Zener diodes with finned heat sinks and, when they arrived, use electronic ignition systems.

The frame had a pressed steel engine cradle which would be removed to get the engine out. As the cradle also held the centrestand, this means you can't remove the engine and gearbox with the bike on the stand and the bike would have to be supported on blocks to do this. The frame was otherwise conventional and there were long rear shocks which fortunately can be rebuilt, as you'll be unlikely to find a new set with the right dimensions. The CSR also had 17-inch wheels, which limits tyre choice today. AJS built a scrambler version, with a tuned engine which was given a larger crankpin and a beefed-up con rod, a bigger carb and 10.5:1 compression ratio, but because of the weight of the bike compared to off-road two-stroke offerings from other manufacturers, not many were sold.





“Today you can pick up a decent runner for considerably less than £3000, even from a dealer, making a Lightweight one of the more affordable British four-strokes.”

These performance upgrades, together with a bigger inlet valve were added to the 14CSR Sapphire Super Sports which had a handy 83mph top speed, which meant the AJS was no slouch. In 1964 a race-prepared Sapphire Super Sports won the 250cc class at the Thruxton 500, with an average speed of just under 62mph.

Like other manufacturers AJS adopted an imaginative and optimistic model numbering system which was supposed to indicate the top speed. The last model, the Sapphire 90, was a serious attempt to create a poky 250, with a bellmouth air intake which ended inside the side panels and a 9.5:1 compression piston. Some models were fitted with lightweight alloy mudguards as an option, as well as a tucked in and swept back exhaust pipe and silencer as standard.

AMC record keeping by the mid-1960s was poor and there are no parts lists or details for the post 1962 bikes, while finding original post-1962 AMC manuals with details of the engine will require some serious autojumbling. Unfortunately for AMC neither the AJS nor the Matchless 250 set the world on fire, despite being reasonably priced for the period and much more modern than the other AMC singles. An AJS 250 cost just over £200 when the average male manual worker's salary would have been between £10-£15 a week, and a good deal less for a teenage apprentice. In today's money a new 250 CSR would have set the buyer back around £5000. Today you can pick up a decent runner for considerably less than £3000, even from a dealer, making a Lightweight one of the more affordable British four-strokes.



The 250 CSR on the road

FOR AN EARLY 1960s British 250, the CSR is a substantial beast that you sit on, rather than relax into. The handlebars are almost flat and turned down at the ends, and with the speedometer in the headlamp nacelle you are left with the impression of being perched on the seat with little in front of you, despite the bulbous tank.

The riding position sees you pushed slightly forwards in a mild sporting crouch, though not uncomfortably so. The handlebar grips on the CSR when it came out of the factory would have been smooth, which came in for some criticism as they slipped when wet, though this example has had good quality ribbed replacements fitted, while the original fitment control levers have an air of bargain basement about them.

CHALLENGE

Starting the CSR was something of a challenge for me, which was partly down to my 21st century choice of footwear. The position of the rotating gearbox put the kick-start at the top of the housing and as a result the top of my chunky commando soled bike boots fouled on the footrest at the bottom of the stroke, so getting a good swing in using the ball of the foot was impossible.

It meant that I had to kick with the toe of my boot, which in turn meant a decent swing was almost as difficult. Perhaps more svelte period footwear would have been in order.

Once rolling, the handling was more than acceptable, with the Teledraulic forks and long Girling shocks soaking up bumps, though it was a little heavy at low speeds, possibly down to the forks being designed for much bigger and heavier machines. It was certainly heftier to move about than my BSA Starfire, with the AJS having a much lower centre of gravity. Unlike the Starfire the engine was mechanically quiet which could have been down to the substantial construction damping out the noise or to the désaxé design of the engine.

This mechanical quietness was in contrast to that of the exhaust, a yawning Dunstall megaphone silencer fitted to a swept back down pipe which gave the machine a purposeful sporty look, akin to a Matchless G50 racer, and produced an effective bark.

Road testers in the 1960s praised the standard silencer for its quietness, something of an obsession for magazine testers at the time who eschewed anything that suggested motorcycles might be anti-social. Any self-respecting 250 owner would have removed it in short order and swapped it for a straight-through megaphone.

Despite appearances, the gearshift on this bike didn't foul the exhaust pipe and changes were clean and positive, while the clutch was about right, being neither heavy nor overly light. Power take up was good, even when pulling away in the wrong gear, and the late model full width brake hubs with their air scoop seemed to work effectively.

The CSR was a sporting 250 that was designed to be thrashed, and thrashed it was, so it's hardly surprising that so few have survived into their mid to late 50s.

DIFFICULTY

Today, the 250 CSR could be an excellent addition to a classic bike stable. The difficulty of finding parts and the lack of interchangeability between other models in the AJS range, or indeed some different years of the same model, means that buying a decent, complete runner is advisable rather than a kit of parts, unless you enjoy spending hours online or at autojumbles fruitlessly searching for bits. Nowadays the AJS is unlikely to be pressed into service being hammered from chip shop to transport cafe by an unsympathetic learner.

As it approaches its 60s, a more restrained and gentler owner may find it the ideal back lane brawler, with the potential for the odd burst of exuberant full-throated joy.

BUY THIS AJS

THIS AJS 250 CSR was still for sale at the time of going to press. It's a good honest example that rides well with less than 20,000 miles on the mileometer. The bike is for sale at Classic Motorcycles Ltd of Northwich, Cheshire. This CSR is priced at £2,799 and is well worth a look. Visit showroom.ebaymotorspro.co.uk/classicbritishbikes search for or call 01928 788500

Don't buy a basket case

An expert view

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING GETTING AN AMC

Lightweight, the best thing to do is to get a complete runner, rather than taking a risk on a project, according to Steve Surbey of AMC Classic Spares.

“People buy them incomplete without realising what a job they’ve taken on. Often, they’ll find they hit a wall with their project and just move them on. Try to find one that someone else has spent money on rather than a box of bits. If you do buy a box of bits, good luck to you.

“One big problem is the lack of decent literature, in particular pictorial info about the lightweights in manuals and parts lists. The heavyweights have good illustrations, but there’s very few available for the lightweights. The lack of info is made more complicated by the number of changes that were made. There are four or five different mainshafts and four different versions of the clutch with different splines on each one.

“Some areas of the lightweights are tricky too, such as the centrestand which is a fairly complex arrangement. The lightweights in general were overdesigned. I’ve had a couple, the first one being an early G2 which had Francis-Barnett or James front forks, and I hated it. Then I got an unrestored 1967 CSR with a proper Teledraulic forks and British Hub front wheel which was a great bike, though at 6ft tall I did look a bit ridiculous on it. I’d hesitate to recommend one to someone who doesn’t have any mechanical skill, even though they are nice to work on and ride. Don’t embark on one if you don’t know what you are doing. You’ve got to remember that it’s a learner’s bike and were thrashed until they died, which is why there are so few about.

“But they’re a really good bike for the rider who is getting on a bit, as they are easier to start and lighter, which is better than struggling with a heavyweight, and there are lots of loyal lightweight owners out there.” **GBG**

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: Four-stroke, air-cooled OHV single, 2 valves per cylinder **LUBRICATION:** Dry sump, integral 2.5 pt oil tank **CAPACITY:** 248cc
BORE X STROKE: 70 x 65mm. **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 9.5:1. **CARB:** Amal 1.5ins Monobloc **IGNITION:** Points, coil **TRANSMISSION:** Chain primary drive, wet multiplate clutch, four-speed gearbox **FRONT WHEEL:** 3.25 x 17 **REAR WHEEL:** 3.25 x 17 **FORKS:** AMC Teledraulic
REAR SUSPENSION: Girling shocks, 3-way spring preload **FRONT BRAKES:** Single 6in (152mm) drum, front and rear **SEAT HEIGHT:** 760mm (30in) **WHEELBASE:** 1345mm (53in) **WEIGHT (WET):** 150kg (330lb) **FUEL TANK:** 16 litres (3.5 gallons) **TOP SPEED:** 83mph

SPECIALISTS

AMC Classic Spares
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The Enfield BULLET

INDIA'S SPRIGHTLY SEPTUAGENARIAN

WORDS OLI PHOTOGRAPHY MATT (WITH MANY THANKS TO MY FRIEND MATT FOR LETTING US PHOTOGRAPH HIM AND HIS BIKE)

IT'S NEVER THE FLAGSHIP MOTORCYCLES THAT KEEP the world turning. While manufacturers pepper the top of their ranges with exotic and short-lived superbikes, it's the day-to-day transport that keeps people rolling along and the production lines humming. Honda's Cub, the myriad of DKW based two-stroke singles, the hundreds of thousands of Suzuki GS125 clones turned out by far-eastern factories, they have all filled vital roles taking the worker to their place of employment and liberating them during their release from the daily grind.

The 70-year production run of the Royal Enfield Bullet, the 350cc single launched in the UK in 1948 that survived into the 21st century, shows it stands head and shoulders above its rivals in providing affordable, classy, two-wheeled transport for all.

The 1948 Bullet wasn't the world's most exciting motorcycle but quickly gained a reputation for being solid, reliable and simple while more modern than many of its rivals. While the Redditch Enfield factory turned out thousands of these practical singles, it was the Enfield operation on the other side of the world that ensured its survival, with the result that today you can buy a new single in the classic British mould at a highly competitive price. If you are not worried about fuel injection or ABS, there are some second-hand bargains to be had. Picking up a complete 350 Bullet from the mid-1990s for not a lot more than £1,000 is perfectly possible.

The survival of the Bullet, as the world changed around it, has its roots in 1953 when the Indian Army ordered 800 new Royal Enfield 350cc Bullets. The bikes were shipped at first in kit form and assembled in Madras, now known as Chennai. India's protectionist industrial policies saw the Government insist on the setting up of a new Indian factory to build them and this ultimately saved the name from extinction. The setting up of the new factory suited Enfield in the UK, who were about to upgrade the Bullet with a new frame and an expanded version of the engine from their Crusader. They provided the tooling and designs to produce the older Bullets to the new Indian company and full production was soon underway. The Indian Bullet was much sought after by the country's emerging middle class but was too expensive for most working people and became a status symbol. ▶





WHAT IS IT?

An Indian-made traditional OHV single



GOOD POINTS?

They're cheap, they're easy to work on and reliable with excellent spares availability and a good dealer.



BAD POINTS?

If you don't have a bit of mechanical nous, and a bit of patience, the carby Bullet may not be for you.

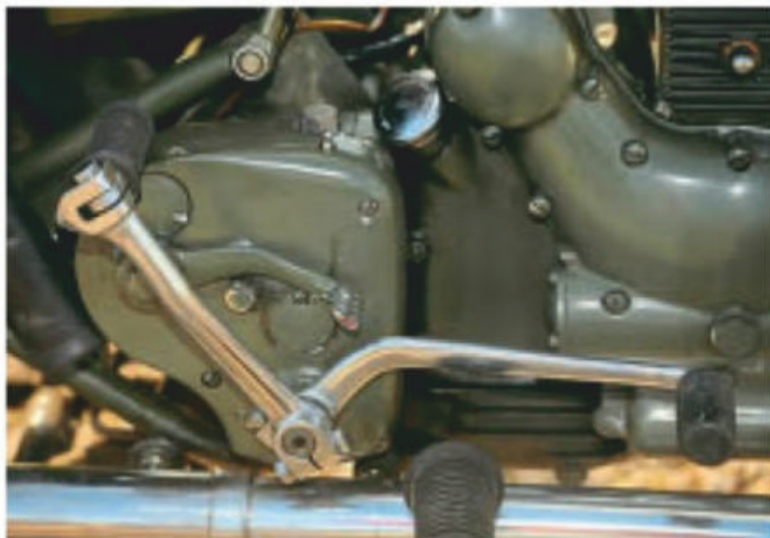
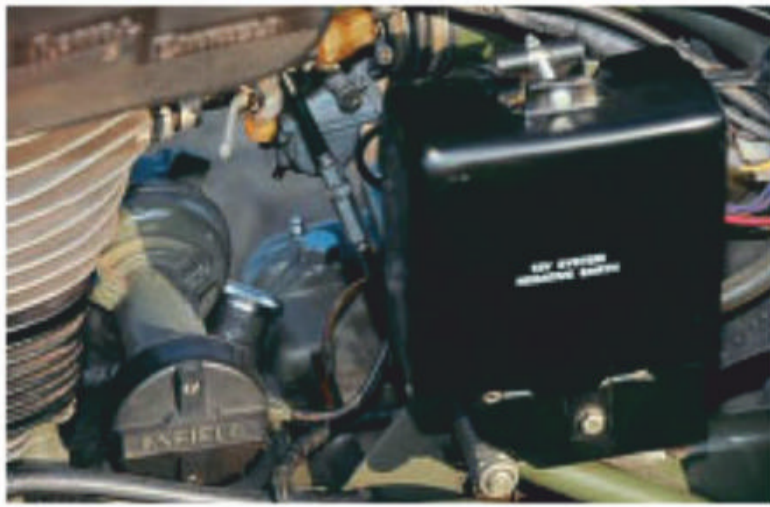
HOW MUCH?

A basket case will cost you £500-1,000

An oily rag runner or restoration project
£1,000-2,000

A good quality show bike £3,000-3,500

New Bullets start at £3,999.



“Enfield made up for not having a big model range by marketing multiple versions”

The Bullet earned a reputation for reliability and the name ‘Raja Gadi’ or ‘Royal Vehicle’. In 1959 the design of British made Bullets diverged from the Indian models which continued in production based on the original 1948 design. The Indian Bullet stayed that way until the mid-2000s when the power train got a major redesign.

Royal Enfield in Redditch dropped their version of the Bullet in 1964 but the old model kept the Madras lines humming. The UK company’s collapse in the late 1960s caused problems for Enfield India which had still been using some UK sourced specialist parts on their bikes and the factory was forced to set up manufacturing operations for these parts, and the Bullet became an entirely Indian motorcycle.

The first efforts to re-establish Enfield in the UK happened in 1977, when a small number of Bullets were brought in by Laverda importers Slater Bros, heeding the call of motorcycle enthusiasts demanding an old school, simple machine. Slater Bros were ahead of their time, as the classic motorcycle movement had yet to seriously take off. Rather than chasing a nostalgia market, the first Indian Bullets to make it to the UK were marketed as cheap transport for the



working man, something basic and easy to work on in the same way that Eastern European bikes had been filling that utilitarian marketplace. The first Slater Bros bikes came in gloss black with gold lining, which is always a good look. The styling was a little clumsy, though not unattractive.

Imports stuttered and stopped a few years later, not least because if you wanted a British single you could find one at the time easily and cheaply, while the Bullet had gained a reputation in the UK for dubious build quality.

The 350 Bullet returned to the UK in 1986, by which time buying old British bikes was becoming a busy and burgeoning market. The UK-market Bullets were built to a higher standard than the Indian home market variety. As nostalgia bit in the UK, the idea of buying a bike that had that classic feel, but from a dealership and which came with modern things like warranties and spares, availability had a certain appeal. Not everything was rosy, as the build quality through the 1980s and 90s was patchy with chrome, paint and general finish decidedly variable.

The name on the tank was changed from Enfield India to just Enfield, the Indian factory having dropped the Royal from their name some years previously. A legal fight to use the name Royal Enfield again went on for years, finally being resolved in the UK in 2000. As the growth of multi-franchise big dealerships started to crush the high street bike shop, Enfield helped keep many a small-town motorcycle dealership in business.

The 1977-2008 four-speed gearbox and carburettor equipped Bullets, both in 350cc and 500cc capacities, are as close as you can get to a 1950s British-made classic single without actually buying one and they come with all those 1950s quirks and charm. The 350s were the first to arrive in the UK with the 500 arriving in 1990. With new importers and fighting for their survival in India as the Government contracts fell by the wayside, Enfield made up for not having a big model range by marketing multiple versions with different levels of trim and equipment. From 1977-2008 you could buy a carburettor equipped 350 Standard, DL, Superstar and Classic, with 500s in the same branding from 1990-2008. Indian buyers could pick up a 500cc Machismo. Watsonian-Squire, the then importer, offered a number of excellent special editions of their own, including the trials inspired Woodsman with a high-level exhaust and a single seat and the Clubman, with an alloy tank and a humped café racer seat which was the forerunner of the later factory-built fuel-injected 535 Continental GT. ▶



HAVING A BULLET IN YOUR ARMOURY

OWNING A CARBURETTOR-EQUIPPED Indian Bullet is not for the mechanically faint-hearted, but if you do have basic garage skills then Bullet ownership is likely to improve them. It does suit those who like to fettle, to fiddle and to improve their motorcycle.

The Bullet isn't the kind of machine you can just ride and then cover it in Muc-Off and hose down until next time. Maintenance is a regular occurrence and checking nuts and bolts are tight, that your tappets are properly adjusted, that your oil levels are good, and all your bulbs still have intact filaments is part and parcel of Bullet ownership.

If you are the kind of owner who likes to do their own maintenance and only have experience of Japanese, American or European bikes rather than pre-1970 British models, you'll need a lot of new spanners. Most carb-equipped Enfields were built with British Cycle threaded nuts and bolts, for which you will need BSF/Whitworth spanners, sockets and other tools. Fortunately, classic shows and autojumbles are awash with good quality old tools for pocket money prices.

A softer state of tune and lower capacity makes the 350 Bullet a lot easier to start than a 500cc version. The 350cc 17bhp OHV engine produced a less than earth-shattering performance. While there is a comfy cruising speed of 50-55mph, anything more than 60mph will ensure the rider experiences genuine Brit-style vibration. The extra 150cc improves mid-range performance on the 500, but the

22bhp power output doesn't add a lot to the top end. That's not to say the engine is weak or lacks potential. Enfield experts Hitchcocks have built a 44bhp 500 engine and methanol fuelled 612cc sprinter.

The average Bullet owner is unlikely to be looking for a high-speed motorcycle, and the tractable power in the midrange on the bigger Bullet makes for a relaxing ride. By more modern standards it's not a quiet engine, with plenty of rustling and mild clattering going on, but beware an engine making loud mechanical thumping noises. The 350 is less likely to have serious mechanical problems than the 500, simply because it's not as stressed.

The same frame is common to all carb-equipped models and is a version of the old British 1948 design. The simple single downtube frame is suspended at the front end by a basic set of non-adjustable telescopic forks with a distinctive leading spindle mount. These cast aluminium mounts are prone to cracking if over-tightened. If looking at buying a Bullet, check for play by grabbing the bottom of the forks with the wheel off the ground and see if they rock backwards and forwards. Movement indicates worn internal bushes.

A set of equally basic adjustable shocks

at the back give a ride best described as 'firm'. Silentbloc swingarm bushes help everything go up and down, but give that swing arm a tug to check for wear.

Brakes on the early 350 are a very basic pair of SLS single width drums and were notoriously poor, but one big advantage of owning a Bullet is that it's easy to upgrade. Enfield owners do not tend to be sticklers for originality and with large numbers of 500s with twin leading shoe front brakes now on the road, a lot of 350s will have had better brakes fitted, though even these require very careful setting up to work well. The back brake will benefit from the fitting of a Hitchcocks extended brake arm. Like all drum brakes, careful setting up will always improve stopping power. For those with less patience, the easiest way to improve front-wheel braking is to swap the front forks for a set from a later Brembo disc equipped model.

The operation of the four-speed box with its right-foot change will be familiar to riders of British classics. Gearchanges are a matter of taste with some preferring the good solid clunk of a British gearbox, while others require something altogether more sophisticated. The four-speed box is designed to be lubricated with grease, rather than oil, though users often use EP90 gear oil. Some find it notchy, and neutral can be hard to find at a standstill. Enfield fitted their box with a neutral finder, an extra lever that is mounted above the right foot change that takes the bike into neutral from any gear. The later five-speed box is far slicker and more sophisticated than the old four-speed. ▶





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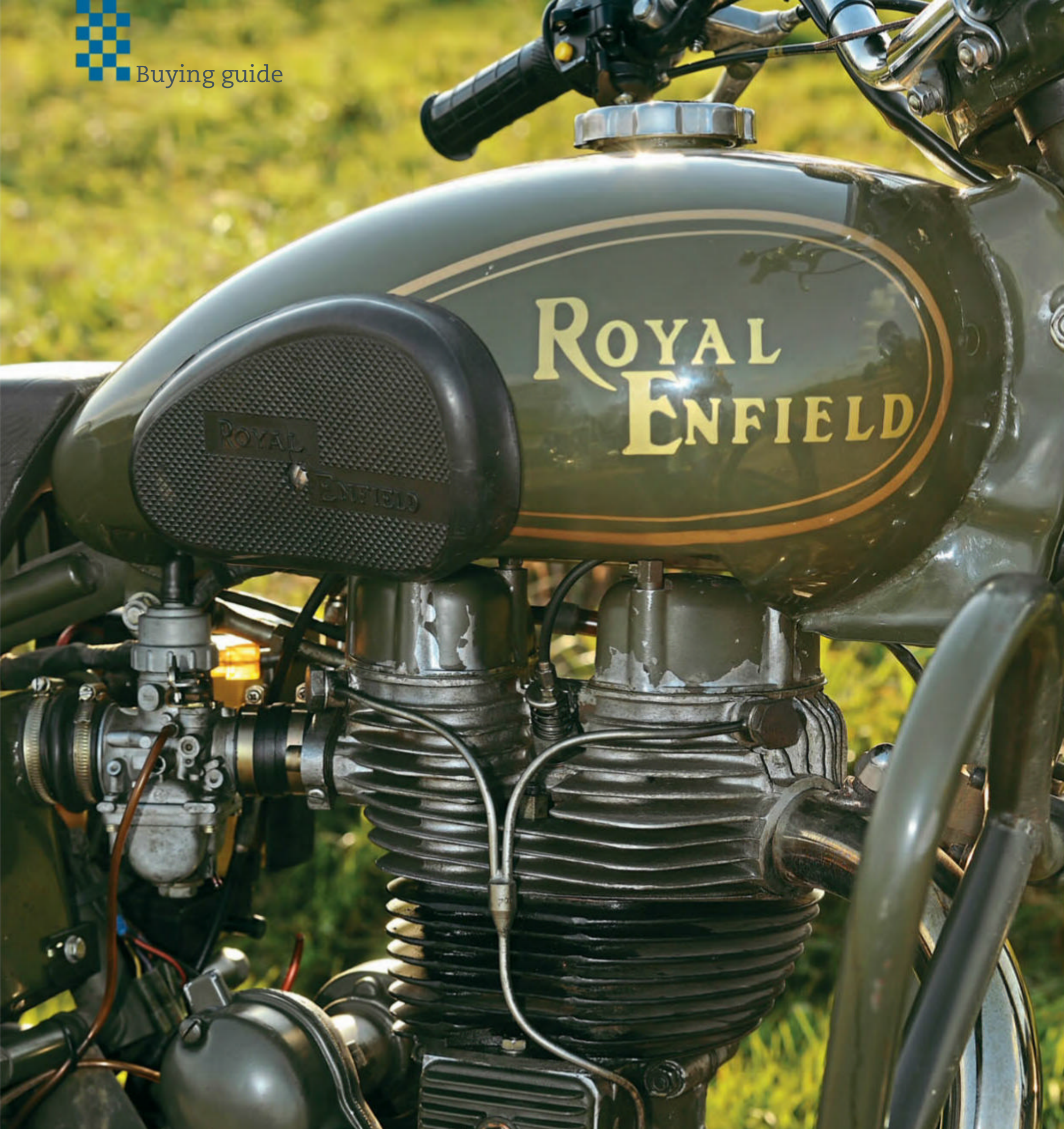
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LOOKING AFTER YOUR BULLET

THE CARB-EQUIPPED BULLET is made for the home mechanic, with the engine basic and simple to work on, and servicing limited to checking things over and changing oil, plugs and setting points and tappet clearances. Other jobs, like wheel and steering bearing replacement are not for the faint-hearted however, while replacing a failed starter clutch on the ES and Electra-X is a tricky job. A fine mist of oil comes from the engine

of the cast-iron barrelled Bullets and keeping the chaincase oil-tight is tricky, though not impossible. Depending on your outlook this is either a messy and unsightly or an example of period charm. As long as levels are regularly topped up this isn't a major problem unless you are obsessed with oil tightness and if you are it seems unlikely you would plump for a Bullet in the first place. Oil can leak from primary drive casings, head gasket leakage can be

reduced by torquing the head down properly and there are leaks from the gearbox sprocket seal, which can only be replaced by taking the clutch off. Many British motorcycles used to feature a breather pipe to the rear of the bike, something that today is an ecological no-no. On an Indian Bullet a breather sends the oil mist to the carburettor airbox to recycle it through the engine, and you might see oil dripping from the bottom of the box.

ELECTRICS – KEEP THE SPARK ALIVE

THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM UNTIL 1998 WAS old-fashioned and used bullet connectors rather than blocks. This makes for a complex, unreliable and unwieldy collection of coloured wires and can cause problems. Later models were fitted with block connectors to make things more reliable. The first 350s on sale in the UK had 6v electrics until 1986, long after most manufacturers had gone to 12v. It is a relatively simple job to change a pre-86 Bullet to 12v, and most bikes from the period still on the road will have had this done. In 1999, Enfield changed the electrical system from the old 12v AC/DC system to a 12v DC system. Electronic ignition arrived in 2004 as a standard fitment and alternative aftermarket set ups like the Boyer Bransden ignition can be retro-fitted to eliminate contact breakers on older bikes, though some people still swear by the old points and coil operation, partly because it's easier to fault find.

HORSES FOR COURSES

Switchgear on the first models was hopelessly unreliable. For a brief period German-made Magura switches replaced the old set up and these were replaced in turn by an Indian design that wasn't as good. Stylistically the bikes are horses for courses, but it's the look with the original style frame and the lovely and well-made headlamp nacelle with a smart pair of riding lights that has endured to this day. Enfield offered an optional electric start fitted on 2001-2003 models to create the 500ES, but the mechanism wasn't perfect, and the starter clutch could destroy itself if the bike backfired while starting. Given the trouble Triumph and Norton had with starter motors, one might suspect that such devices just don't suit bikes designed in the 1940s.

In 2002 Enfield launched the Sixty-5 that took its styling cues from the 1960s and had the new five-speed box. It had a ribbed seat, brighter colours and redesigned bodywork. Electric start was standard, with a redesigned starter clutch to cope with the self-destruction problem experienced with the ES.

The Sixty-5 was joined in 2004 by the Electra-X, which saw Enfield produce a new Austrian designed lean-burn engine giving the Indian Bullet its first new power plant in more than 50 years. Of all the Bullets, the Electra-X is the one to avoid and has the most problems. The new engine was needed to keep selling



the Enfield around the world as emissions regulations bit. The Electra-X had higher compression and an alloy cylinder replacing the old cast iron item. A more efficient oil pump was fitted, as was a roller bearing big end, however this could give trouble compared to the plain bearing crank on the iron barrelled models. The slide carb was replaced by a CV item. Although the Electra-X was not much faster than the older 500, it felt tighter and was built to finer tolerances. It also had a disc brake on the front.

In 2008 emissions regulations caught up with Enfield again and a fuel injection system was introduced, together with a new unit construction wet sump engine with hydraulic tappets and a new gearbox. All of which made for a better motorcycling experience but reduced the ability for the home mechanic to tinker and improve the breed. ▶

The bullet on the road

ON THE ROAD a Bullet is solid and surprisingly compact, thanks partly to the frame design which allows a low seat height. Kick-starting a Bullet is a knack, though it is easy to get the hang of it, especially if the carb and ignition are properly set up. The handling is safe and predictable and while they have a reputation for being a sturdy plodder, a

well sorted Bullet with some weight reduction carried out can be surprisingly sprightly. There's not a lot to a Bullet and with firm suspension and good ground clearance the Bullet can be an agile mount and there are plenty of tuning parts around. Trials conversions are a fun ride with plenty of low-down grunt to get you out of the mud, and

while road bikes aren't exactly Gold Stars on the twisty bits, getting them to look and feel fast, even if they aren't is a rewarding way of passing the time.

The Bullet is a fun to own rider's bike first and foremost, and whether you make it your sole steed or part of a stable, it can fulfil all kinds of roles from old school B-road

long distance touring to commuting.

And if you are feeling naughty, why not re-register it with an old number and confuse the less well-informed. It'll turn heads wherever it goes, and the gentle chuff-chuff-chuff exhaust note will fill the streets with misty-eyed nostalgia.



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Royal Enfield
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www.royalenfield.org.uk

SPECIALISTS:

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hitchcocksmotorcycles.com

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burtonbikebits.net

Buying a Bullet? Be a tinkerer

ONE MAJOR ADVANTAGE OF OPTING FOR AN INDIAN Bullet is that spare parts availability is good, and parts are, if not cheap, certainly more affordable than most. Hitchcocks website lists thousands of parts including complete engines from £1600, toolkits for less than £20, and cables starting at £6.

It's easy to turn your Bullet into something personal and special on a budget. Hitchcock's Bullet catalogue is nearly 300 pages long and is a must for all Bullet owners, while devotees of other marques can only stare and wonder at the riches within. The bikes use old fashioned rubber for the foot pegs, kick-start and gearshift. This is quite soft and will wear out quickly, but replacements are cheap and easy to fit. Hitchcocks supply kits to build authentic 1950s throwbacks, trail bikes, street scramblers and café racers. Their website has an excellent set of technical articles too.

Derek Wood from Hitchcocks owns a 2007 carb-equipped 350 Bullet.

He says: "People who buy Bullets, especially the pre-2007 ones, are looking for a really traditional bikes. If you are a tinkerer the Pre-2007 bikes are the ones for you. If not go for the more modern bikes.

"The four-speed Albion gearbox has been around forever and requires a bit of mechanical sympathy. If

you are jumping off a Japanese bike and try to change gear too quickly you'll miss gears. It's a bit agricultural and requires a positive engagement. Making the gearbox work properly requires tiny adjustments which can be very fiddly and a tiny amount either way can make it perfect or much worse, but once set up properly it's fine.

"The original carbs don't take kindly to ethanol in petrol. People come in and say they are having running problems and assume they need a new carb. The first thing we ask is, 'have you left the petrol in the tank for more than few months?' If so, throw it away, clean the carb by squirting some cleaner into it, put fresh petrol in and set it up properly and all will be good. Always ride the bike for 20 minutes or so before deciding there's something wrong after setting the carb up as it needs to be warm and ensure the gaskets between the carb and the cylinder head don't leak.

"The 2000-2007 Bullets are pretty bomb-proof. Plenty of people say they want to change to the front brake for a disc, and we always ask, why? With a few minor modifications such as drilling the top trunnion out a little and overhauling the brake regularly, you can make it perform well. We get a few people in who have chains that have worn out quickly and it's nearly always down to adjustment. Adjusted properly, a chain will last 18-20,000 miles. If you don't know how to do it, buy a Chain Monkey. Coat the bike in ACF50 in the winter and try not to leave it outside. All kinds of people own them, and they usually have another bike in the garage, but they all have a great love for the Bullet. They're not expensive to run, and they need to be ridden regularly to get the best out of them. I can't see myself ever selling mine." **CHIC**

SPECIFICATION (500CC BULLET)

MANUFACTURED: 1990-2007 **ENGINE:** Air-cooled ohv single **BORE / STROKE:** 84mm x 90mm **CAPACITY:** 499cc **COMPRESSION:** 8.5:1 **POWER:** 22bhp @ 5500rpm **LUBRICATION:** Dry sump **IGNITION:** 12v Battery and coil **CARBURETTOR:** Micarb VM28 **TRANSMISSION:** Chain **GEARBOX:** Four-speed foot change **FRAME:** single downtube cradle **FRONT SUSPENSION:** Telescopic forks **REAR SUSPENSION:** Swinging arm, twin shocks **FRONT BRAKE:** 7in 2ls drum **REAR BRAKE:** 6in sls drum **TYRES:** 3.25 x 19 front 3.50 x 19 rear **WHEELBASE:** 54in/1372mm **SEAT HEIGHT:** 30 ins/760mm **DRY WEIGHT:** 361lb/165kg



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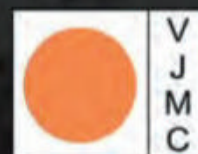
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New

RETRO



TRIUMPH

Scrambler 1200

Triumph are the masters for classically-inspired bikes with a dirt bike look but this time they seem to have mated a Bonneville with a Camel. It harks back to when a bike had to be capable of whatever its owner asked. So is it any good? Absolutely!

WORDS BY MATT PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARETH HARFORD, CHIPPIE WOOD AND MARK MANNING



New
RETRO



THIS IS TRIUMPH'S NEW SCRAMBLER 1200. There are two models, the £11,500 XC and higher spec, taller, £800 more, XE. They are part of the Bonneville range with their styling harking back, yet both pack tons of tech in them and the same 1200cc twin from the Thruxton R, albeit retuned. But the big story here is it's actually been designed as a scrambler, not a coffee shop poseur.

In case you missed the name, the 21in front heavy-duty rim, huge forks, high exhausts and minimalist styling should help you guess its off-road bias. Over recent years we've been used to many new bikes mimicking a dirt-agenda, but falling short on expectations when you actually try mud-plugging. However, the 1200 Scrambler is about to change all that; this is not a styling exercise. It's not uncommon to see several variations of one model and Triumph are well-versed with this. But as Stuart Wood, chief engineer of the project explains: "We wanted the Scrambler to be the real thing, so we started with plain paper and the geometry for off-roading."

MORE THAN A MAKEOVER

So the Scrambler has a new frame to give that geometry and carry incredible suspension movement, 250mm – almost 10 inches – on the XE (50mm more than a BMW R1250GS), but also to allow the signature high pipes to fit tightly to the bike for when the rider is standing up, another essential for the dirt. So much so, that to narrow the bike even more, they've binned one of the two throttle bodies, which has also improved torque on the twin, helping midrange where you need it. The engine has had lots of little changes inside to suit off-roading. Lighter and less crank inertia was the key, so for example the crank is lighter, but the webs are a larger diameter yet lighter – losing weight and inertia – clever. Even the clutch and balancer shaft didn't escape the diet – and the cam cover is magnesium now. With exhaust and throttle changes, it gives 81lb ft of torque and 89bhp. With a dry weight of 205kg (450lb), so around 220kg fully-fuelled, that's about right and crucially a lot lighter than many adventure bikes.

Talking of balance, although the suspension has the travel of a prewar brake lever, the 1200 Scrambler isn't that tall. The XE has a seat height of 870mm (34in), whereas the XC is 840mm (33in), so most riders should feel comfortable on one of them. And the



narrow dimensions help getting a leg down, too.

In a world where we are used to pre-unit engines, drum brakes and magnetos, the following may be a slight shock. The electronics on the Scrambler are mind-blowing. The engine can be put in different modes to adjust the power delivery, the traction control also, including the best off-road traction I've ever tried. The ABS also has cornering ABS, which takes into account your lean and speed and this is all while your phone is charging safely under the seat. And don't forget to adjust your Go Pro action camera from the interface on the full-colour, fully adjustable dashboard, where you can also see who is ringing or texting you. Oh, and later there will be Google maps navigation! How simple life was in the old days...

I don't care much for modes, fancy dashboards or charging my phone, or even remembering it for that matter. I like a bike to look nice, sound nicer and ride brilliantly – either making me smile, laugh, or focus. And despite all its digital trinkets, the 1200 Scrambler manages through the course of the two days' riding to give me all of the above.

Off-road may be the mantle, but most Scramblers will see out their days as predominantly road bikes. At this it excels, with a commanding and comfortable riding position that allows you to take in your surroundings, an engine with perfect power delivery, allied to nice ratios and lots of control. The off-road prowess doesn't dampen the on-road skills like it does on my Africa Twin, and the brakes and handling are far better than most of us need. The shorter XC felt better on road; the taller suspension on the XE losing a little feedback and slowing the steering slightly. Think Thruxton R engine with Bonneville looks with Triumph Tiger height and you have the Scrambler.

So enjoy a great road ride on the Scrambler you will, but once you've had enough, you can choose to turn off the black stuff and head for the hills.

Off-road the Scrambler is simply superb for its

Far left top: This is the XE model, which is taller, has better suspension, more gadgets and handguards. It gains in off-road ability over the XC, but is lightly less sharp on-road, thanks to that lanky suspension. Still great, though.

Far left bottom: The XC is lower, cheaper and just as much fun as its taller, £800 more sibling.

Above and below: If you buy one, which I would like to, please, please, please take it off-roading – you'll love it!



size. It has been designed for this and you can feel it. It takes time to get used to what it is – is it a heavy dirt bike? Or is it a lightweight adventure bike? To be honest, who cares when it's this good.

The electronics are simply fantastic. In off-road mode it helps you to control the amount of slide you're getting, yet if you need more, just open the throttle further and it will over-rule the traction control. It even has ABS in off-road mode, which has been tailored for slip and minimal grip – incredible. Steering lock is enough, riding position could allow all-day riding and not once could I get the suspension to bottom or top out.

It is important to note we were on off-road biased Pirelli tyres in the dirt, not the road-biased Metzeler Tourance the bikes will come with. But the bike was so good I'd see how much a spare set of wheels were so I could swap them when heading for the mud. I'm not a great off-road rider, but I enjoy it every time and this bike flattered me like no other, and, more importantly, didn't intimidate me. Complete novice off road riders were sitting down but still having a hoot – it truly flatters.

When Meriden was selling off-road bikes like the T120 TT, it was for competition only. You couldn't

ride it on the road and you certainly couldn't ride a T120 off-road without flattening a pipe or losing something. The Scrambler 1200 will let you ride hundreds of miles on the road, then squirt down a green lane, tyres permitting. It's that good. GS move over.

Two days of riding the Scrambler 1200 has proved to me it is one of the best all-round bikes out there. My only concern is how many people will really use it in the way it's been designed – after all £11,500 is a lot of money to spend on something to then thack down a track. So it's built to take the odd knock and if any bike has been designed to hold your hand while you are dirt riding then it's the Scrambler – it really does make lions of off-road mice.

I feel anyone who likes the idea of an adventure bike but doesn't need the continent-crossing fairing or bulbous tank would find the Scrambler ideal. It may be a modern bike, but the ethos of one machine being able to do it all for you is as classic as the earliest motorcycles. If you've ever ridden past a green lane and wondered: "Where does that go?" Now you can find out. The Scrambler 1200 could just be the most fun bike out there at present. **CBG**

SPECIFICATION

MAKE AND MODEL: Triumph Scrambler 1200 XC and XE (in brackets) **PRICE:** £11,500 (£12,300) on the road, 24 month warranty, 12 months Triumph Assist **ENGINE:** 1200cc inline twin, 8v, liquid-cooled **POWER:** 89bhp @ 7400rpm **TORQUE:** 81lb-ft @ 3950rpm **FRAME:** Steel tubular **BRAKES:** Twin Brembo calipers, 320mm discs, rear single two-piston caliper, 255mm disc **TRANSMISSION:** six-speed, chain drive **SUSPENSION:** Showa upside down forks, Ohlins twin rear shocks, both fully adjustable **WHEELS/TYRES:** 21in front, 17in rear, 90/90 x 21 front, 150/ 70 x 17 Metzeler Tourance **SEAT HEIGHT:** 840mm (870mm) **FUEL CAPACITY:** 16 litres **MPG:** 56mpg claimed **WEIGHT:** 205kg (207kg) Wet not given **CONTACT:** triumphmotorcycles.co.uk



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904s Sports Big Bore Kit

There are very few modifications you can perform on an engine that will improve power and torque right through the rev range, but TTP's 904s big bore kit is one of those modifications. In use the extra top end horsepower is excellent for acceleration and top speed, but the revelation is the extra torque through-out the rev range. 12:1 CR, tight quench & anti-friction coated pistons.



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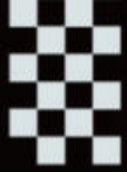
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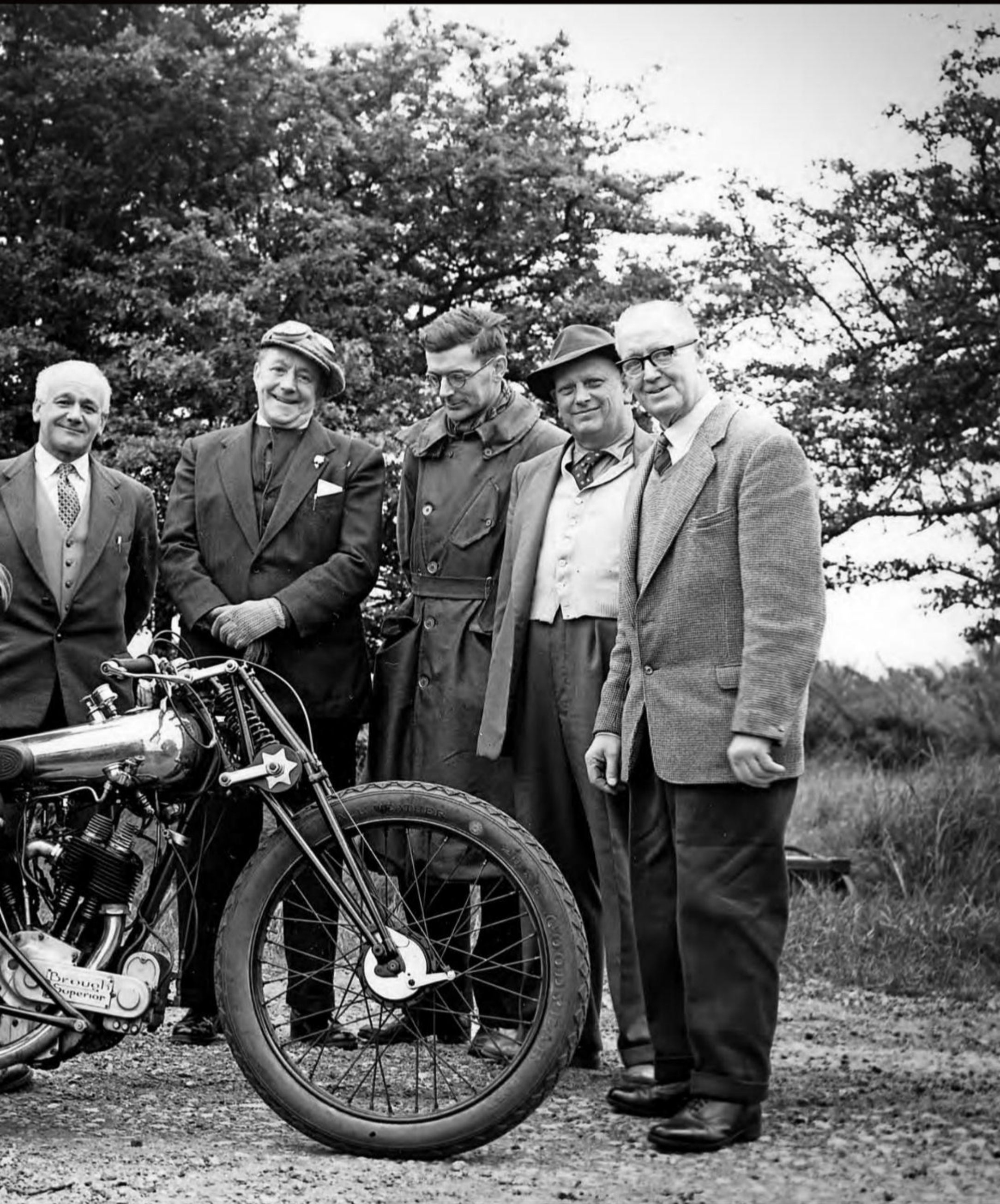
■ FUNCTION OVER FORM

This photograph has some of the most influential people from both the world of Brough Superior and of the vintage bike movement itself. Apologies but there is another, totally self-indulgent reason for using this, as it also features my favourite bike of all time: Old Bill. Named after a First World War character in Bruce Bairnsfather's cartoons, Old Bill was George Brough's personal transport on which he won many sprint competitions. The JAP 1000cc engine, a Bert Le Vack (JA Prestwich engineer, designer and competitive racer himself) creation using both side-valve and overhead valve parts, was as powerful as the frame was minimal. But more importantly, it became the 'Trigger's broom' workhorse of Brough Superior, a moving testbed for new parts, new engineering and different ideas. Its minimalism is so very workmanlike, its importance to the motorcycle brand-of-brands unequalled and to me, its beauty lies in the bare bones of an engine, two wheels and a frame. It may have a posh name on it, but this bike was used and abused.

Similar bikes have been built, some even by George Brough himself, but this one sold in 2012 for £291,200. It wasn't the largest engine, it was never the fastest, it wasn't the shiniest and it didn't have the Lawrence of Arabia tag on it - but to me this is the most important of all Brough Superior bikes.

Founder of the Vintage Motorcycle Club, Titch Allen, is seen seated on the 1922 Brough Superior 'Old Bill', who owned the bike himself for some years. Behind, from left to right, you can also see George Morris, Blackie Blacknell, George Brough, John Griffith, Frank Ingar and Ike Webb. **CBG**







Products

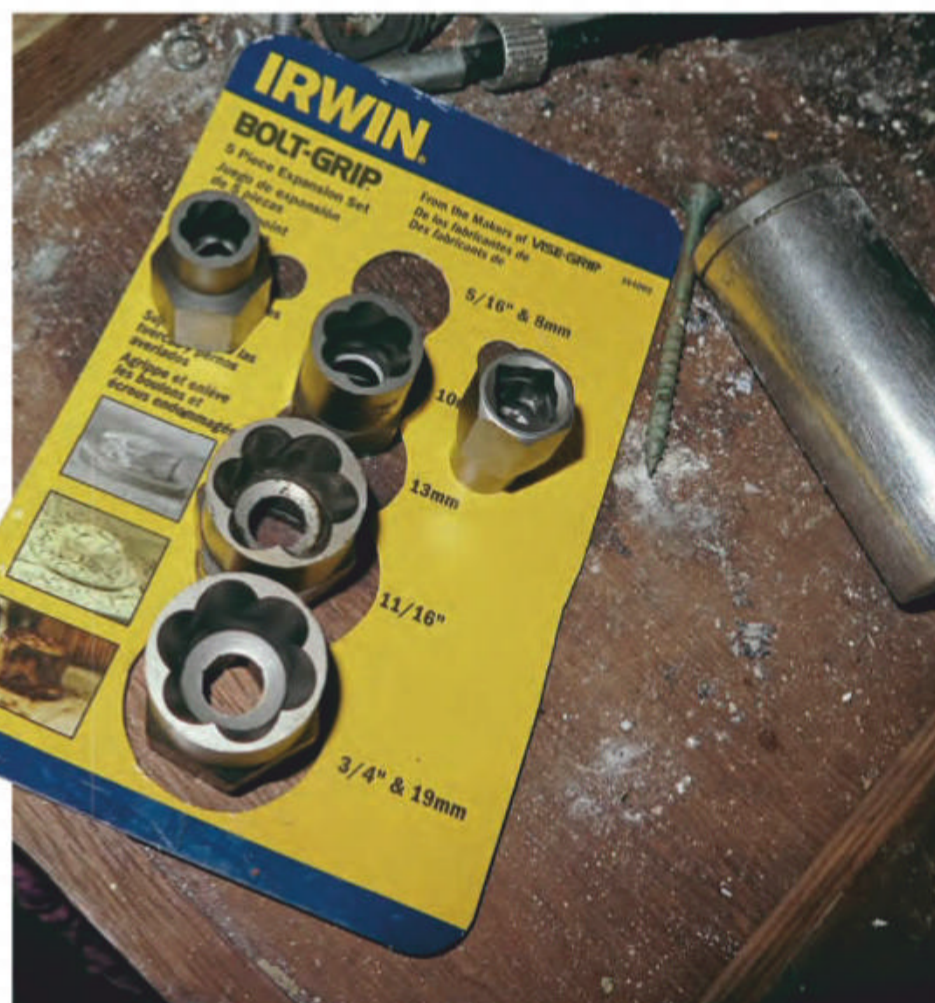
Irwin Bolt Grip Sockets

THERE'S THAT DREADFUL moment when working on your motorcycle, especially a Japanese one from the 1970s, when you realise that 10-minute job is going to take days to sort out. You're undoing a stubborn bolt, or a drain or filter plug and your heart sinks as there's the faintest of clicks and you feel the spanner go loose. Yes, you've rounded off another bolt head, usually one made from that curious mixture of cheese spread and aluminium that was used in the factory.

Getting it out now is going to be a challenge. Vice grips will be considered, as will punches, hammering an undersized socket on, or trying to cut a slot for a screwdriver. Few of these will succeed, and as the bolt is almost always in an inaccessible place, trying them out will result in further frustration and destruction.

Alternatively, you could invest in a set of Irwin Bolt Grip sockets. These have reverse spiral flutes that bite into your chewed-up bolt head. The tougher the bolt, the harder they bite. Made of carbon steel, these sockets come in two sets, and it doesn't matter if you are going to use them on Metric, AF or British Standard bolts, because they fit all of them from 5/16in/8mm to 3/4in/19mm. They come in 3/8in square drive for use with hand ratchets, impact wrenches and are tough enough to use with air ratchets for that really stubborn fastener. They also come with hexagonal flats for use with wrenches, pliers, sockets or locking pliers, which is useful if you are using them in confined spaces.

The set seen here is the Expansion Set, purchased because a 19mm head on a particularly stubborn



overtightened sump plug had rounded off. Although they aren't cheap, when compared to repairing the damage done by attacking a rounded-off head with blunt instruments, they

are a bargain. I got mine from Toolstation, but they are widely available from tool retailers and at bike shows.

■ **£20.96 per set**
■ **www.toolstation.com**

Bright sparks from the Czech Republic

SPARK PLUG CHOICE is usually limited to whatever you can get, with NGK the commonest brand. Though they work well in newer motorcycles, I find that in my collection of old nails they do tend to foul quite a lot. I get through a lot of them, to the extent that I've moved to Champion for my British bikes, as they seem a bit harder wearing.

Jawa importers F2 Motorcycles are now offering a new option from a long-established Czech brand, Brisk. Brisk spark plugs are original equipment fitted to some of the motorcycles F2 deal with.

In the past, F2 found that when they eventually needed changing, the easily available alternatives from well known

manufacturers did not last as long and did not run as well.

They contacted Brisk and now offer a range of plugs to suit many traditional motorcycles. Brisk spark plugs cover most motorcycle needs with just four different heat ranges. This wide heat range is very useful for older type engines running carburettors.

Older petrol engines fitted with a carburettor fuel system tend to run rich on start up and under acceleration. Following the introduction of lean burn fuel injected engines many plug manufacturers changed how they produce their spark plugs. They no longer feel they need to worry about fouling and wide heat ranges. Brisk understand the requirements of older

engines and produce a range of traditional plugs for classic motorcycles and cars.

Brisk plugs recover well from over-rich mixture due to excessive choke or flooding on start up. They continue to function well even on a feathered throttle at speed when a carburettor may be a little lean. They will not cure incorrect carb set up, but they are said to tolerate small variations in mixture very well indeed.

Brisk plugs can be purchased by calling 01945 410165 or calling at F2 Motorcycles, 290 Leverington Common, Gorefield, Wisbech PE13 5JG

■ **£3 each**
■ **www.f2motorcycles.ltd.uk**





Waxing lyrical

THE BLACK LEATHER jacket has always had a rival as the clothing of choice among serious motorcyclists – the black wax cotton jacket. The wax cotton jacket was developed for the trials riders of the 1960s but its waterproof nature and tough cloth finish soon found it a home among road riders too, and it became the abiding image of the respectable motorcyclist.

These days, the wax cotton jacket comes with bulky body armour and is expensively priced, with a jacket from one of the original manufacturers costing a little more than £500.

You can get an authentic British-made wax cotton jacket for considerably less than that, however.

Midlife Classics of Worcester have a small range of jackets which use the original 1960s patterns and are as period specific as they come. Costing £79.99 including postage and turned out in black or dark brown, the 6DT (for Six Day Trials) jackets are well put together

with quality brass fittings. They are made from heavyweight wax cotton in a classic cut with overbraided elbows and shoulders. They come with a waist belt, traditional tartan lining, union flag motif and turnover breast pockets.

Putting one on does feel

a little unusual these days, especially for those used to removable linings and shoulder and elbow armour.

Midlife Classics also produce the similarly styled, but armour-equipped, Brooklands jacket in black Cordura, for those who feel protection is a more important

consideration than period authenticity. The Brooklands jacket costs £99.99, plus £12 postage, or you can visit their shop or catch them at a bike show during the year.

■ £79.99/£99.99

■ www.midlifeclassics.co.uk



Halfords Advanced 200 piece tool set

I'VE NEVER SUBSCRIBED to most overpriced tools, because I'm not a professional so don't use them enough. Good screwdrivers, good pliers and good sockets are a must though. And over the years various size spanners and sockets have disappeared, so

I bit the bullet and bought this set. Being the Advanced range they have a lifetime warranty, and while swapping broken tools may not be as easy as the expensive man in his expensive van, hopefully it gives some clue as to their quality.

Sizes are metric and AF, as well as Torx screwdriver bits and the quality is superb. This was a limited edition black finish, which I'm not sure will wear too well but hey, they're only spanners. The ratchets have a nice movement, the sockets are

a tight fit and after two months of amateur use, I'm happy – especially at the price. And I haven't even lost one yet...

■ £165
 ■ www.halfords.com

Alpinestars M-56 Drystar gloves

NOT ALWAYS A fan of Southern European clothing manufacturers with their emphasis on looks rather than protection, but Alpinestars have always made great boots and gloves.

These leather, winter gloves are supple from the off, comfortable with their pre-curved fingers and, so far, I haven't managed my trick of pulling the lining out. Also, despite using Alpinestars' Drystar membrane and not Gore-Tex, they have kept the rain out. It also makes them a bit cheaper, though I still think they're a little steep.

I've got warmer gloves for when it gets really cold (the sort of cold you should really be in the car) but

for chilly days the M-56 thermal insulation works well, yet without making the gloves feel bulky. The hard knuckle armour is unobtrusive and the cuff should be wide enough for a hefty winter jacket. Third and fourth fingers are linked to prevent injury if you fall – some may not like that, in which case just snip through the leather. You can even use a smartphone with the fingers. All I miss is some protection on the outside of the hand, but otherwise, some good winter gloves without garish colours that should be fine until it gets nice and sunny.

■ £110
 ■ Alpinestars.com





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The perfect starter?

One man's Enfield Scrambling Special

Louis Paterson wanted a hassle-free entrance to classic bikes and loved the look of an Ariel Red Hunter. But in reality, the Enfield Bullet proved perfect

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY STUART URQUHART

THIS RATHER HANDSOME ROYAL ENFIELD scrambler has been given a new lease of life by its enthusiastic owner, Louis Paterson. I doubt admirers would ever have guessed that this beautiful motorcycle has been created and assembled from a collection of disassociated parts. With this revelation in mind, some might write it off as a 'Bitsa' – whereas others might pause for a moment to admire its timeless and classical lines. But whatever the onlooker's first impressions are the yellow number plate will immediately identify this machine as a modern Indian Enfield Bullet. Nevertheless, CBG readers should judge this book by its cover - for this functional off-roader has been carefully planned and skilfully executed by its proud owner.

THE AUCHTERMUCHTY INDIAN(S)

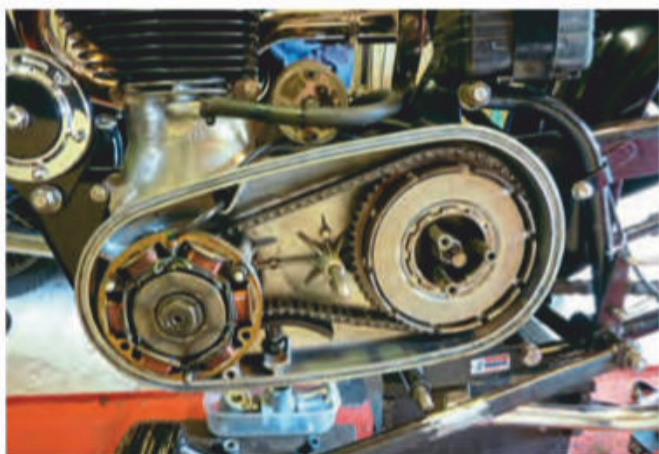
Louis is a devotee of hassle-free modern machinery, but with a little encouragement from his friends, he fancied getting his hands dirty with a classic motorcycle. But understandably Louis was nervous about investing all of his precious beer money into a 'do-or-die classic' – one that might burn more cash and suck up more time than he could comfortably afford. Louis also admits he is quite happy to change a sparkplug or top-up some much-needed oil, but the art of motorcycle mechanics are a complete anathema to him. However, baptism by Indian Enfield seemed like a cheap and reliable alternative to dabble in 'the classic experience', without risking his sanity on the real deal.

"I got wind of a local Indian Enfield Bullet which was up for grabs in Auchtermuchty (think Dr Findlay)

and arranged a viewing, only to discover that the charming seller wished to part with not one, but two Enfields," explained Louis. "A minor irritation was the gentleman would only part with his Enfields if they were sold as a pair. The offer consisted of a running, customised 350 and a non-running 500 that had been cannibalised for spares. I was interested in the 500, thinking it would possibly make an ideal project bike. So I bought the pair and sold the 350 weeks later in order to raise some capital to restore the cannibalised 500. I suppose I was taking a chance that it would ever run again. But weeks later I managed to do just that, and I was relieved the engine didn't sound like a bag of rusty old nails – which in outward appearance, the bike certainly was.'

"Once I was satisfied with the engine, I began to pull the bike apart. At the same time I armed myself with a Hitchcocks Motorcycles accessories catalogue – renowned purveyors of everything Enfield. Needless to say, I was not a fan of the Indian Enfield's heavyweight mudguards, bulbous petrol tank and toolboxes. Further, I had already decided the dated rear end and the cassette-style headlamp were items bound for the skip. I spent many late evenings planning my 'special' - which was very much influenced by a pre-war Ariel Red Hunter. I loved the Ariel's classic lines, but especially its rigid rear end and hi-level exhaust system.

"Therefore two of my first Hitchcocks purchases were a bolt-on rigid rear sub frame assembly – not cheap – and a hi-rise exhaust system. Both became the backbone of my idea to build a classic scrambler and were quickly followed by a sports-type classic sprung saddle. For Christmas I treated myself to a Lucas-type ▶





headlamp, fork headlamp brackets, alloy fork yolk and a classic style toolbox, all sourced from Hitchcocks.

"I was now financially committed and well on my way to blowing a King's ransom - little did I know then," sighed Louis.

Louis turned to eBay in his search for missing parts. During one visit he found an Enfield Model G petrol tank - a key item, which perfectly suited his 'classic scrambler' brief. Once he had collected enough body parts his next job was to try and fit them all together. This called for a dry build, after which Louis could begin the renovation process.

The brief also included chopping the Enfield frame in half before Louis could add the Hitchcocks rigid rear sub frame. For this crucial stage of the build, Louis had secured the services of local friends and blacksmiths, John Don & Son. Brian Don is a wizard in metal fabrication and was happy to assist Louis in realising his dream machine. Brian also involved his dad John - a renowned mud-plodder in his day, with post-war trials experience that would prove handy during the build. As expected 'Team Don' made light work of cutting away the unwanted swinging arm and down tubes before welding together the two separate frame sections to create the new rigid frame.

Next the Dons extended the rear brake lever before fabricating a set of period brackets to bolt the rear mudguard to the newly created frame. A custom set of mounting brackets were also fabricated and these were welded to the Model G petrol tank that Louis had found on eBay. By careful rule-of-thumb measuring and the canny use of polystyrene wedges and wooden templates, the Enfield Special began to take rapid form inside the Don's workshop - and it "looked superb in its raw skin", according to Louis. When the team eventually had the bike loosely assembled it was then transported back to Louis' garage for finishing and painting.

PAINTING BRINGS PAIN

Following the dry build Louis then sent both wheels to local wheelman Barry Brown, of Windygates, to be powder-coated black and laced with stainless spokes - 18 inch rear and 21 inch front, complete with Mitas Trials tyres and new tubes.

While awaiting the return of his wheels Louis cleaned the engine and gearbox and pronounced them fit for duty. The task of rewiring and plumbing in a Boyer power box and other important electrical accoutrements was undertaken by the renowned 'Ferret' and his mobile workshop, which landed in Newport-on-Tay, only to further lighten Louis' gasping wallet.

He next tackled the painting of the Model G petrol tank. This unfortunately turned out to be another cash-gobbling exercise best told by Louis himself: "I count myself an experienced practitioner in the use of rattle tins. However, my first attempt at spray-painting the tank turned out to be more ripple-effect than smooth. To say I was gutted would be an understatement.

"My second attempt fared much better and actually looked quite flash," Louis chuckled. "Once the paint had cured I very carefully applied new transfers before sealing the tank with a petrol-proof, lacquer top coat. Imagine my despair when the transfers, then the paint, began to curl up and blister before my startled eyes - I cried into my porridge for weeks!"

Louis threw in the towel and went cap-in-hand to local professionals, Bike Paints of Cupar. Once Bike



"The brief also included chopping the Enfield frame in half before Louis could add the Hitchcocks rigid rear sub frame. For this crucial stage of the build, Louis had secured the services of local friends and blacksmiths, John Don & Son"



How to build your own Hitchcocks Special

Throughout the 1950s and 60s the original Redditch Bullet was a class-leading British design, winning not just press plaudits, but International Six Days Trials. Whether in 350 or 500 guise, good low-mileage examples of Indian Enfield Bullets abound and they offer a great introduction to classic motorcycling. The 500 singles have a bit more power (22bhp/75mph) for uphill climbing and living with modern traffic.

Indian Bullets are cheap and reliable workhorses and they deliver excellent fuel economy (70+mpg) and value.

Pre-millennium Bullets are often undervalued and are perfect for modifying or improving, but avoid the early electric start models, as starter motors are the Indian Bullet's Achilles heel. The earlier models also tend to suffer from poor quality chrome and paintwork, so they ought to be dirt cheap – often advertised below the grand mark.

Post-millennium models are renowned for improved quality but fetch higher premiums (in excess of £1500). The only downside to any Indian Bullet is its dated appearance.

The upside is Indian Bullets are simple motorcycles to sort and offer an easy



learning curve for the inspired home mechanic – all you need is a good, illustrated manual (Hitchcocks stock them).

Contrary to rumour the engines and gear boxes are bullet proof, if agricultural in

engineering terms – all good points for the home mechanic.

Their simplistic engineering makes them excellent candidates for custom specials, as Louis' home-built Special proves.

“Clutch slip was especially pronounced when climbing steep inclines in 3rd or 4th gear. Frustratingly, no amount of lever adjustment at either end of the cable would correct the problem”

Paints had managed to stop rolling about in mock laughter at Louis' botched petrol tank, they delivered not only a fabulous paint job, but 'the jewel of Louis' rebuild'. The new petrol tank's metallic gold transfers all glistened beneath a smooth top coat of deep, oven-baked lacquer – a quality, if expensive job, that looked well worth the investment.

Louis did however make a splendid job of painting the fork shrouds, mudguards, frame and other cycle parts – so he did (eventually) pass muster!

When the wheels returned from Windygates Louis began rebuilding his Enfield with the help of several knowledgeable friends. Thanks to the earlier dry-build everything went back together in the blink of an eye – until the fitting of the back wheel.

Frustratingly, a wheel spindle spacer was found to be missing and resulted in several days delay as the part found its way from Solihull to Newport-on-Tay.

Once sorted, the lads then attempted to start up the Enfield, but a miss-fire and poor running engine threw up a new set of problems. Unfortunately for Louis he was out of time and boarded a helicopter to his job in the remote North Sea.

THE SHAKEDOWN RIDES...

The Enfield was now entrusted to your scribe for further fettling. I had already suspected a blip in carburetion was to blame for the miss-firing engine. A quick check with Michael at Surrey Cycles procured a new throttle slide and larger jets that, once fitted, immediately restored easy starting and smooth running. Further fettling delivered a fine tick-over and Louis' Enfield was now ready for its debut ride.

But as is often the case with first rides, as soon as I was all kitted-up, the Enfield refused to start. After several fruitless attempts, I began the process of fault-finding by elimination. This eventually led to the coil itself – which appeared to be

filled with lumps of solder, where the HT cable is inserted into the coil.

It was obvious an earlier owner had replaced the HT lead's traditional brass clip with solder before exposing the cable's copper wires in the blind hope of achieving contact. I could only suppose I had disturbed any continuity when I had removed the spark plug. All I could do was order a new clip and sort out the bodge in the meantime...

As soon as I pointed the sweetly running Enfield out onto the open road I was immediately greeted with a slipping clutch and a clunky gearbox. Clutch slip was especially pronounced when climbing steep inclines in 3rd or 4th gear. Frustratingly, no amount of lever adjustment at either end of the cable would correct the problem. So I simply removed the clutch plates and springs and replaced them with a brand new set from Hitchcocks. As a belt and braces exercise I flushed the primary chaincase





of its engine oil and topped up with fresh transmission fluid – after which the new clutch performed faultlessly. Unfortunately, the clutch handlebar lever is proving to be heavy in operation and this is caused by a clutch cable that is too short – fitting a longer cable will alleviate cable tension by permitting a smoother route to the gear box clutch lever and Louis is on the case.

THE ROAD TEST

Problems now well and truly in the past I was keen to get out on Louis' stunning scrambler to enjoy a fault-free ride. Firing her up requires a few prods of the carb's tickler (no choke is fitted), followed by gently teasing the piston over TDC by use of the kickstart. This task is made easier by the handlebar's valve lifter - as Bullets do have significantly high compression. On most days, one well-timed kick will usually fire up the engine. From cold, Louis' Bullet usually starts on the second kick - but once the engine is warm you can expect her to fire up on the first time.

Thanks to the new clutch, first gear now selects without a clunk or drag, although, as explained earlier, the only downside is that the clutch lever is a tiring pull. First is quickly dispensed with, but as you power away in second and third gears, the engine unleashes its surprising spread of torque. It really is a thrilling ride. There is however an irritating step between third and fourth gears – more pronounced than on my own post-millennium Bullet.

So the rider on Louis's machine really

needs to rev the engine hard in third, then ride out the exploding band of torque and seamless acceleration is virtually guaranteed. Otherwise, if selected too early, the engine can 'wheeze' in fourth, and all the fun evaporates. Best to just crack open the throttle and fly!

Although the gearbox and torque-laden engine were a joy, the rigid rear end was not such a delight. Country roads, on which an Enfield Bullet should normally excel, proved tiring. This was down to a stiffly sprung rear saddle and a lack of rear suspension – both resulting in a bumpy ride over the poorest road surfaces. Thus pot holes of any size should be avoided, if you wish to remain seated and composed. Reducing tyre pressures to below 20psi did improve the ride, and I would place a safe bet the introduction of a lighter grade of fork oil would further enhance the ride.

The Hitchcocks hi-level exhaust note is crisp but not too loud. To the system's credit however it does deliver an exciting and deep bark when abusing the throttle.

On a shut throttle with engine breaking at maximum, there was no perceptible popping or banging through the exhaust – even when in free-fall down some of the steepest descents in Fife. So Michael's (Surrey Cycles) jetting recommendations would appear to have been spot on and the end result of several shakedown runs means the engine now ticks-over like the proverbial Swiss watch.

Plug chop tests revealed colours as per Amal's recommended palette, fading

from a Cadbury's chocolate brown on the outer rim to a cream egg hue across the central electrode – so sweet running is now assured.

Braking could be better and falls short of my own Enfield's. The front TLS brake would pep-up after a bit of TLC, while the extended rear brake lever would benefit from some heat bending – up to and within reach of the rider's boot! The addition of an extended rear brake arm at the hub (another clever Hitchcocks accessory), would also add more stopping power to the rider's finger tips.

Handling is as good as it gets when encumbered with a rigid rear end and a set of knobbly tyres. Given a fair lick of pace and a series of sharp bends, this Enfield can suffer some squeamish moments as it wallows around on its big, bendy knobbles! But hey, with its traditional rigid chassis and scrambler ergonomics, knee scraping and chin-on-the-tank sprints were never going to be its strong point. This head-turning scrambler replica makes more sense when hovering around at speeds of 50mph, or out and about exploring the big outdoors in the company of bona fide classics. It looks pretty cool too, when parked outside the local pub or cafe.

Louis' charming Enfield Special is still going through its ride assessment: but one other aspect of this Enfield's infectious ride is that once I'd reached journey's end, I just couldn't wipe the grin from my face.

Now that, dear readers, is what classic motorcycling is all about. **CBG**



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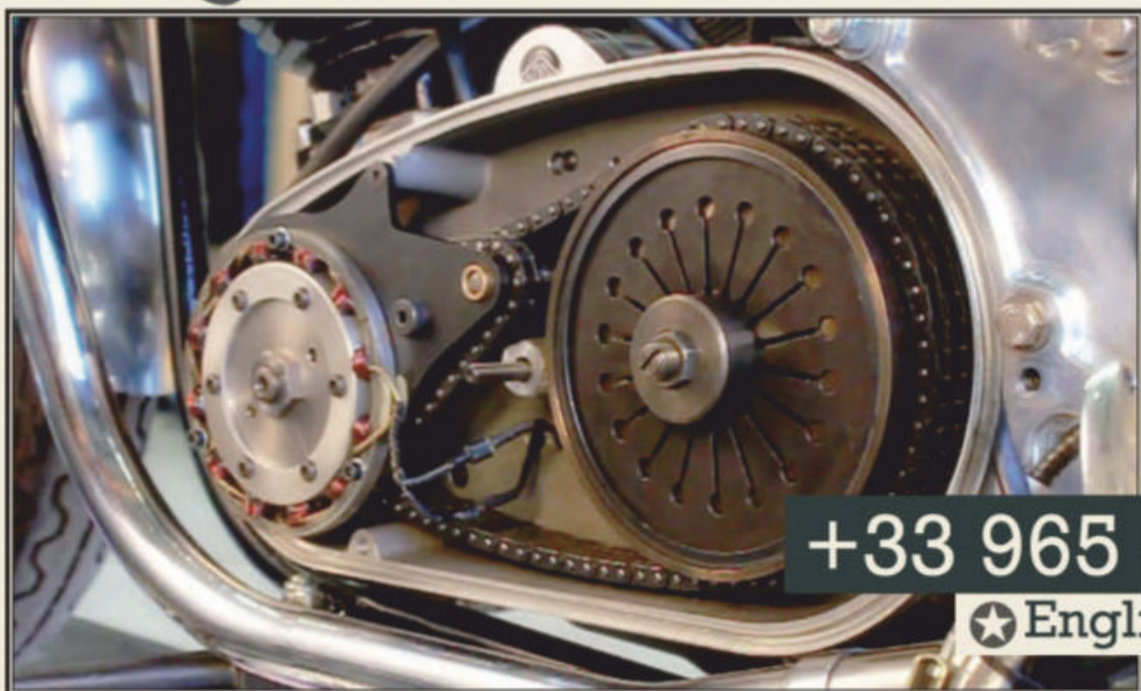


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MIKE HAILWOOD'S MACHINES

Mike Hailwood's 1961 hat-trick of TT successes – in which he won the 125cc, 250cc and Senior TT – propelled him into the top ranks of the world's motorcycling elite. Until 1961 his father, the self-made millionaire Stan, obtained Mike's racing machines by political manoeuvring and persistent persuasion. But now the tables had turned: manufacturers would be asking Mike to ride for them, including MV Agusta, the crème de la crème of factory teams.

PART
SIX

WORDS: RACHAEL CLEGG PHOTOGRAPHY: MORTONS ARCHIVE

COUNT AGUSTA'S DESK SITS ON A platform 18 inches high. His desk seat, throne-like and domineering, is just about high enough for him to peer down at those lucky enough (or unlucky enough) to be invited into his office.

This is a story about power; power on every level, powerful machines and powerful personalities. And the hotbed of this power – both in its human and mechanical form – was the sprawling Meccanica Verghera factory in Northern Italy, which was owned by Count Domenico Agusta.

And it was here where a young Mike Hailwood would have endless meetings and clashes with the formidable Count Agusta. Mike joined the MV elite in 1961. It was the ultimate coup in motorcycle racing: MV machines – especially the four-cylinder 500cc motorcycles – were the best in the business. To race for them was a privilege, a privilege shared only by the best, including Gary Hocking, Les Graham and John Surtees.

But it was a curious assignation, not least because in January 1961 the Count announced he was withdrawing from racing. This was in spite of the fact his MV Agusta race machines dominated the 500cc class – proving itself almost unbeatable. The Count's main concern however, was building helicopters and this constituted the majority of his business.

The motorcycle interests at Meccanica Verghera – from where we get those two infamous letters 'MV' – were merely a sideline, a hobby, one that was costing MV a great deal of money.

But after observing the progress and racing prowess of the young Mike Hailwood

the count U-turned on his decision. In the week after the Ulster GP in 1961, Motor Cycle News ran a front page story based on rumours that Mike Hailwood was to compete on 350cc and 500cc MVs for the Italian GP at Monza.

The rumours were soon proved correct. In the book *Hailwood*, co-written by Hailwood and Ted Macauley, Hailwood said: "...Count Agusta had watched me, after being given good reports about me by Bill Webster, the MV distributor in England. [The Count] said he had enjoyed my riding. And then he didn't ask me to join MV: he told me to. It was as simple as that. I was flabbergasted... There was such a long queue of riders just waiting for the opportunity to climb on an MV that you didn't think twice about offers like that. And of course, I accepted."

It was a baptism of fire. MCN's race report of the Monza event read: 'On Sunday, at the Italian Grand Prix, Mike Hailwood wrote yet another page in his fabulous book of success. Having his first outings on the MVs he scorned the prophets who say it takes a year to learn to ride the Italian 'fours' by winning the 500cc class after a fierce scrap with world champion Gary Hocking which only ended when Hocking overdid things and slid off his MV with four laps to go.'

Hailwood had confirmed his place at MV and was soon signed up for a full season on a salary of £1200. Four years later this had risen to £7000. But that came with a price: dealing with the complex and unpredictable count.

Speaking of the count in Ted Macauley's book, Hailwood said: "Almost his whole life revolves around his business.

The count's main concern, however, was building helicopters and this constituted the majority of his business.







“You are fired!” but Lucio said: “This is not possible.” The count said: “But why not?” And Lucio said: “Because you fired me yesterday!”

He’s thrown himself into it with typical Italian thoroughness. He is the iron-handed autocratic boss who never leaves to somebody else what he can do himself. There are no directors at MV, only varying levels of employment. There is no doubt in anybody’s mind that the count is number one, and he makes certain they don’t forget it.”

“This is probably a fine, workable set-up for the efficiency of the factory and the business, but it was no good to me. I could never keep out of his way as his minions did, and it caused one or two differences between us. I was just as stubborn as he was, and situations developed where we just stood and faced each other like a couple of bulls, neither prepared to give way.”

On one occasion Hailwood had flown to Italy for a meeting with the count but was – according to Hailwood – kept waiting for three days. Eventually he became fed-up of waiting so informed the secretary that “as far as I was concerned he could drop dead.” Hailwood left the building and drove back to his hotel.

But while he was driving back he noticed in his rear-view mirror to see a cluster of MV workers chasing after him shouting: “Come back, Mister Mike, come back.”

Hailwood relented, returned to the factory and was still kept waiting. He said: “I’m convinced he was trying to establish some sort of psychological superiority over me.”

Indeed the count was renowned for his volatility. Alessandro Altinier, an MV Agusta expert and lifelong enthusiast, recounted a story told by Lucio Castelli, an MV mechanic and friend. “He was the last mechanic to come out of the MV door. Lucio stayed with the count for many, many years. And even out of the racing season he worked for him as his chauffeur and right-hand man. But the count was king, so much so that if Lucio disagreed with something the count said, the count would get very angry. He did not like it when people dared to answer back and on one occasion the count said: “You are fired!” but Lucio said: “This is not possible.” The count said: “But why not?” And Lucio said: “Because you fired me yesterday!”

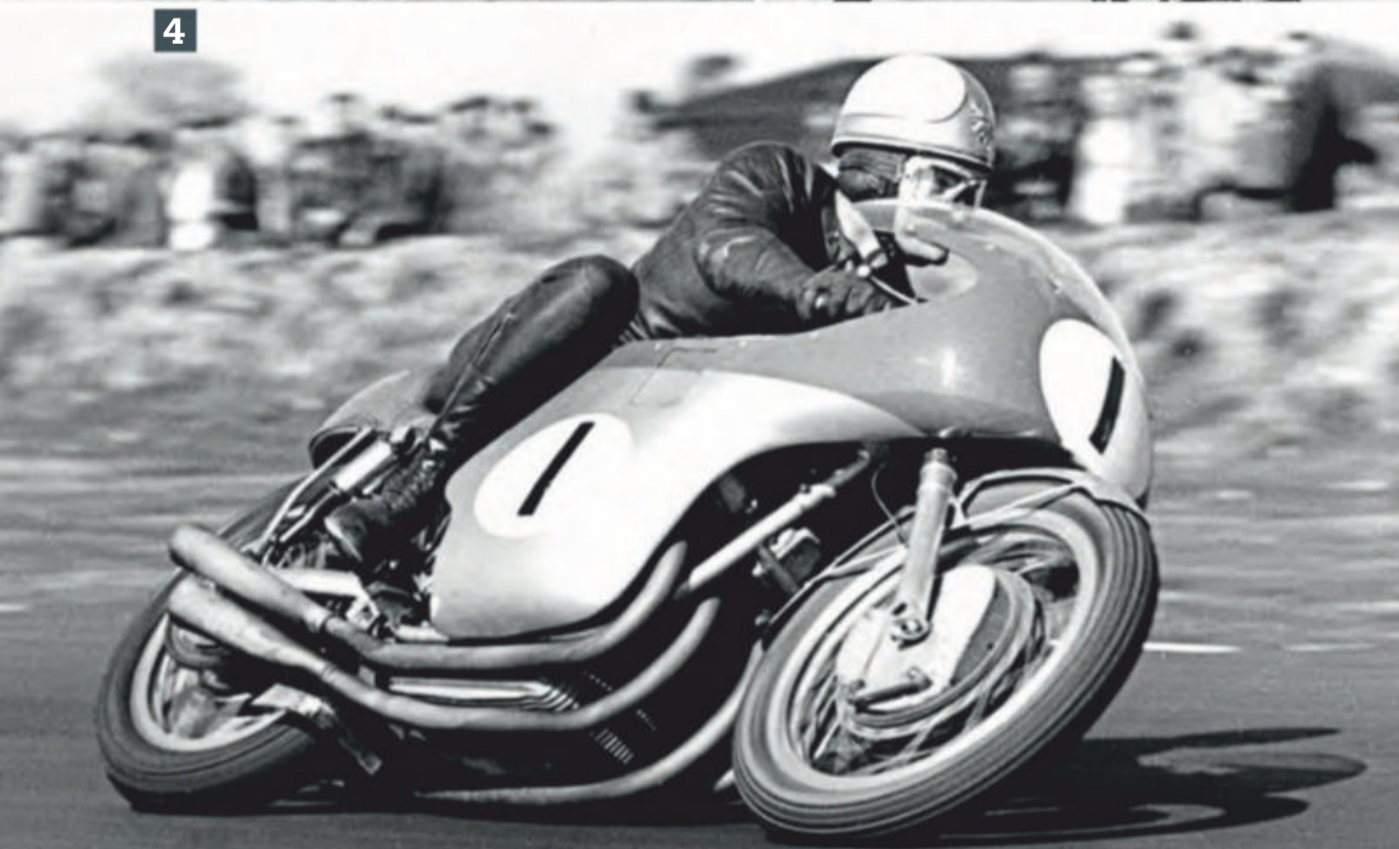
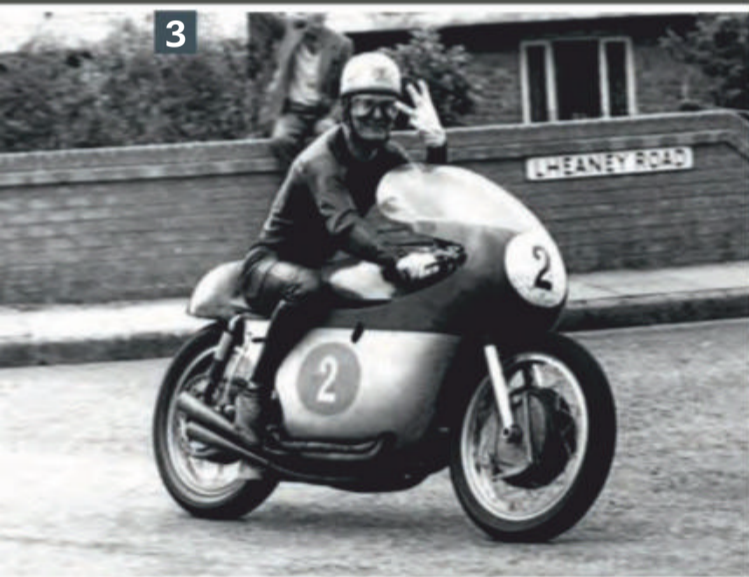
But there was another side to the count, as Stan Hailwood said in Chris Hilton’s *A Man Called Mike*. “I met him and corresponded with him and he was always the perfect gentleman and a real racing enthusiast. He

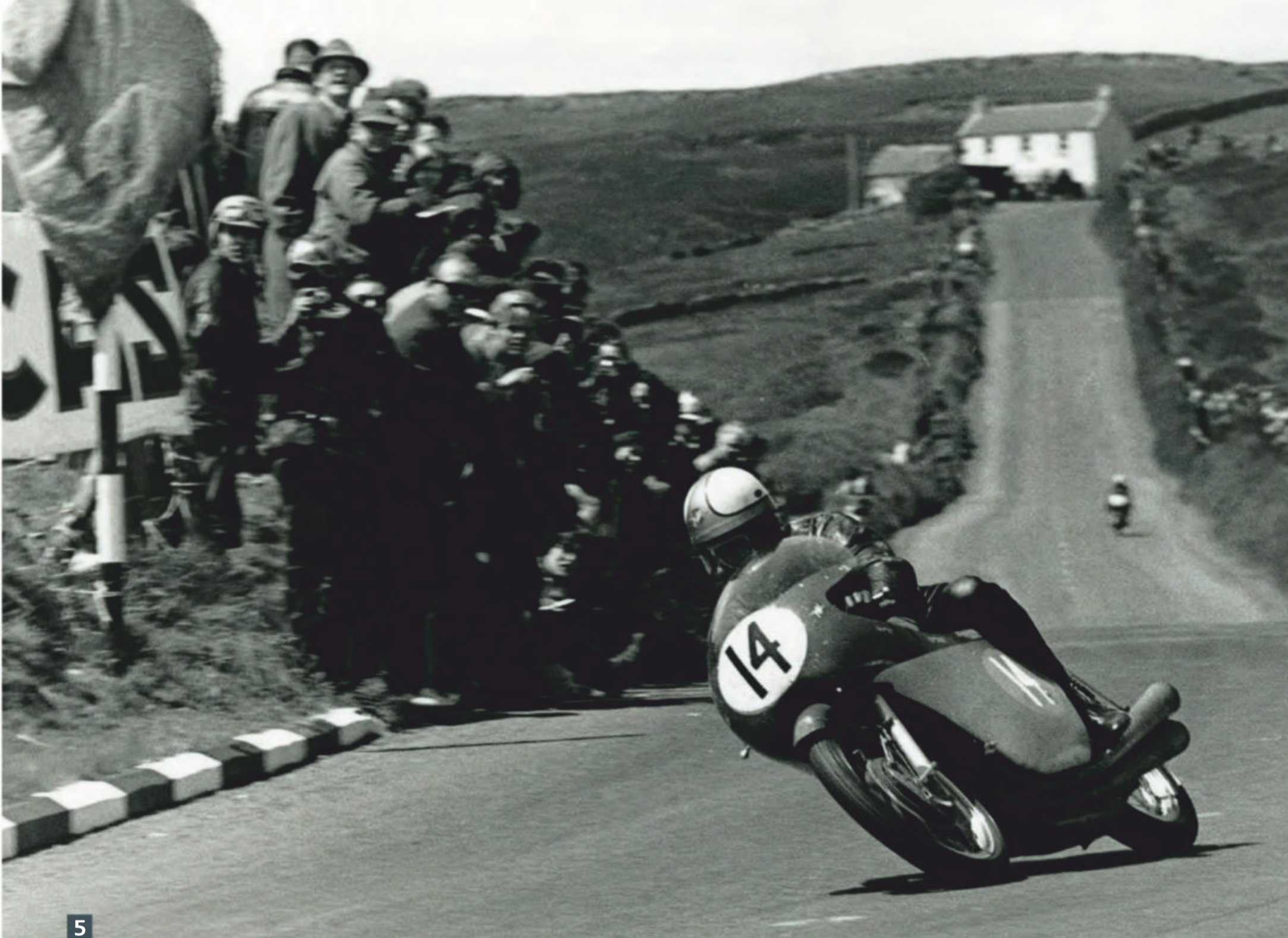
1: Podium of the 1962 Junior TT. Winner, Mike Hailwood (MV-4) in the centre; to his left Franta Stastny (Jawa) and to his right Gary Hocking (MV-4)

2: Mike’s 500cc four is fettled in 1963

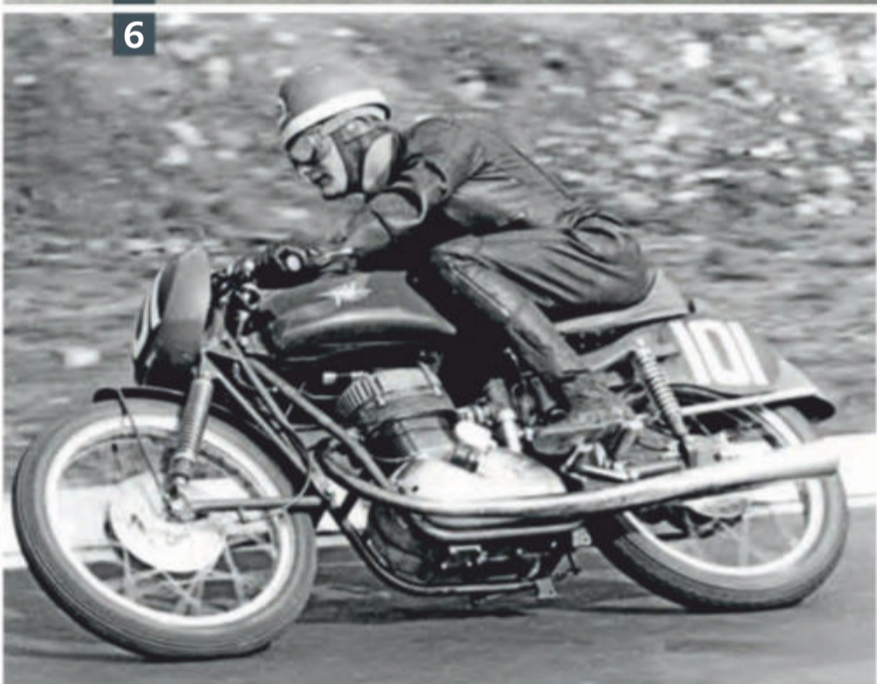
3: Mike, Whitegates, 1963 TT

4: Snetterton 1962 – another win





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5: 1965 Isle of Man Junior TT - Hailwood (MV-3) at Creg ny Baa, his first race on the three-cylinder machine. He set a lap record at 102.85mph but retired on the fourth lap

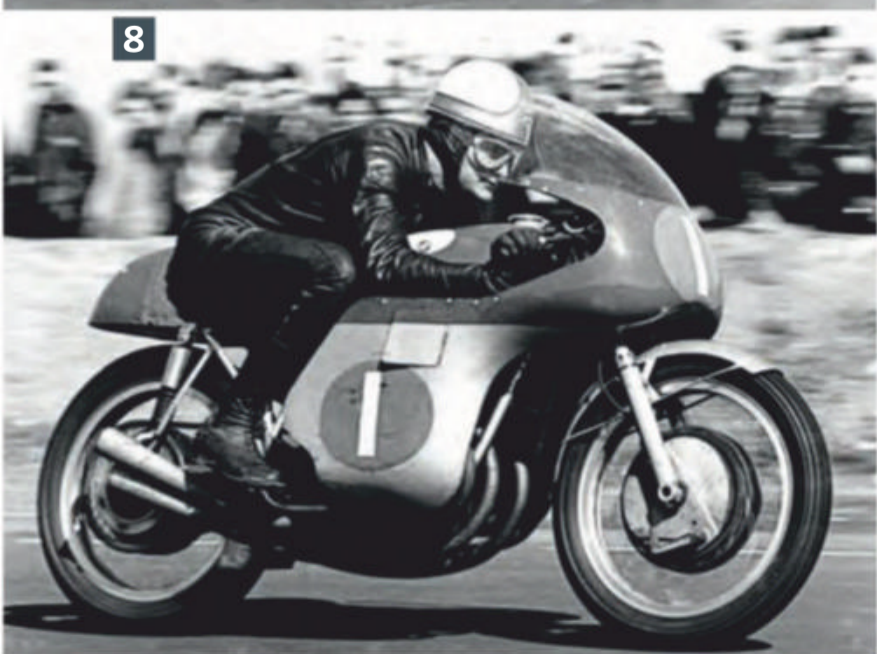
6: 1962 wasn't the first time Mike had ridden MV. Here he is at Brands Hatch April 4, 1958 - on the 196cc MV

7



7: Snetterton, April 22, 1962 - Mike Hailwood (500 MV-4). He won at 94.02mph with a record lap at 96.21mph

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8: Snetterton again, with Mike showing how to streamline on the long Norfolk straights

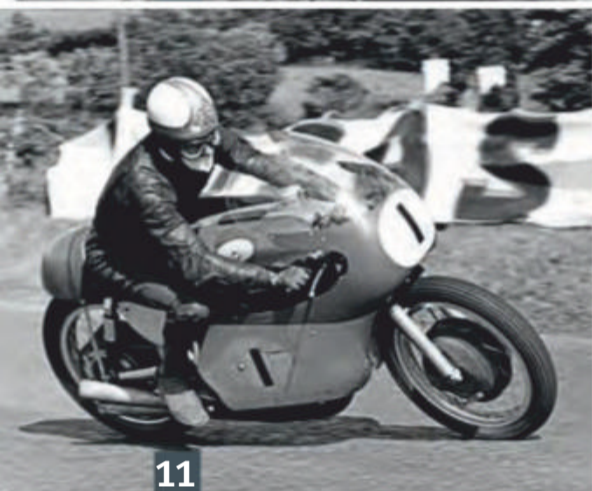
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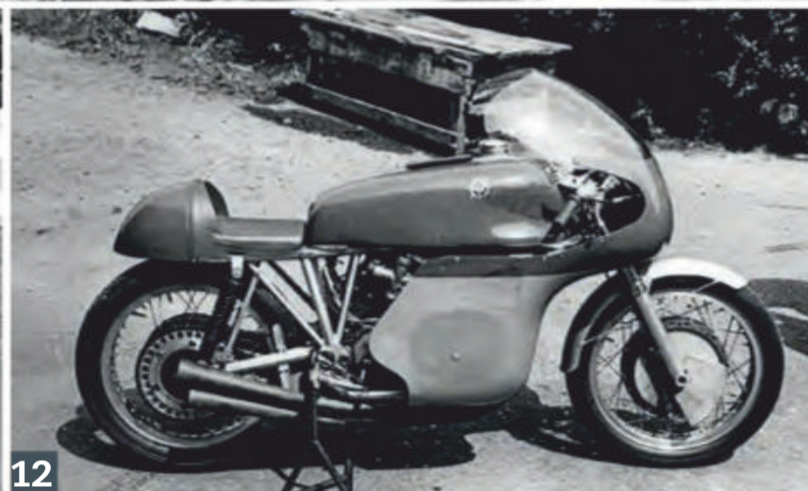
9: 1962 Isle of Man Senior TT. Mike on the 500 MV-4 at Bedstead Corner



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12



13

14

10: 1965 Senior TT, left to right, Arturo Magni, Mike and Stan Hailwood, V Carrana

11: 500cc Ulster GP, August 11, 1962. Race winner Hailwood got record race speed 96.55mph and record lap at 99.90mph

12: In 1960, this was the greatest race bike in the world

13: 1965 Senior TT. Mike at Braddan Bridge with smashed screen and flattened exhaust after crashing at Sarah's Cottage. He still won, despite a 70 second pit stop to straighten his bars

14: February 1964, Hailwood was in Daytona for the one-hour record

15: Daytona 1964. No.6, Benedicto Caldarella (500 Gilera) leading Mike

could be absolutely charming.”

On one occasion, the Hailwoods were passing through Italy en route to Argentina. Stan and Mike arrived at the airport thinking they had a four-hour wait and an arduous journey to the connecting airport, but on arrival they were greeted by a chauffeur-driven limousine, which took them to the MV factory.

“We arrived at the count’s office at 10 in the evening, where he had a snack and champagne waiting for us. I was amazed at his fairness and generosity – like insuring Mike for £10, 000,” said Stan.

The count could show great benevolence with racing – often putting the MV name on the line. Such was the case with the world one-hour speed record attempt in February, 1964. The record had previously been set by Hailwood’s mentor, the late Bob McIntyre, at Monza on a Gilera and now Hailwood had the opportunity to have a go at setting a new record at Daytona Speedway, Florida.

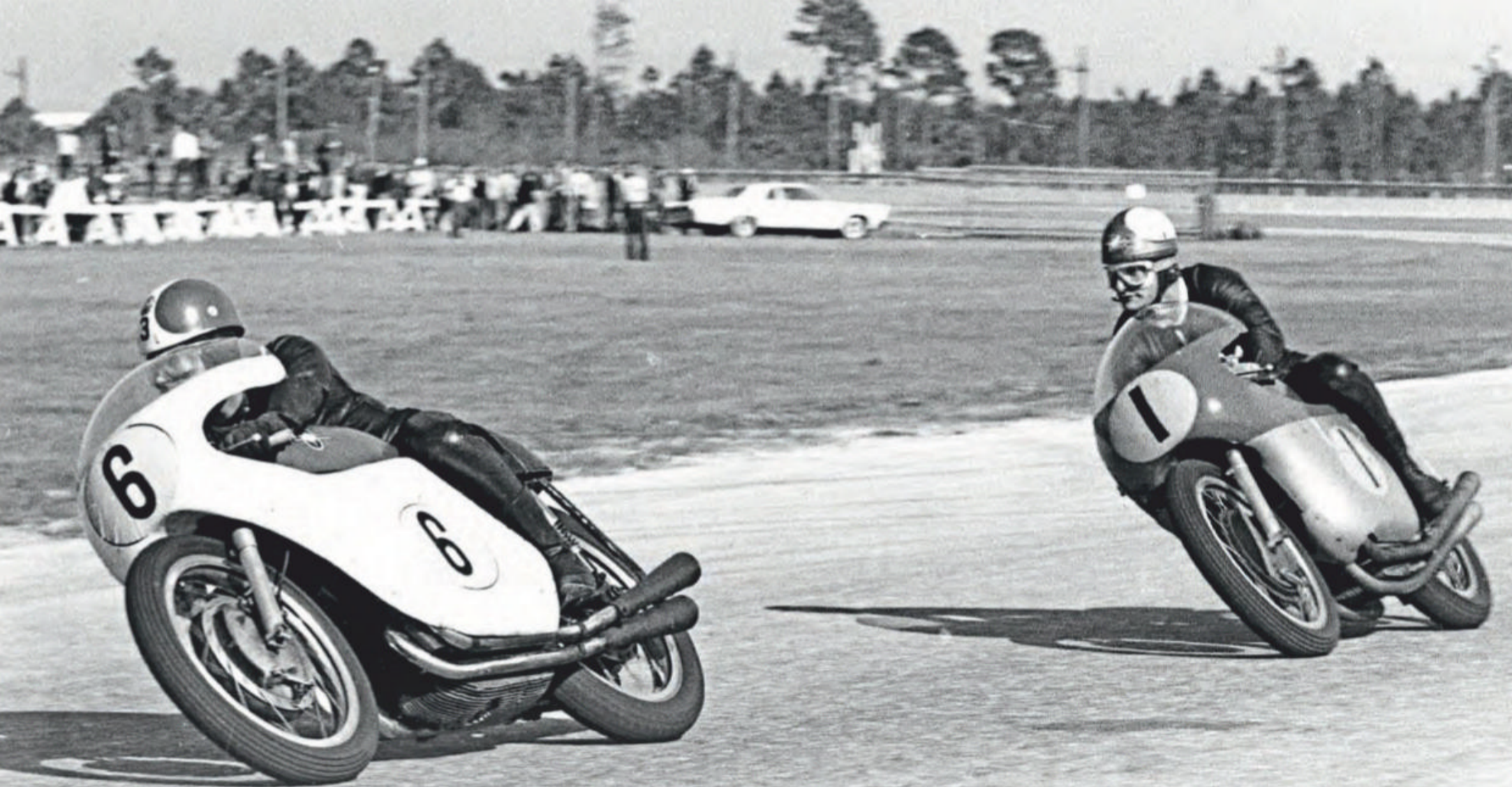
But first, they needed permission from the count. After all, Hailwood was his rider, the MVs were his machines and so any attempt to conquer the record required the count’s approval. But it was a risk to MV’s reputation, especially as the previous record had been set on a Gilera, MV’s arch rival. Stan, in *A Man Called Mike* said: “I cabled Count Agusta asking his opinion. Back came the reply that in view of the lack of special preparations and the lack of spares, plus the risk, he did not approve.”

The Hailwoods packed the practice machine back into the crate and in the meantime the Daytona organisers, desperate for Hailwood to attempt the record at the famous oval circuit, cabled the count directly, pleading for his permission. “To my amazement,” said Stan, “the count said yes.”

Hailwood smashed the new one-hour speed record on the 500cc MV with an average speed of 144.8mph. Stan said: “Mike rode it like a road racer, leaning in the whole time.” He also, according to Stan, remained very low at the banking, thus saving huge distances on each lap, let alone across one solid hour of riding.

But the MV ‘big fours’ had the power to smash such a record. Indeed, the 500cc machine was Hailwood’s favourite of the big bikes. In *The Art of Motorcycle Racing*, which Hailwood co-wrote with Murray Walker, he said: “In six years of racing from 1957 to 1962 I have ridden 14 different makes of machine, ranging from the 500cc two-stroke Itom, on which I started, to the 500cc four-cylinder MV. They have included two-strokes, spring and desmodromic valved four-strokes and single, twin, and four-cylinder engines. Which have I enjoyed the most? The big four-cylinder MV Agusta.”

He said: “Every machine I have ridden has at least one good feature but the MV has the biggest attraction. This is for a number of reasons, not least of which is the



15

Hailwood smashed the new one-hour speed record on the 500cc MV with an average speed of 144.8mph. Stan said: "Mike rode it like a road racer, leaning in the whole time."

fact that it offers such a terrific challenge. The MV develops so much power that I am not sure that anyone yet has succeeded in getting the best out of it, simply because the rider's limitations are greater than those of the bike."

Hailwood also hailed MV's reputation as a major draw to riding MV machinery. He said: "Another aspect of the MV mystique is the magnificent tradition of success that lies behind it. For it has dominated the 500cc world championship since 1958 and with brilliant predecessors like John Surtees and Gary Hocking to live up to, any MV rider should feel inspired."

But the MV was also a victim of its own success. Many critics and cynics suggested that the machine created an unfair playing field. Hailwood believed that this was not the fault of MV, rather, the problem of a lagging British bike industry. "In my view the answer is for the other manufacturers to raise their machines to the MV level and not for the Agusta to withdraw."

The major advantage of the MV was its smooth power and its highly responsive throttle, according to Hailwood. "You have to watch the MV's rev counter like a hawk, especially on bumpy surfaces, because the engine speed can rise so rapidly that if you are not very careful you are over the maximum rpm limit before you realise it."

The secret to MV's success, according to Altinier, is the brains, money and infrastructure behind it. He said: "Count Agusta spent all his money on racing and money was never a problem for the count.

MV Agusta – at the time Hailwood was riding for them – had the best engineers, the best mechanics, the best solutions, the best riders, the best materials and a lot of people in the factory to test, try and resolve problems."

He said: "MV Agusta also had a lot of experience on new technology – after all, MV Agusta was an aeroplane factory first and foremost and this, along with the other factors, contributed to its production of superior, very powerful racing machines."

Technically-speaking, the MV 'Four's' enormous success, especially in the 500cc world championships, was thanks to an air-cooled, double-overhead camshaft, four cylinder power unit with a compression ratio of 10:1 and a fuel system comprising of four 28mm Del Orto carburettors. It was, however, a heavy machine, much heavier than its British rival, the single cylinder Manx Norton and thus making the MV far less nimble on shorter circuits than its British rival.


The machine's development was thanks to designer Piero Remor, who developed the 1950s Gilera inline four. One of Hailwood's contemporaries, Sammy Miller, said: "The MV 'Four' was really designed by Gilera in 1939 by its chief engineer, Remor, he worked with Gilera until they had a fall-out and then moved across to MV Agusta and designed the 'Four' with the same layout. Gilera pulled out of racing but MV kept on developing."

And nowhere was the sheer power of the MV more evident than on the Isle of

Man TT course. Here, the MV – nicknamed 'the Fire Engine' – was unbeatable. As Sammy Miller said: "MV raced 125s, 250s, 350s and 500s – it had a huge race shop. It was the best for Hailwood at that time – Stan wouldn't have had it any other way."

Indeed, the technological advantages of MV even outweighed the unfathomable Count Agusta, as Hailwood, writing in Ted Macauley's book, said: "The count is a very difficult man to understand. At one and the same time he could be the most charming and the most irritating man one ever met. But there is no escaping the fact that the count made the best racing bikes in the world of their time. If I had the choice I'd always ride the big MV 500 in the TT. It's perfect for the job."

It was perfect, at least until 1967 when it was dropped in favour of a more compact, lighter three cylinder 350cc machine, which was campaigned by a young, up-and-coming Italian known as Giacomo Agostini. Agostini, aka 'Ago' became motorcycling's pin-up boy and would remain with MV until 1973.

Hailwood had his sights set much higher, and to the East – to Japan. And the 'big bike' 500cc plinth would soon be occupied by a more exotic, more powerful four-cylinder machine: the Honda 500/4. Its rider would be none other than Mike Hailwood. 

In Part Seven of Mike Hailwood's Machines, Rachael Clegg takes a look at the Honda years.



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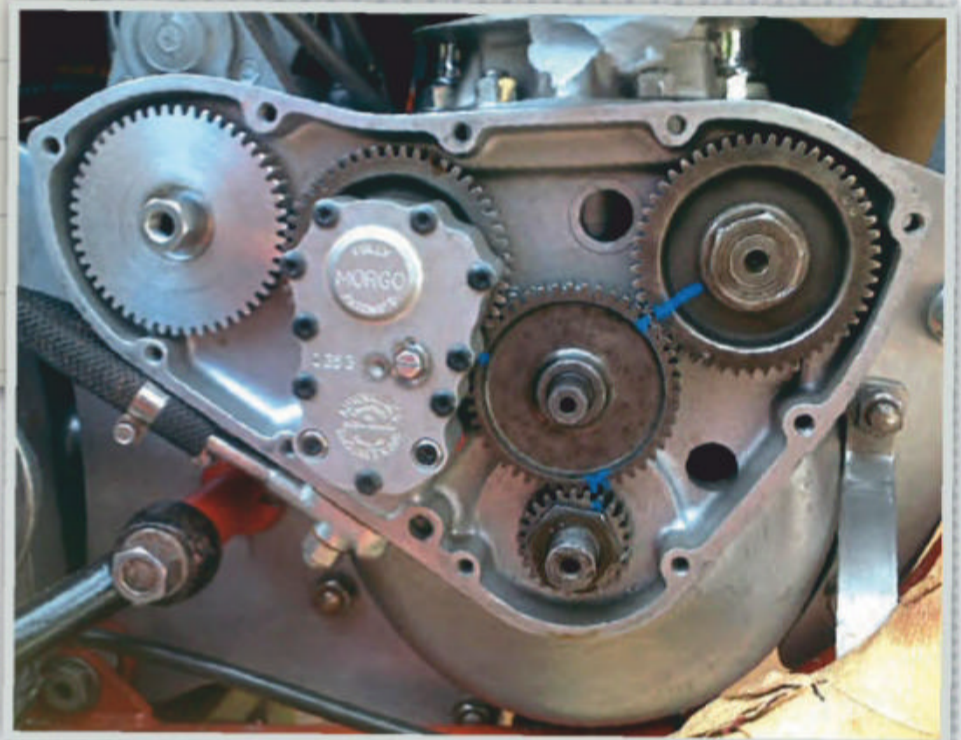
CBG Workshop



Everyone needs a magical tin of 'bits'

When I wore my 'stupid' hat this month and lost some vital and odd bolts, I scoured my bits tray. But, being mainly a metric man, it was to no avail. The narrow-headed, cycle thread bolt to keep the damper rod in place in the ES2 forks (see page 99) would also not be in my friends Stu and Dodge's bits coffee jars; so I shot to see Hutch, to see what his bits pot contained. Alas, not only did the fine man have a couple, but he even had a cycle thread die with which to clean and re-profile said old-school thread.

It all goes to show that friends are an essential part of keeping old bikes alive and that you need a bits collection of some sorts. You never know when that nut/bolt/washer/thing-a-me-jig will get you out of a hole. And you can store them in anything. Some call it hoarding, but you will have the last laugh.



▲ Triton rebuild

This rebuilt Triton has been built to ride



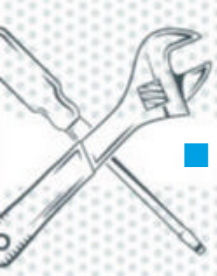
▲ Enfield Bullet service

We show you how to give your Bullet a birthday



▲ Project Norton

Rebuilding the forks on our ES2 – once we find all the parts...



HOW TO:

Service your Royal Enfield Bullet



The original 350 and 500 Bullet can be a fantastic bike to look after yourself or to learn your wares with home maintenance. Here we follow Enfield specialist, Dodge, at Dereham Motorcycle MoT centre, as he completes a service

WORDS AND WISDOM BY DODGE PHOTOGRAPHY, TEA AND BAD JOKES BY MATT

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A good visual inspection is vital to spot any issues before you start. Check the tyres, spokes, brake cable end for fraying, lights, final drive chain adjustment and signs of fork seal leaks, shock issues and have a general look around.



The essentials

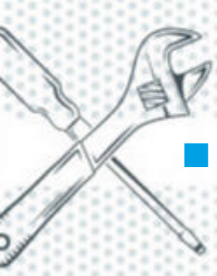
- Oil filter
- Oil filter seals
- Drain plug washers
- Air filter (note there are two types)
- Spark plug
- Condenser
- Ignition points

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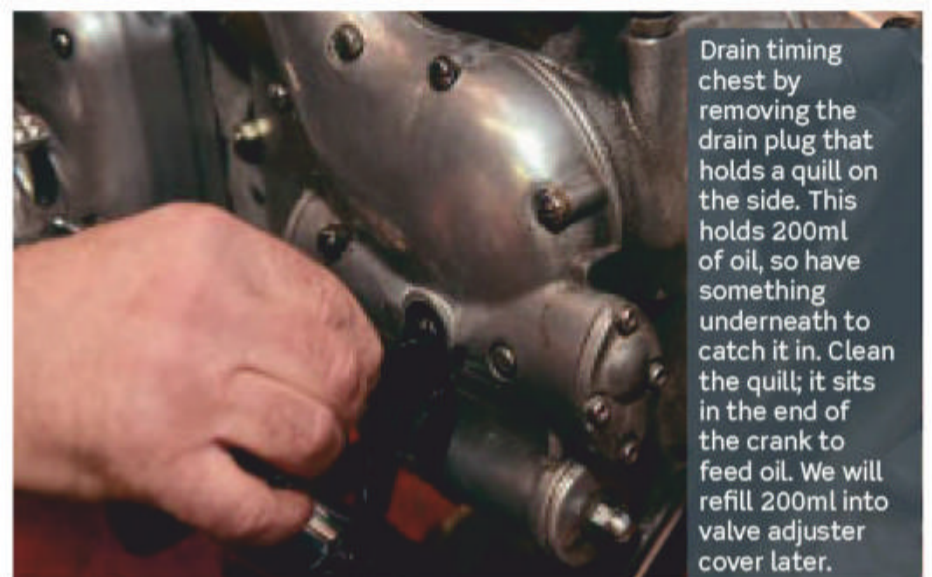
Before you get started, pop some new 20W 50 mineral engine oil in a container to pre-soak the new oil filter. This helps the engine when it first starts to not be starved of oil. Don't worry, you're not wasting oil, we'll use it later.



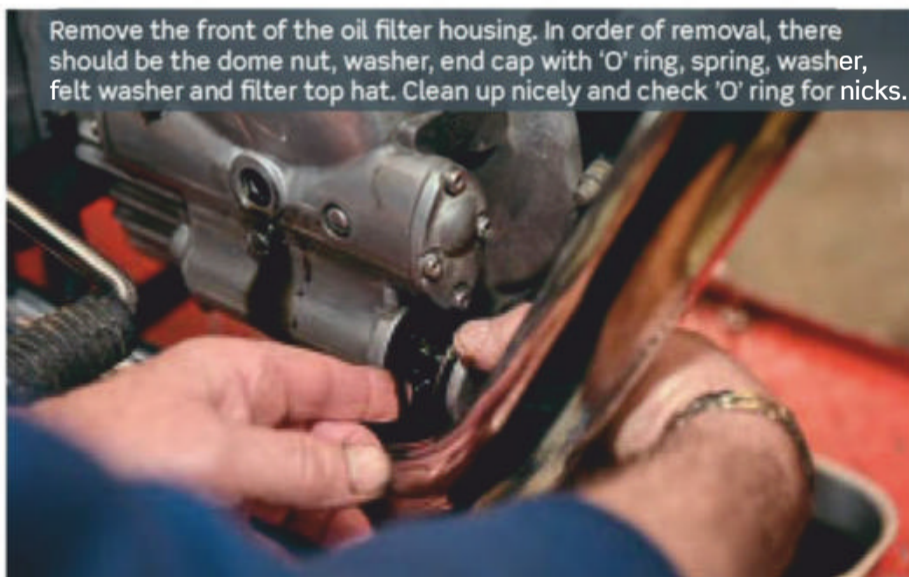
There are a number of drain bolts in a Bullet. The rear, seen here, is undone to drain the oil reservoir that sits in the engine. Oil drains more thoroughly if the engine has been warmed slightly before work - but watch out for the hot exhaust!



The two other large hexagonal plugs are the oil strainers either side of the oil pump. Undo these while the oil reservoir is emptying and remove. Once removed, wash out with brake cleaner or similar and make sure they are not damaged or kinked.



Drain timing chest by removing the drain plug that holds a quill on the side. This holds 200ml of oil, so have something underneath to catch it in. Clean the quill; it sits in the end of the crank to feed oil. We will refill 200ml into valve adjuster cover later.



Remove the front of the oil filter housing. In order of removal, there should be the dome nut, washer, end cap with 'O' ring, spring, washer, felt washer and filter top hat. Clean up nicely and check 'O' ring for nicks.



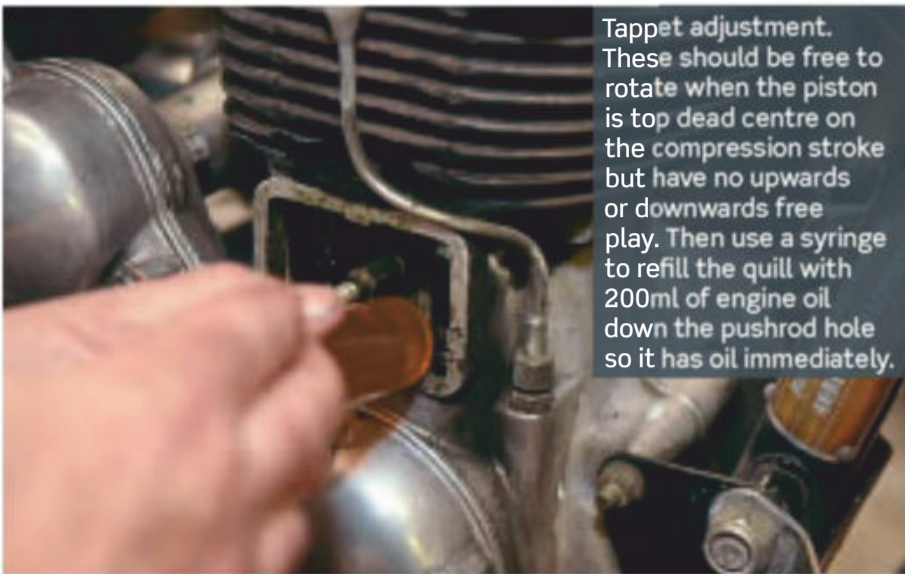
Now remove the old filter. Don't just bin it, have a careful inspection to see if there are any traces of metal - a sign things could be amiss. Then get the new filter that has been nicely soaking and refit, followed in order by the top hat and other parts just removed.



While we're all oily, undo the primary chain inspection bolt and check for around 1/8in slack in the middle of the top run of the chain. Ours needed a little adjustment, so we drained the oil, the cover came off and we moved the slipper adjuster slightly.



With the cover refitted, the primary chaincase was refilled with 10W 40 mineral engine oil until it came out of the level hole. You can use ATF (Automatic Transmission Fluid) but it can make older clutches slip.



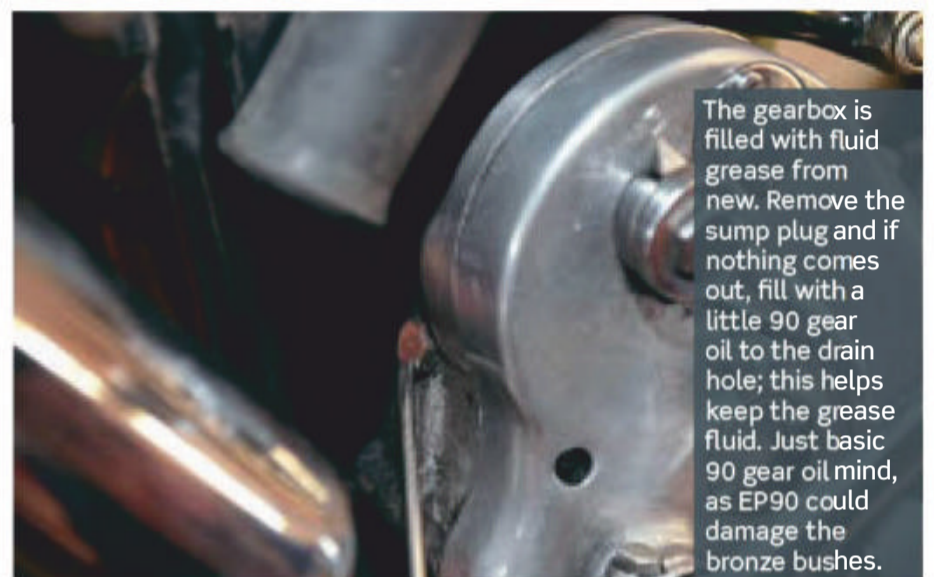
Tappet adjustment. These should be free to rotate when the piston is top dead centre on the compression stroke but have no upwards or downwards free play. Then use a syringe to refill the quill with 200ml of engine oil down the pushrod hole so it has oil immediately.



Make sure the tappet cover goes back on with the small vent in the corner in the bottom.



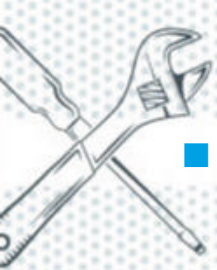
With the main drain plug, the oil strainers and filter cleaned and tightened up, you can now refill the oil reservoir. Go for initially three pints, start it up to get the oil pump moving and filled, then let it settle. After two mins, fill to top mark of dipstick.



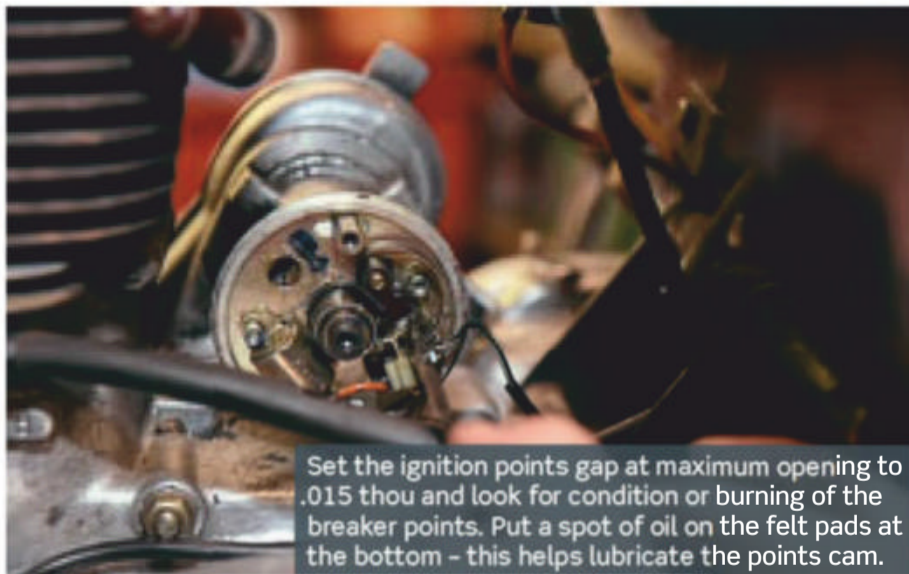
The gearbox is filled with fluid grease from new. Remove the sump plug and if nothing comes out, fill with a little 90 gear oil to the drain hole; this helps keep the grease fluid. Just basic 90 gear oil mind, as EP90 could damage the bronze bushes.



Get your grease gun out! Grease all external nipples, like the brake lever and gear mechanism - but just one squeeze or so - watch how much, as you can blow the oil seal out back of distributor shaft with too much.



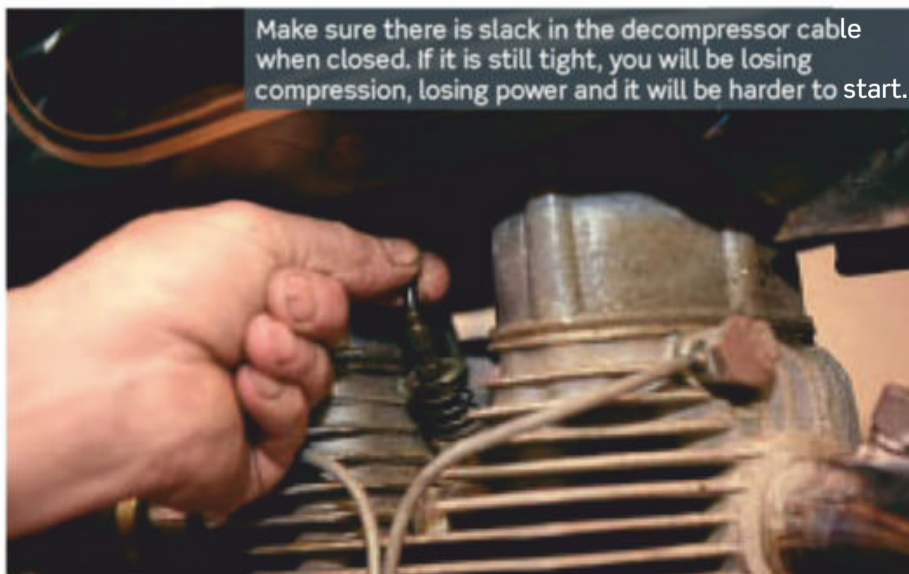
Also check there is free play in the choke lever, as the rubber can wear at the bottom of the choke and you'll be riding around with the choke always on.



Set the ignition points gap at maximum opening to .015 thou and look for condition or burning of the breaker points. Put a spot of oil on the felt pads at the bottom - this helps lubricate the points cam.



Early models have the air filter that sits in the box behind the carb, while later ones have a rubber filter that sits in the dummy toolbox. Occasionally, imported Indian bikes have had both! Make sure you have the correct one.



Make sure there is slack in the decompressor cable when closed. If it is still tight, you will be losing compression, losing power and it will be harder to start.



After checking the battery fluid level and a road test, it was time to hand the keys back to one happy customer!

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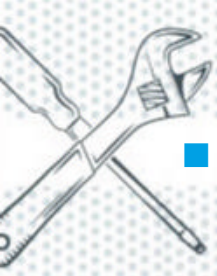



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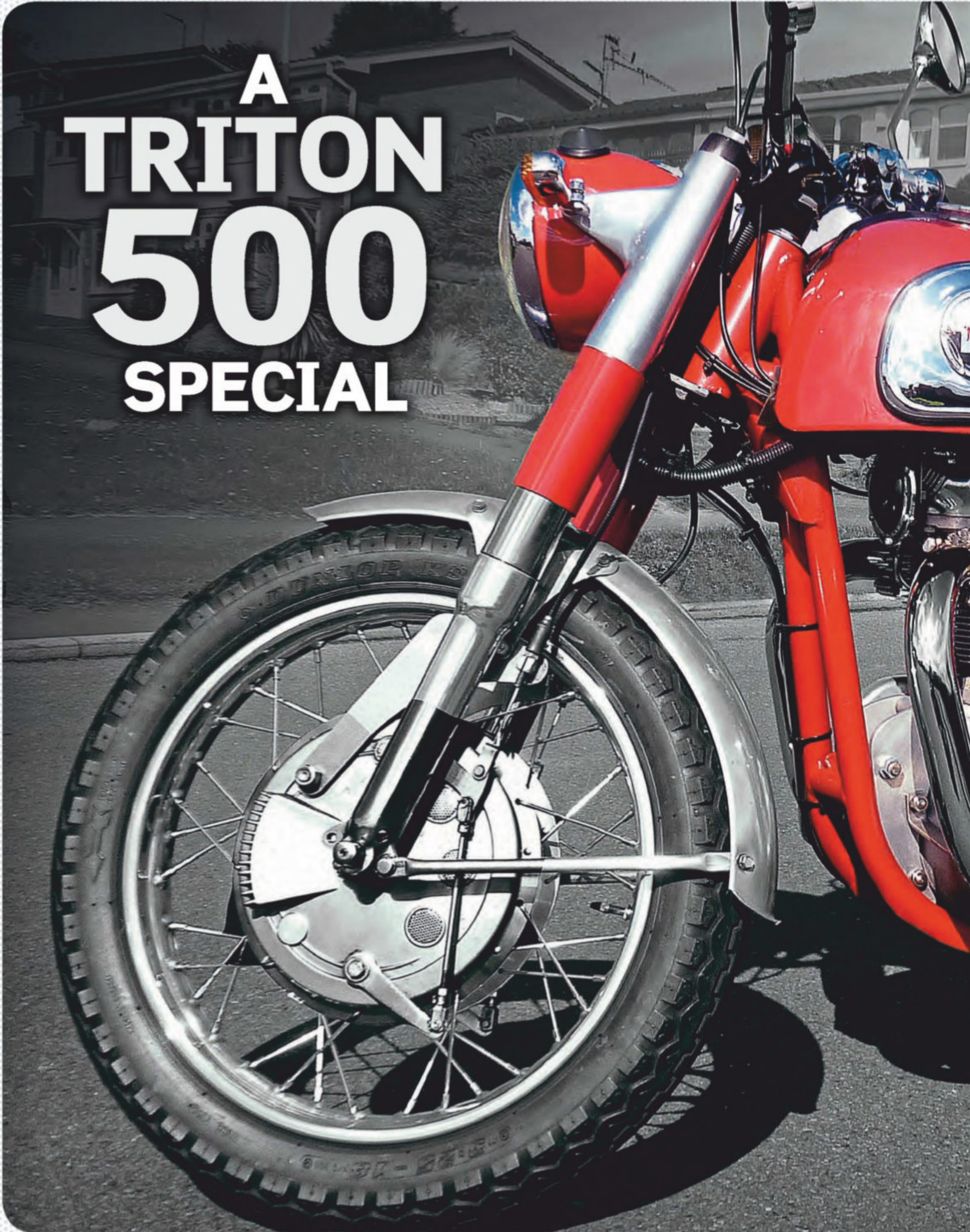
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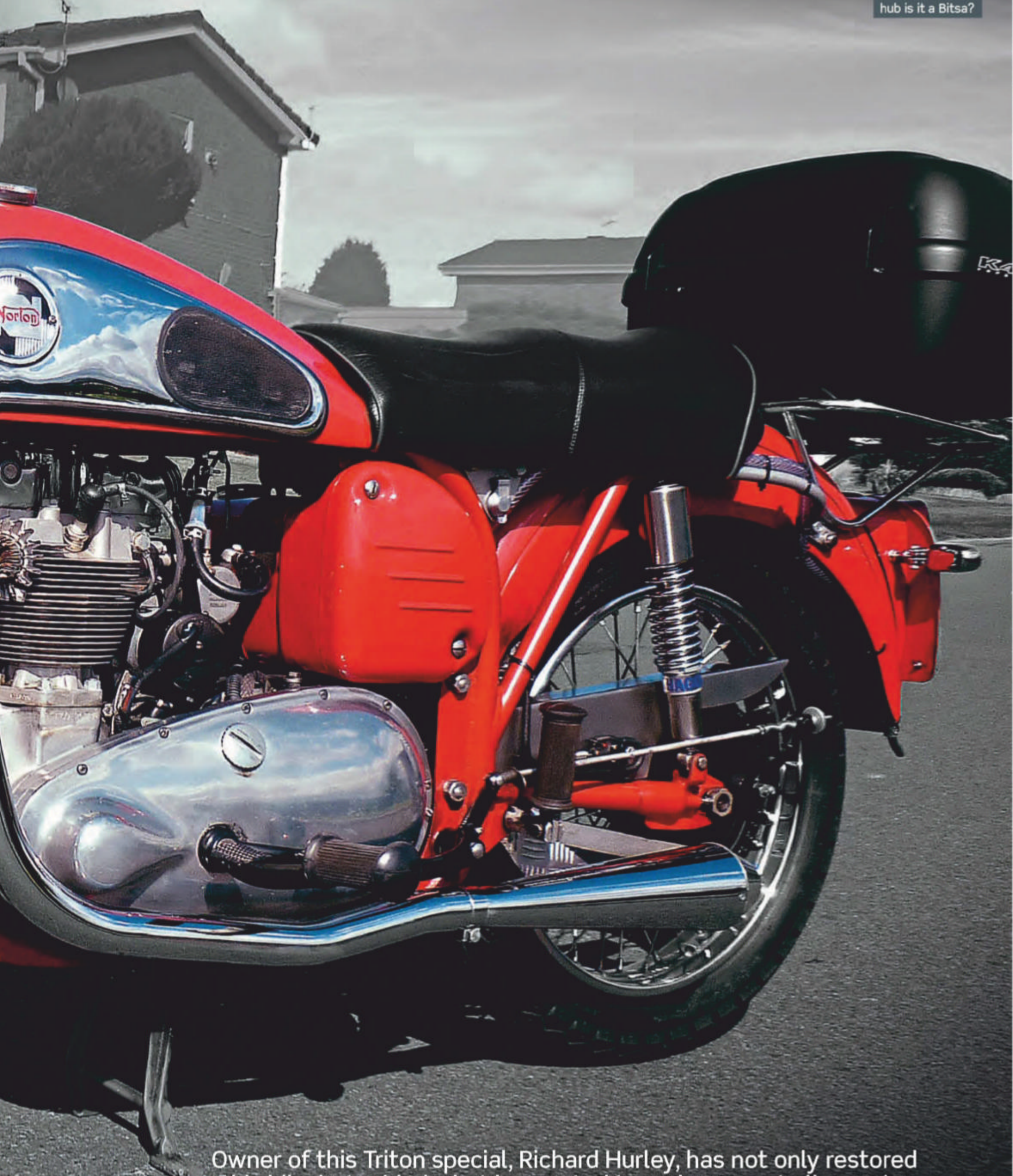

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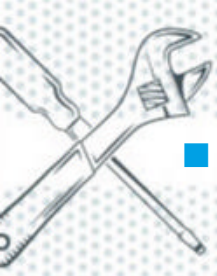


Is it a Triton - or
with that Italian
hub is it a Bitsa?



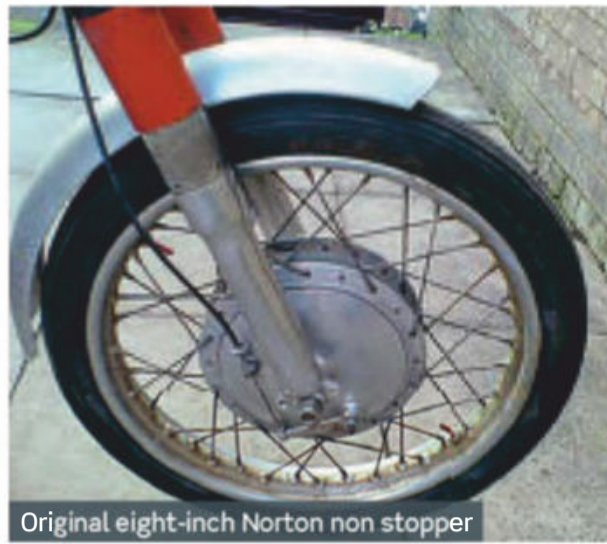
Owner of this Triton special, Richard Hurley, has not only restored this bike but added what he wanted to make a great all-rounder

WORDS ROB DAVIES PHOTOGRAPHY ROB AND RICHARD HURLEY



THE SUBJECT OF EXACTLY WHAT MAKES A classic bike has been much aired of late. But I think that fellow contributor Frank Westworth hit the nail on the head when he stated that it is a bike that engenders not only a wide interest, but also has a certain desirability – or words to that effect. So, as a writer and motorcyclist I am generally, possibly like the rest of us, always on the lookout for interesting motorcycles. Fortunately to that end, we have in the Midlands an excellent cafe that is much frequented by motorcyclists of all persuasions. It is in Quatt, a pleasant riverside setting, a mile or two from the old and picturesque town of Bridgnorth. Maybe you have already been there? If not put it on your list, for the ride out there on the A458 Stourbridge to Shrewsbury road is one of the best rides in the country.

I was there last week, getting a drink, talking motorcycles and generally looking at the bikes out on the car park when my ever wandering eyeballs spotted something out of the ordinary. There were **three** people standing chatting next



Original eight-inch Norton non stopper



Up close and personal with the Grimeca



Frame after powder coat



Three-piece Speed Twin crank

Can you really tell that those are 42mm 650 down pipes and not 38mm 500?





Crank now balanced and ready to go



Cylinder head after cleaning. With hardened valve inserts, there was no need for any changes to take unleaded fuel



Fitting new bearings and selectors into the gearbox



Original hand rolled Norton SE1 Tank 1960



1939 Speed Twin Nacelle and speedo, with the modern additions of oil pressure gauge



A good look at that Slick shift gearbox



Another small touch at modernity is this four spring clutch plate made by Velocette in Brum

to this bike – which was about 50 yards away, so me and Tony surreptitiously strolled around the line of bikes heading generally toward this red framed machine – without trying to look like we were obviously interested.

En route, we passed one of Hinkley's latest incarnations of the 'Daytona', which had acres of fairing and a single-sided hub and drive shaft combined. And when I carefully examined that drive shaft and hub, I took one look at Tony and said: "Isn't that the ugliest bit of machinery you have ever seen?" But I digress. We worked our way steadily along the line of bikes to our ultimate goal.

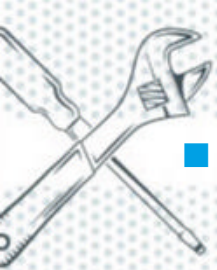
"It looks like a Featherbed frame," I remarked, to which my companion nodded, and added: "But it's obviously a Triumph engine – but one I don't recognise." Add to the fact that the bike had the most amazing front hub, something like the four leading shoe jobs on certain Suzuki 750 GTs, but it wasn't one of those. So in the end, I waited for a lull in the trio's conversation and introduced myself. The bike's proud owner was Richard Hurley – I asked him for the story behind this enigmatic machine:

CBG: So Richard, tell us the background to your Triton. Perhaps you could start with that unusual hub?

Richard: ('Ah' he said with a knowing smile and warming to the subject – bikers are mostly like this when you show an interest in their machine). The bike was originally a 1960 black Norton ES2 500 single; ES as you probably know stands for Easy Start' (actually I didn't know that but didn't let on) with the later Roadholder forks (actually, the story behind the 'ES' name is still not certain – ed). The original eight-inch hubs were not known for their braking efficiency, and as you can see I'm a decent sized bloke and realised that I need a much better stopping system; so that is a Grimeca hub. Grimeca, an Italian firm started out in the 1950s as an engineering company that within a decade or two branched out into supplying parts for motorcycles and they still do today. I happened upon them at the Stafford show, and finally ordered it from AJS (Andover). This particular hub cost around £1000, which included the special brake lever plus matching clutch lever with cable set. And that was before I had a rim put on it. Having a shortish inside leg I decided to go from the original 19in rims down to 18. This also gave me a better choice of tyres. Fortunately, when I took the hub over to Central Wheels in Birmingham, they said that was just about the smallest rim that would fit with that size hub. So there you have it.

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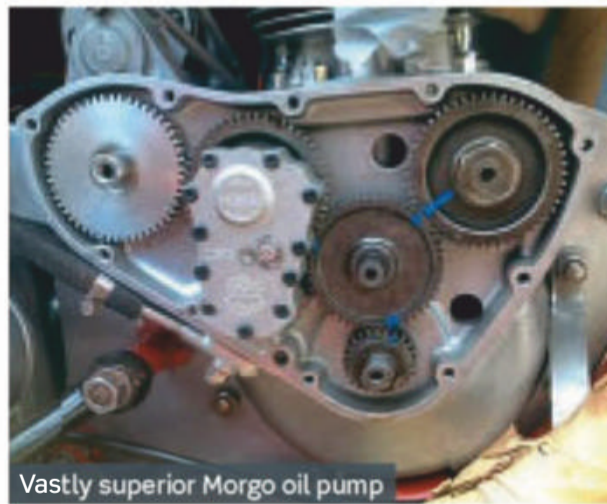
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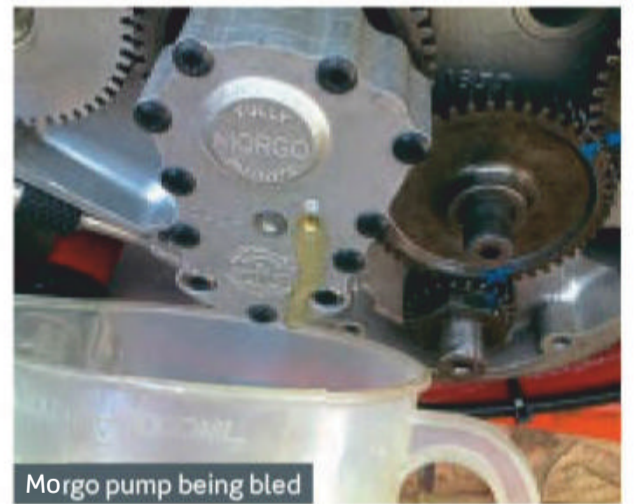
The oil pressure gauge is taken from the connection on the timing chest



No move to a modern electronic system here. The mag/dyno works fine, as does the reconditioned Amal carb



Vastly superior Morgo oil pump



Morgo pump being bled



All right for the 1960s, but it's just not possible in this modern age to do without indicators



The Triumph QD rear hub and wheel adjustment



The 'Bikers' Cafe' at Quatt near Bridgnorth

CBG: It is pretty gorgeous. How good is it?

Richard: It's fierce – let's just say that it's stopped me going into several stupid car drivers already. The rear drum is a Triumph QD hub and works okay.

CBG: I see you have fitted Hagon shocks at the rear, any other modern improvements?

Richard: Hagon shocks certainly improved things at the rear, but the front end was too spongy and frequently bottomed out, so I fitted progressive springs and made changes to the damping cartridge. There is a later system where the oil holes have been moved – it improves the damping tremendously, but you have to experiment with different grades of oil to get it right. I started off with SAE 30, then 25, before finally fitting 15 grade, which was just right – for me anyway. I fitted a Morgo oil pump, because they deliver twice as much oil – even when it's hot – than the regular Triumph part and that's what you want for your engine. They are not cheap, but they are well worth it. I also fitted a Norton inline oil filter and a Morgo oil pressure gauge so you can see exactly what's going on (see pictures). I did toy with the idea of fitting a Mikuni carb for efficient starting, but Fred at Harthills in Bilston told me that he could put a brass sleeve in the Amal 376, and it would always go second kick – sometimes first kick. And he was bang-on. I fitted a Trials air filter with cleanable sponge from Villiers services.

CBG: You had better tell us about the engine. I know it's an early Triumph, but the barrels are not quite right.

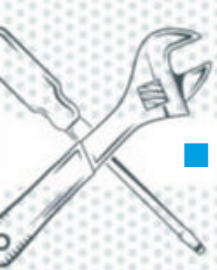
Richard: Some years after the bike was bought the last owner fitted a 1939 T100 Tiger engine, otherwise known as the Speed Twin. It's the old story of a marriage of convenience. Triumph made better engines, while Norton made the better frame. The bottom end is original Speed Twin but the barrels are postwar, probably somewhere between 1945 and 55. I'm not sure that the engine ever fitted perfectly, and before he could finish it, he had an accident which caused serious head injury – it wasn't a motorcycling accident by the way. He then asked me to take the bike, as he knew I had an engineering background, and that I could finish the build. At this point (2009) the bike had been in a dry garage and covered over with loads of junk for some years and the frame had been brush painted with red to make it look like the Dominator. The engine was in bits and out of the frame, with the big ends completely shot so as you can imagine there was plenty of work to get on with.



So a Speed Twin will fit into a Featherbed frame! Notice the footrest bolted to the primary clutch cover. This can, and has caused problems with cracked cases – but they can be repaired with skill



▶ Typical man cave with man and bike



CBG: And you were told in no uncertain terms that this engine would never successfully fit this frame, because the primary chaincase is so long?

Richard: I was, and I admit it did take some fettling and messing around to get everything lined up, and I used tough 10mm aluminium to make the plates. This made the fitting of exhaust and down pipes a bit of a game so in the end I had to fit the slightly larger diameter 650 pipes – which have useful brackets and then sleeved the exhaust ports to fit. The original three-piece crank had already been grinded once and not a good one, so I searched around for a billet crank and discovered to my delight that Alec Dorrell in nearby Stourport had a new-old one – still three piece – wrapped in brown paper for £99, so I snapped that up as you can imagine. It was then that I decided to go the whole hog and have

the engine dynamically balanced. Again, this is an expensive job, but I wanted the best for this bike. My philosophy is that I wanted an everyday bike to ride, a bike that was going to be enjoyable and reliable and not something to stick away and only use on nice days. This balancing process is where the pistons, billet con rod and crank are all weighed, and then processed on a very expensive machine (£200) so the vibrations can be moved to the most acceptable place.

The gearbox is a Triumph four-speed Slick shift, designed so that you could change gear without the clutch – quite revolutionary for its time. I fitted new bearings while Harthills did the selectors – again I had to do a little bit of fettling in order to make the gears change smoothly. There are always problems along the way on a build like this.

CBG: And finally the finishing touches?

Richard: As I said earlier the frame had been brush painted, so I had that blasted with aluminium oxide which leaves the frame rust-proof, grey and ready for a powder coat. You'll probably think this is funny, but a pal of mine was at that time powder coating some let's say 'famous mega store cash boxes' in just the right shade of red, so he took the frame to work and did that for me – what are friends for? The front ally mudguard is original. The seat was recovered by Leighton's in Birmingham. The fuel tank was also a bit tricky. They were hand rolled into shape in the factory, and I had to have a few dents knocked out and then the steel side plates supplied didn't fit properly, so I had to do a bit of shaping work on them before they could be chrome plated at Howell's in Walsall. But in the end – after several years – it all came good, and now I love riding this bike. **CBG**



Richard on the move



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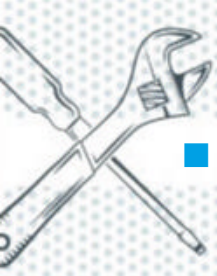
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PART TWO

Project Norton ES2

Rebuilding Roadholders

Initially this was to be a 'how to' story, but the job is so straightforward that few would find it helpful. But the research and the journey to getting all the parts is far more interesting, and hopefully more useful

What we used

- Rock Oil fork oil 20W (had some in the shed), £7
- Brake cleaner – lots of it, £10 for 5 litres
- Norvil service kit – bushes, seals, washers £38
- Damper rod bolts you lose, £5
- Wet and dry paper, various grades, £2
- Polishing cloth mop and soap, kit, £15
- T-shirts for cleaning, £ free
- Stone for filing nicks from stanchions, borrowed
- If you need:
- Stanchions, new £150



Even before my love of classics turned into an obsession, I had heard of Roadholder forks. Will they be as good as people say they are?

I doubt it. Having served my 'apprenticeship' on Eighties' and Nineties Japanese bikes,

the Roadholders that are fitted to the ES2, other singles and some early twins are very similar in theory to a cheap, basic damper rod Japanese fork. The main difference is the spring is external, not internal, but otherwise a job befitting

those new to classics. The few differences – felt or leather washers instead of rubber, a screw cap to hold the oil seal in rather than a circlip and a drain screw, are all that were different. And threads – but more of that later.

Roadholder forks

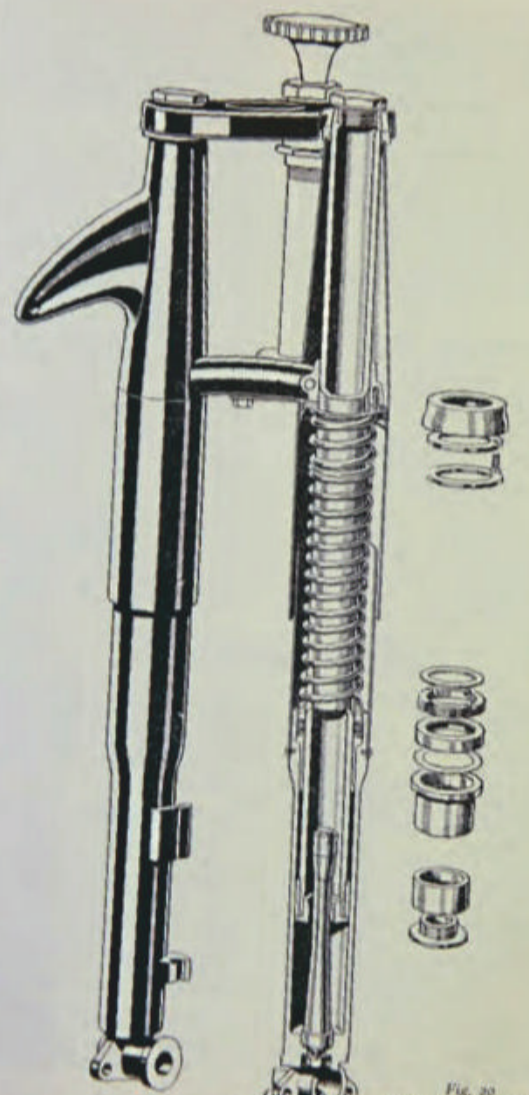
There were several different types with different internals and different lengths.

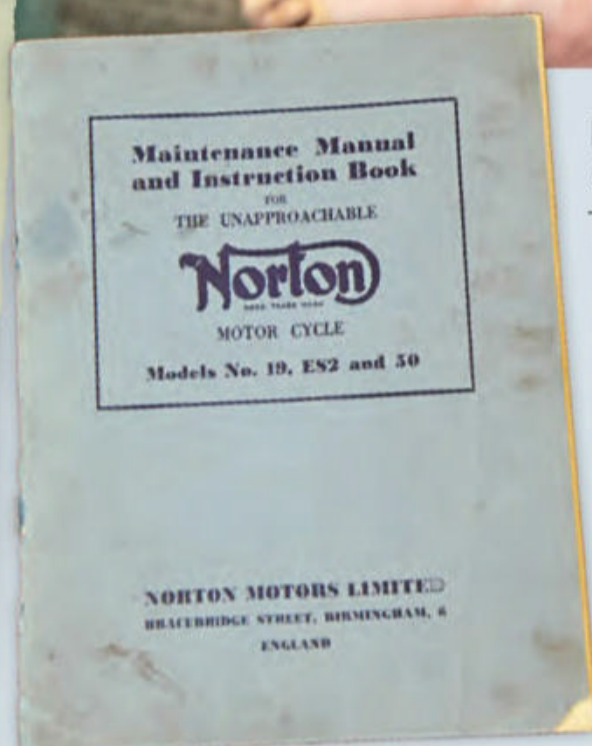
A quick peak through the parts suppliers will reveal lots of parts and information on the Commando forks that had much better rebound and compression control, but little on the basic damper rod design used here.

ES2 models have just one hole in the damper rod controlling the flow of oil that could be drilled out for more flow or welded up and drilled to make smaller for slower flow. As our bike is to be standard, this was left alone and 20W fork oil used – if that feels too slow at harnessing the spring to

you then changing to a lighter oil is a much easier solution.

For reference, these are classed by many as 'long' Roadholders, referring to the length of stanchion, which I measure as 23.23in. By comparison, 'short' Roadholders have a stanchion of 21.84in and Commandos are 23.16in, but they also have fork bottom differences for the later disc brake models. But the basic rebuild kit we purchased from Norvil contained bushes, seals, felt and alloy washers that would fit long and short Roadholders, as the diameters of the stanchion and fork leg are the same.



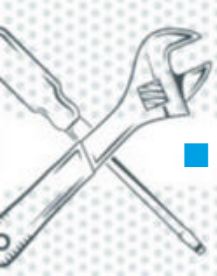


I NEED HELP!

Getting information on this bike has been tricky – you can't just order a Haynes manual. Luckily, the Mortons archive had a maintenance manual for the Model 19, 50 and ES2 that featured the breakdown illustration of the forks. It has come in handy but if you're looking for detail like torque settings then forget it – it's a case of looking at what you're doing, whether what forces will be acting on it, whether there is a tab washer and working it out yourself.

Another job that is rarely, if ever, covered in a manual is the fact we're working on a bike so old and that came in a box of parts because it had been stripped so long ago. My first job was to assess which parts we

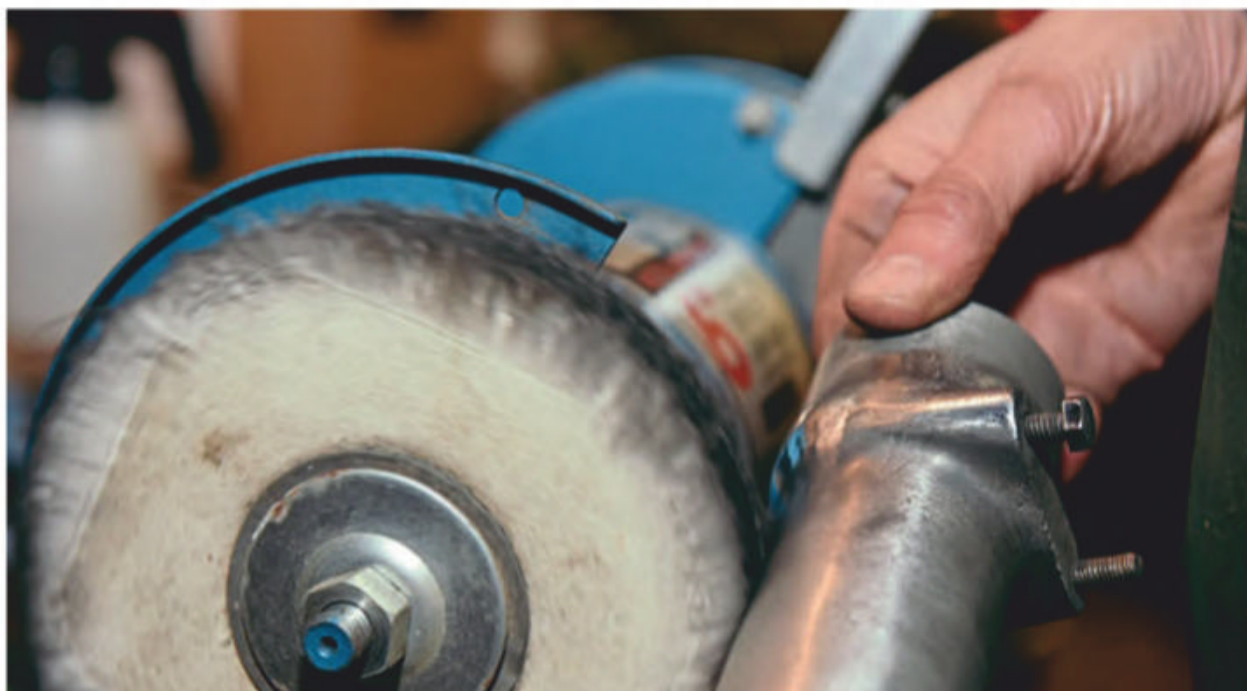
had, which were needed and if anything needed additional work. I needed heat to remove the chromed spring covers (don't lose the tiny screws) and had to remove a mudguard thread that had snapped (I welded a nut on to it and it wound out). Otherwise work was limited to removing horrible, soft goo-type paint on the bottoms, then polishing them up, cleaning, more cleaning and sorting any pits in the stanchions with a stone, then 2000-grit wet and dry, especially around the area the yokes grip to. The metal spring covers need painting and the chrome covers need rechroming or replacing, but until I know about the engine and gearbox costs I'm loath to fork out (see what I did there?) for shiny parts, so they will be painted for now.



POLISHING

I'm not used to owning shiny shiny things, so it was with reluctance that I polished the fork bottoms. After removing the paint and flattening any large damage with a 320-grit wet and dry paper, I used a cloth buffing wheel on a bench grinder with a medium soap. Several attempts later I could see most of the areas had been polished, so I finished the crevasses with a smaller mop in a drill. Most of the corrosion in the alloy has gone but there are a number of marks at the bottom – it is 62 years old after all – that I am happy with. It shows a little of the bike's life and I'm guessing similar marks in the engine and other areas will tie in. Two coats with Autosol chrome and alloy cleaner and numerous old T-shirts cleaned the bottoms up nicely. The jury is currently out on how long they will last; I may yet lacquer them. Each bottom took around one-and-a-half hours to polish, though each hand took around the same to clean before dinner...

■ **Threads, big spanners and bigger screwdrivers (thanks Stu!)**



If I wasn't an idiot, this may not have come to light. But, having grown up with metric fine or course threads, the classic world is full of surprises. Like when you have to remove the damper rod bolt, but the rod turns and the only way to hold said rod is with a flat-bladed screwdriver of at least 3/4in width. My friend Stu used to work on trucks, so helpfully he had one. Once removed, I then duly lost the bolts. No matter, until you try to replace them. With a narrow head (to fit in the fork bottom) and a cycle thread (5/16in, 22tpi) this

proved nigh-on impossible, until another friend, Hutch, came to the rescue – or more precisely, his 'spare bolts, British' pot (Note - Norton specialists, Norvil, stock them for around £2 each). With classic bikes you need friends. You also need a truck mechanic – as the stanchion lower bush is held on by a huge 1 5/16in bolt, which just happens to be the same size as older lorry wheel nuts!

So after cleaning, polishing, losing and finding all the parts, rebuilding was a simple case of removal, cleaning and

refitting with new parts. I slipped the oil seals on from the bottom first, so they didn't have to go over the rough parts at the top of the stanchion and fitted bushes with a good coating of fork oil, then did it all up. Finally I added 150ml (3/4 pint) of 20W fork oil, which doesn't sound a lot, but if it feels bouncy I can always add more. It doesn't look too beautiful yet, but once the spring hangers are painted, it should be a front end to be proud of. And shiny!

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Andy Tiernan

Est. 1972



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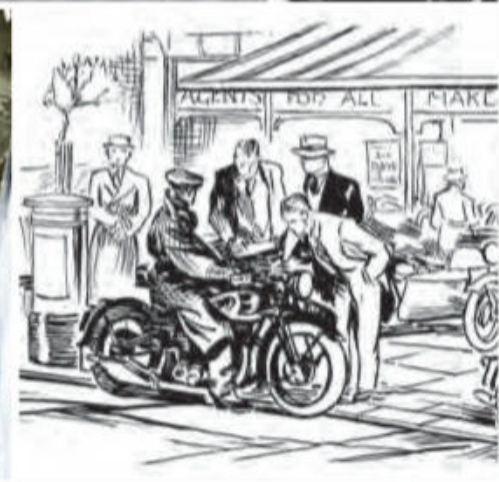
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FRANK WESTWORTH

ONE MAN'S JUNK...

Frank starts to dissect his collection of bikes and paraphernalia that live in his house - or has he just started an early spring clean?

“This is a brochure for a Beezer that never was: the Fury 350 twin. You know the one; the dohc twin which, alongside its Triumph Bandit stablemate, was intended to be the start of the modernisation of Britain’s biggest bike builder’s range, thus reversing their declining fortunes and dispatching Honda to the footnotes of history”

A LIFELONG AND LARGELY INEXPLICABLE passion for elderly motorcycles has resulted in my having a large shed loaded with an alarming amount of stuff. To the initiated this looks largely like jumble ... to the uninitiated it looks entirely like junk. You can choose sides should you so wish. When I acquired most of it I regarded it as simply stuff, simple soul that I am. Other opinions are available, and previously I would have also remarked that they’re irrelevant. Except...

As well as a large shed containing a lot of old bike stuff, I inhabit a house which also contains a large amount of stuff. Less of that stuff is metallic, and less still is actually seriously oily, rusty and filthy, but there’s still a vast pile of stuff connected in some way with that same inexplicable passion. A couple of particularly handsome ornaments are a pair of new old stock AMC twin con rods, which share shelf space with a Norton Model 19 cylinder barrel. Things of considerable artistic merit, I’m sure you’ll agree.

For a decade or so one of the main rooms of the res was decorated by a Norton F1 and a Triumph Hurricane. This was an art installation representing both the sublime and the ridiculous. I thought of entering it for an award, but decided that international fame and fortune would simply be too tedious. And then a domestic discussion suggested that the room would benefit from a table and chairs, and things like that, so I invested in a couple of Vac-Bags and relocated both objets d’art into a dark place out of public view. All art galleries do this, as you know. Maybe I could qualify for a grant for preserving my country’s great heritage? Maybe I need psych treatment?


There’s also a shelf with a pair of Lucas Magdynos sitting dustily upon it. Every so often I look at them and wonder whether I should sell them. But why? And in any case, they were rebuilt by a Noted Expert around a decade ago and have never been used since. How is this a problem? Well, to get top shilling I’d need to advertise them as rebuilt by said Noted Expert, but I have a twitch of doubt that they actually work. Prevarication provides stability, as you know. As investments they may have out-

performed my pension, too, although I doubt a lengthy life of luxury would follow the sale of a pair of elderly Lucas devices.

A little more conventionally, another shelf – actually a filing cabinet – contains a large collection of ancient motorcycle brochures. I use this in the course of my occasionally gainful employment, so that’s unremarkable. Less unremarkable is that among this carefully organised and almost entirely random assortment of crumbly paperwork is something unique. It’s a partial set of page make-up artwork for a BSA brochure. But not just any BSA brochure. This is a brochure for a Beezer that never was: the Fury 350 twin. You know the one; the dohc twin which, alongside its Triumph Bandit stablemate, was intended to be the start of the modernisation of Britain’s biggest bike builder’s range, thus reversing their declining fortunes and dispatching Honda to the footnotes of history. Or something.

The artwork is interesting, especially in these days of entirely computerised digital page make-up systems. There are neat pieces of paper with the words on, and high quality cut-out photos of the bike, all of these stuck with an adhesive called Spraymount (are my age and anorak showing here?) to a larger piece of thick paper called a keysheet. How do I know what all these things are? Because that was how magazines were produced when I started writing for magazines.

But that’s not the purpose of this little waddle along memory lane. There’s a debate festering away in old bike land about who actually owns items like this. It’s been suggested that in fact such historically and indeed technically interesting items belong not to the ‘owner’ (me, in this case) but to whoever originally produced it, which would be either the graphics studio or BSA. Or even, and this would be a little alarming, to whoever the descendants of the original originators are – BSA is currently a trademark of Mahindra, I believe.

Many people have apparently become quite heated about this debate, which is a bit of a puzzle, but people do what people do. And life goes on... 

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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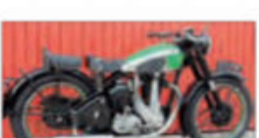
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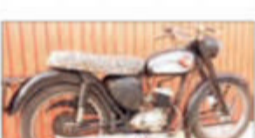
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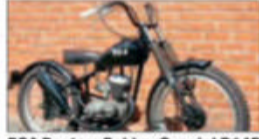
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1969, factory pairing £27,500



VINCENT COMET 499cc 1950
..... £24,999