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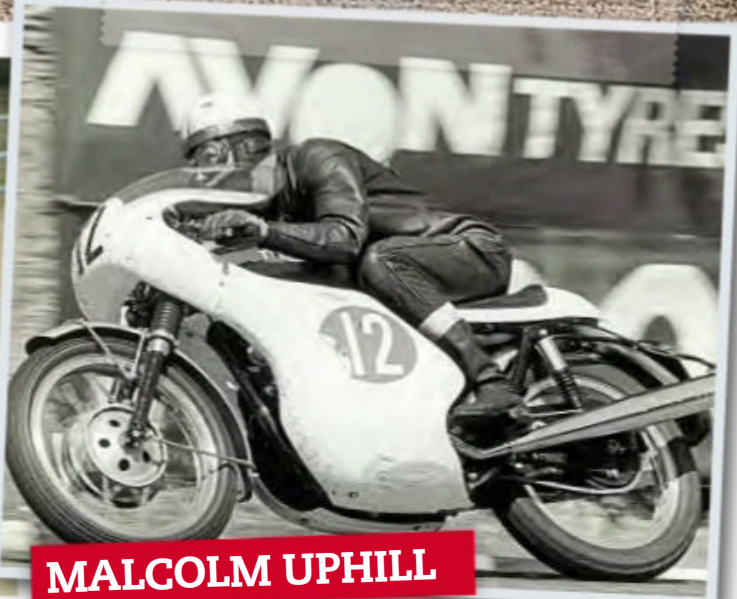
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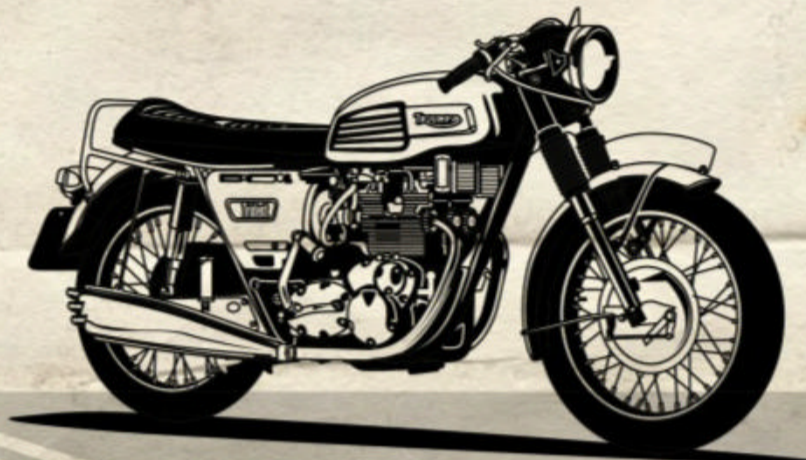
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Enjoy what you have

THE WEATHER'S BEEN KIND RECENTLY, so I hope you've been making the most of it. I've been sneaking out when I can on the B31. It's starting well, running fine and is such a hoot, until the front brake cable snapped chasing a modern CCM. Mental note to self – live within your limits and check your bike regularly...

As many of us do, I get tempted by what I haven't got. The recent Bonhams auction at Stafford had a myriad of fine machines, some of which I could imagine in my possession, listening to the engine while riding and revelling in the admiration from others at a bike meet. But every time I jump on the Beeza, or am in the workshop (well, I call it a workshop; it's an ex pig sty with a load of unfinished, sad looking bikes and cars with some tools scattered liberally) and look at what I have, I quickly realise how lucky I am. None are valuable or rare: hell, most aren't even complete. And as for provenance and matching numbers, ha! But they are mine, and fun to ride. When running...

There's something satisfying about making a silk purse from a sow's ear. Take modern, unloved bikes (cheap) then modify to give an older feel. Cheap bikes look cheap, but modify them to give them an older feel and they're no longer just a cheap bike; they're different. Yours.

They're no Trident or Velocette, you may

not like the looks, but they give the owners a lot of fun for little money. Have a look on page 100 for some we've put together – not everyone has £10,000 for a bike.

My love of modified bikes saw me rock down to East London for the Bike Shed show this month. It's the seventh year this show has been going, and has become the biggest show for all things two wheels, custom, modified and cool. It's not a classic show, but the majority of bikes are styled classically. And they were incredible; every year the bar is raised, both in quality and style. I may not have liked a particular look, but there would generally be some superb detail; gorgeous welding, interesting packaging, creative painting or just something that made you go wow.

You can get away with more in London than other parts of the country, but the organisers pushed the boat out – the listed old warehouse looked incredible, the food stalls were amazing, there were comfortable areas to just sit and chill in a deckchair, you could pop into the cinema and watch 'On any Sunday', the corporate stands didn't overtake the show and it was all laid out so well. You could easily spend all day there and still miss things. It is a really refreshing show and others could take note.

Personally, the best part of the show was the people that came. I saw younger

people than at any other bike show, families, ladies and everyone was getting along, appreciating what they were looking at and getting enthused.

Several I spoke to didn't even own a bike, they just liked the idea and the feel. I've spent most of my life working in motorcycling, trying to promote what we love, and often feel frustrated that nothing ever changes; and we don't help ourselves. And yet here are a group of bikers that only got together around 10 years ago and are promoting bikes more successfully than anyone in the industry. Thank you.

Back in East Anglia and I was invited to judge at the Brimbo (brimbo.co.uk – brilliant club) classic show. There have been few times I was more nervous! I like honest, used bikes, those a bit dog-eared; but I also appreciate the nut and bolt restorations. So how do you choose? In the end I decided to pick the bikes that I liked and were within the spirit, but I hope no one was too disappointed – you can't pick 'em all!

Right, sun's still out, so off to the coast for fish and chips.

Be good

Matt Hull

editor@classicbikeguide.com



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Built simply to go as fast as possible, 'The Hundred' is truly function over form

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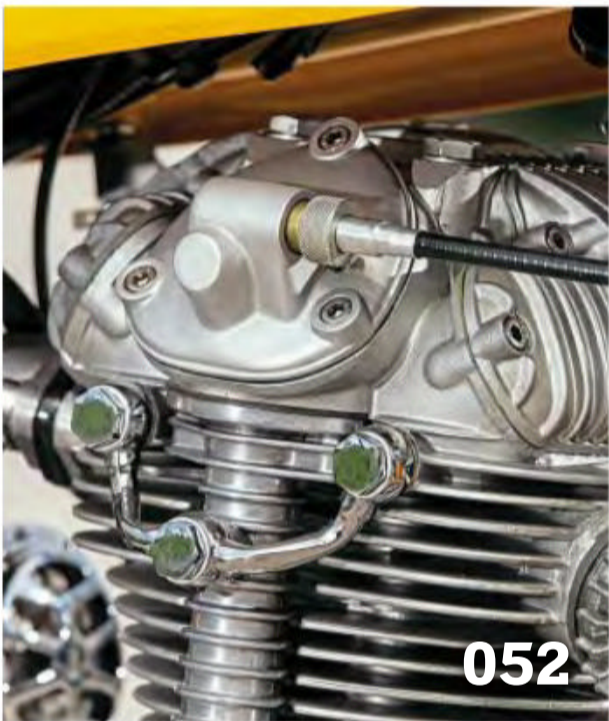
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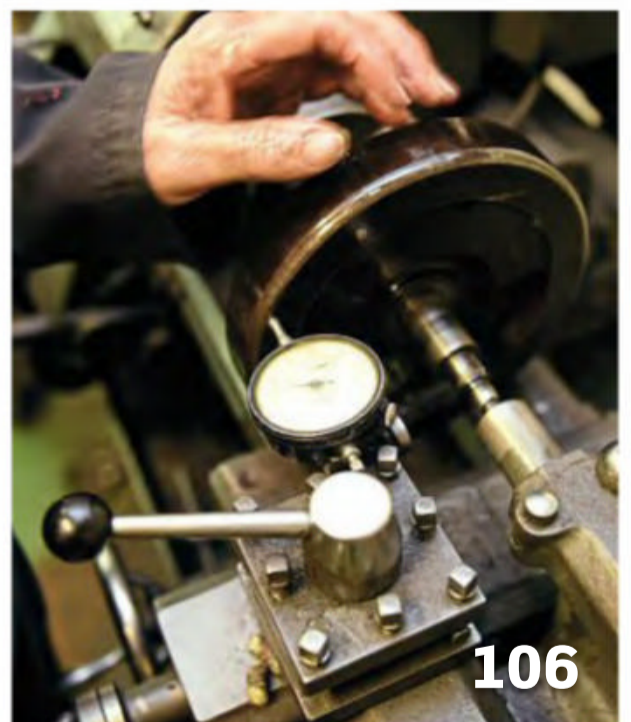
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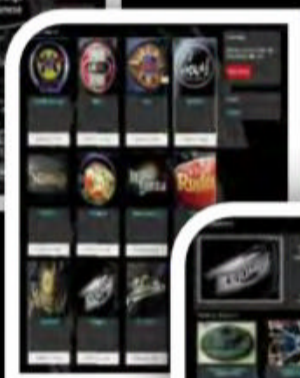
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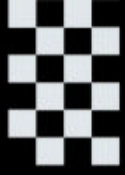
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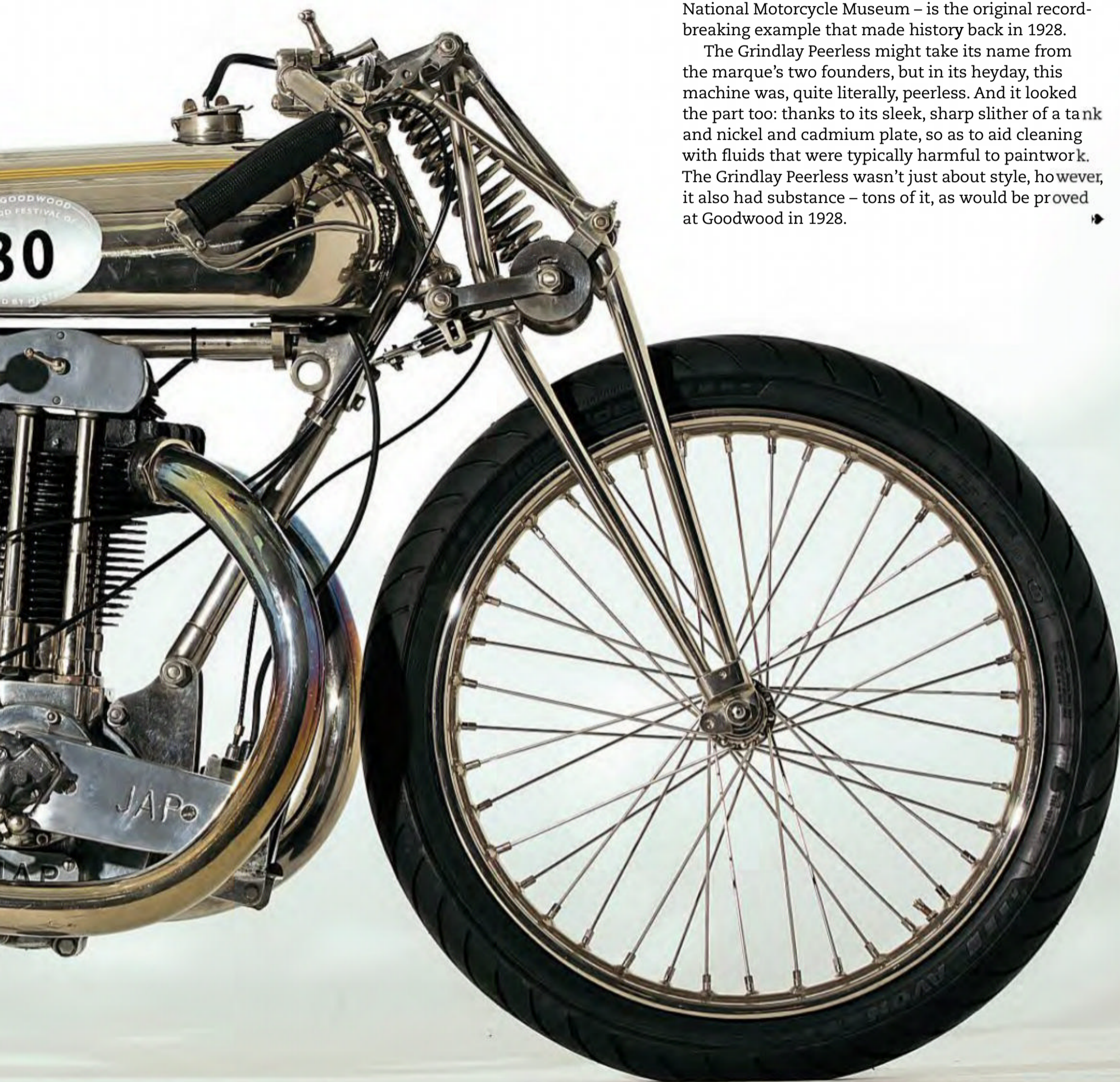
Over 100,000 examples of the Norton 16H were supplied to the war effort. Simple, easy to maintain and reliable, the side-valve was essential. And it made a reasonable coffee table. **CBG**



Silver machine

For this month's *Machines That Matter*, Rachael Clegg delves into the history of the National Motorcycle Museum's sensational Grindlay Peerless 498cc record-breaking machine.

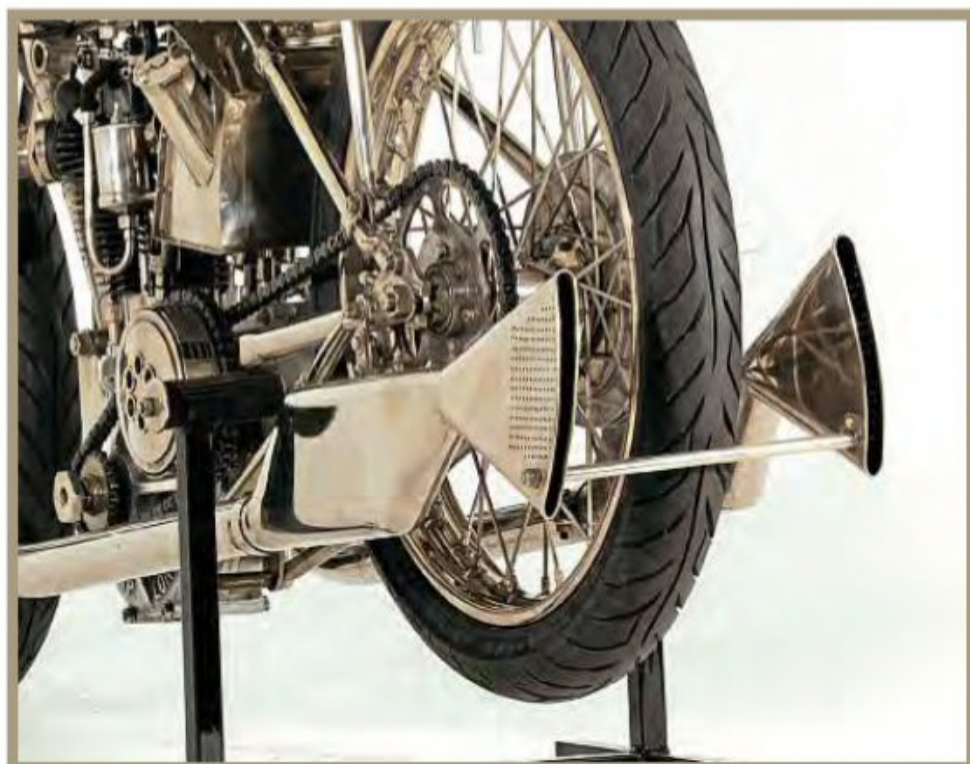




IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT SHAKLETON ROAD, Coventry, was once home to one of the most formidable motorcycle marques of the prewar era. Here, in the 1920s, among row upon row of small terraced houses, Alfred Robert Grindlay and Edward Peerless set about producing a machine that would make racing history: the Grindlay Peerless.

And this month's featured machine is about the marque's star creation: the 488cc, JAP-engined, Grindlay Peerless which later became known as 'The Hundred'. The machine – which stands in the National Motorcycle Museum – is the original record-breaking example that made history back in 1928.

The Grindlay Peerless might take its name from the marque's two founders, but in its heyday, this machine was, quite literally, peerless. And it looked the part too: thanks to its sleek, sharp slither of a tank and nickel and cadmium plate, so as to aid cleaning with fluids that were typically harmful to paintwork. The Grindlay Peerless wasn't just about style, however, it also had substance – tons of it, as would be proved at Goodwood in 1928. ▶



Grindlay Peerless originally produced sidecars but in 1923 the company started manufacturing large capacity V-twin motorcycles with a Barr and Stroud V-twin engine. The machines had a Sturmey-Archer gearbox and a chain final drive. Then, in 1924, the marque produced an overhead camshaft 488cc machine with a JAP engine, though in 1925 Grindlay Peerless resorted, once more, to a Barr and Stroud engine. That didn't last long though – Grindlay Peerless were soon back on JAPs – a switch that would pay off in dividends.

But it was the 1928 machine – as seen in the National Motorcycle Museum – that would be the marque's trophy machine. By this time, Grindlay Peerless had signed up rider/engine tuner Bill Lacey, who had already proved his worth riding 350cc Cotton JAP machines in the early Twenties. Lacey was admired not just for his riding skills, but also for the immaculate preparation of his machines.

In an interview for *Classic Racer*, Lacey said: "I didn't have much interest in riding at all, not really. My main interest was in the workshop, making them go as fast as possible and absolutely reliable. That's why I never raced in the TT; Brooklands was the only place for me."

And it was Brooklands where Lacey and Grindlay Peerless made history, but more of that later...

As the 1920s roared on, race records were being broken left, right and centre – including the 100mph record – which had seemed so elusive for so long thanks to Claud Temple. But Temple's ton was achieved at the French speed bowl, Montlhéry, where

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: 490cc (80 x 90mm) JAP ohv single with an Amal carburettor **WEIGHT:** 250lb **TOP SPEED:** 110mph

CHASSIS: tubular steel frame **FORKS:** Brampton Girder front forks **BRAKES:** drum (rear brake only)

GEARBOX: Sturmey Archer three-speed gearbox



speed-restricting silencers were not obligatory – unlike the UK, giving riders a greater advantage. Added to this, Montlhéry was a smooth circuit, which also aided speed, compared with the bumpy British equivalent, Brooklands.

So it seemed only right that a ‘100 miles in one hour’ challenge was put to riders on British soil and in July that year *The Motor Cycle* offered to award a cup to the first rider to cover more than 100 miles in 60 minutes on a British circuit. The ever-ambitious Lacey embraced the challenge and on August 1, 1928, conquered 103 miles and 532 yards in one hour. It was an incredible feat – not least owing to the speed-restricting silencers on his Grindlay Peerless and the shocking condition of the track itself. Furthermore, this was a machine with only a rear brake and a meagre three-speed gearbox.

But Lacey hadn’t just raised the bar for the 498cc class, he’d also beat Temple’s 101-miles and-1724-yards in one hour record at Montlhéry. Lacey, Grindlay Peerless – and more importantly, Britain – were now the kings of the ton.

Back at Grindlay Peerless HQ, among the terraced houses and back-to-back gardens, brothers Grindlay and Peerless were – needless to say – delighted. So delighted, in fact, was the company that it launched a handful of replicas of the 498cc machine called ‘The Hundred’. One of these rare replicas stands in the Brooklands Museum today.

Later that year, on October 6, Lacey upped his ante once again on the trusty 498cc machine, this time



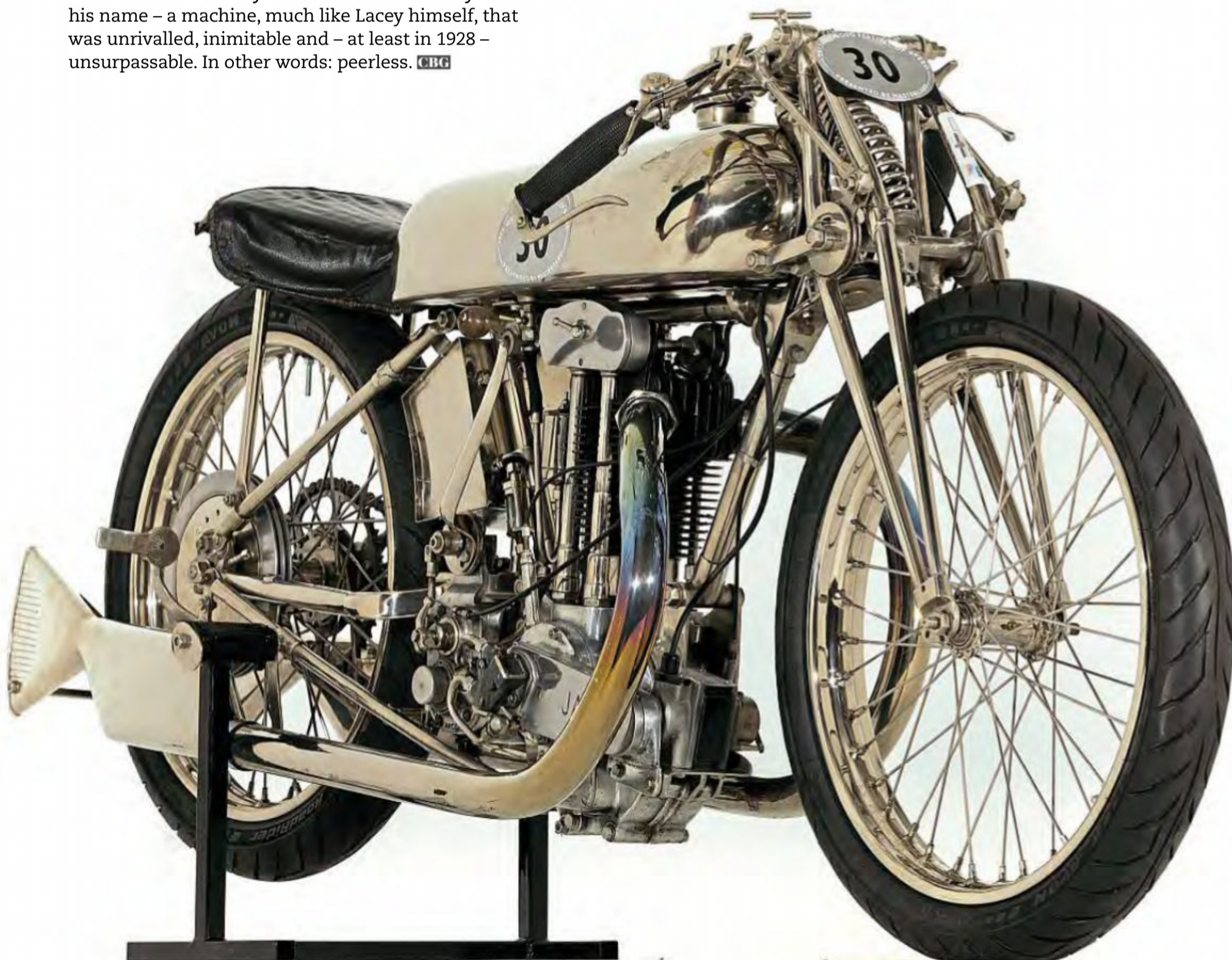
winning the Wakefield Cup at a speed of 107.10mph from a standing start and a flying lap at a sensational 109.97mph.

And it's for this reason the 498cc machine even made it into John Griffith's famous 'Historic Racing Motorcycles' even as far back as 1963, when Griffith's book was first published.

This was just one chapter in Bill's extraordinary career. In the 1930s he started working at the Norton factory and helped develop the company's overhead camshaft engines. But as the global depression of the 1930s started to bite, many British marques either folded or stripped back their costs. As a result, Lacey stopped racing, formidable though he was, and concentrated on his work as a precision engineer and later set up a motorcycle garage. The latter was successful, until the outbreak of the Second World War, during which Lacey was involved in complex precision engineering projects such as the tooling for the production of 35mm cine film cameras.

Then, in 1957, Lacey had a call from Stan Hailwood, who asked Lacey to prepare some machines for his young son, Michael. Lacey did so, with gusto, and in 1961 worked on the Norton Manx on which the young Stanley Michael Bailey Hailwood rode to his 1961 Senior TT victory.

But it's the Grindlay Peerless on which Lacey made his name – a machine, much like Lacey himself, that was unrivalled, inimitable and – at least in 1928 – unsurpassable. In other words: peerless. **CBG**



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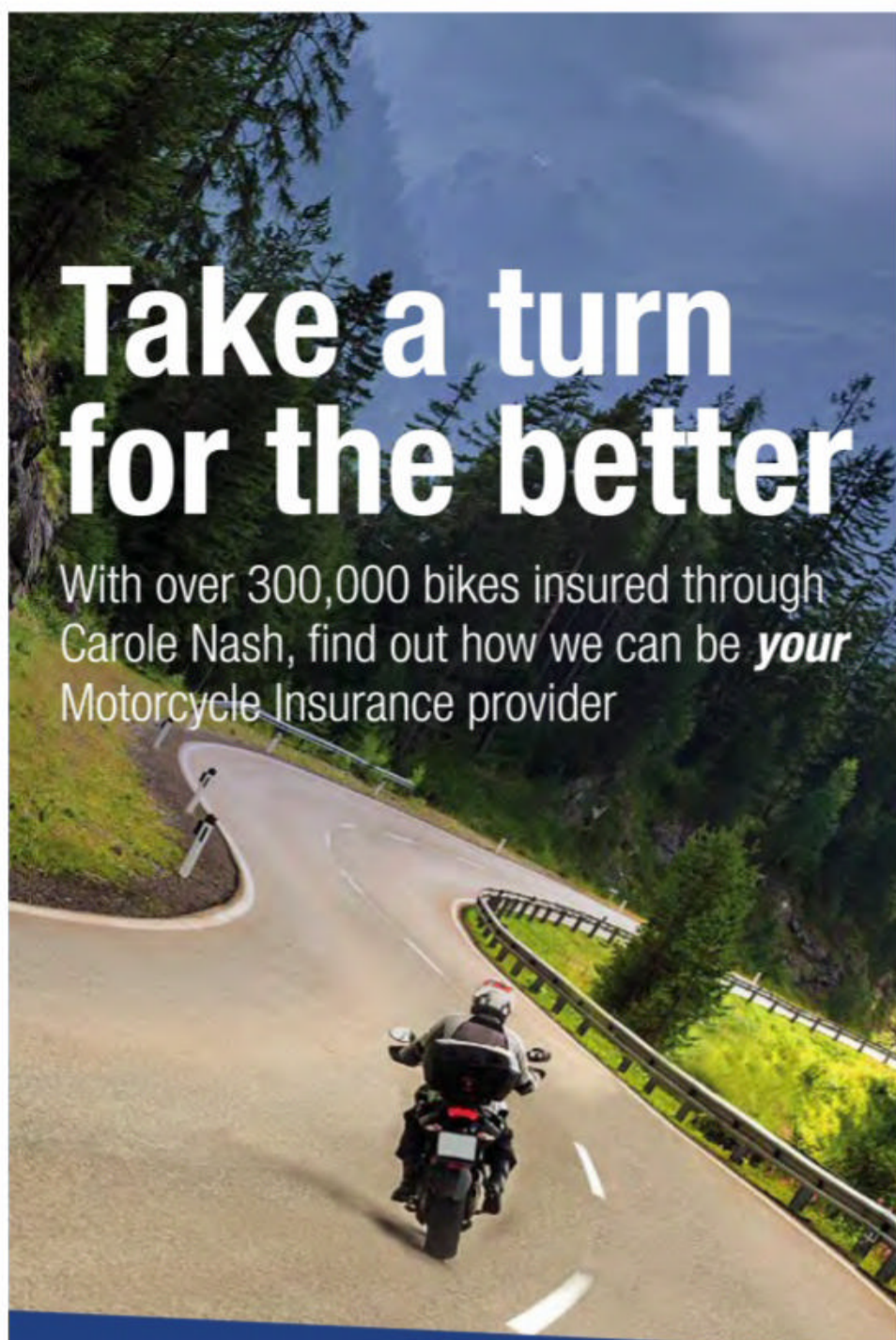


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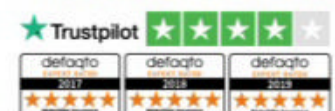


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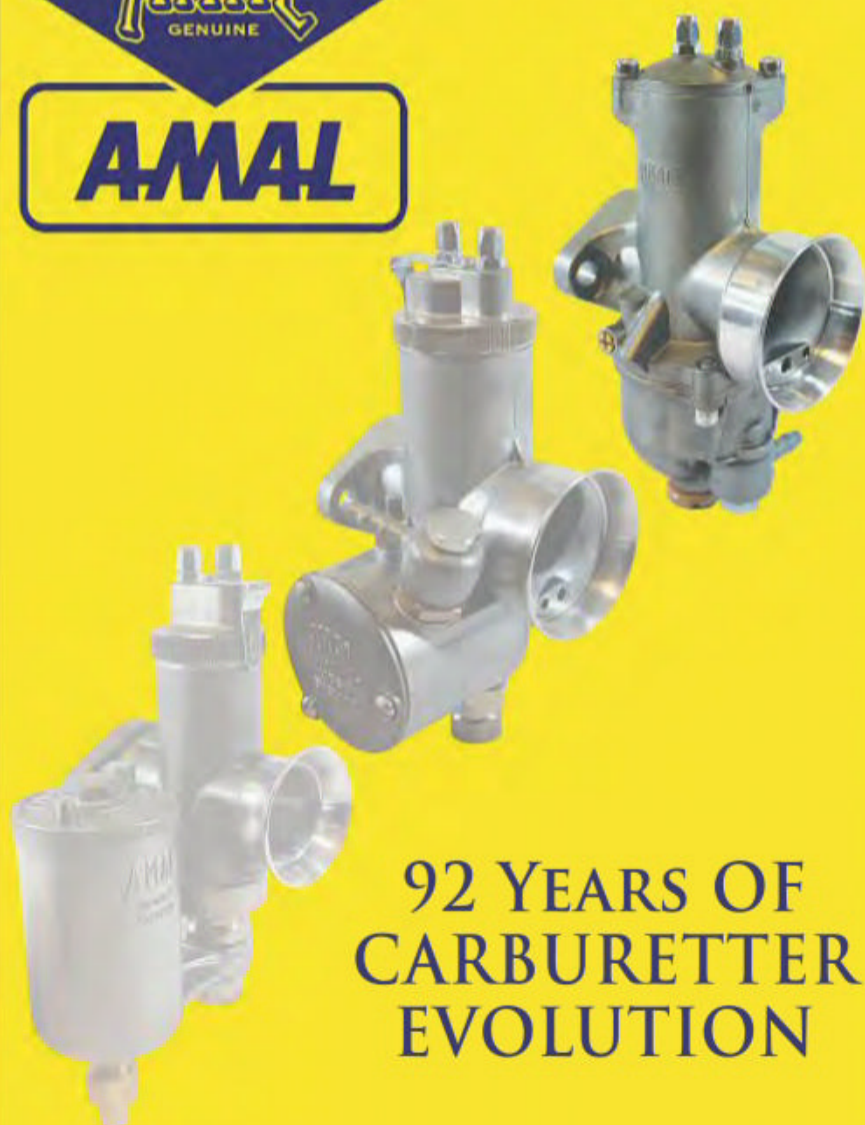
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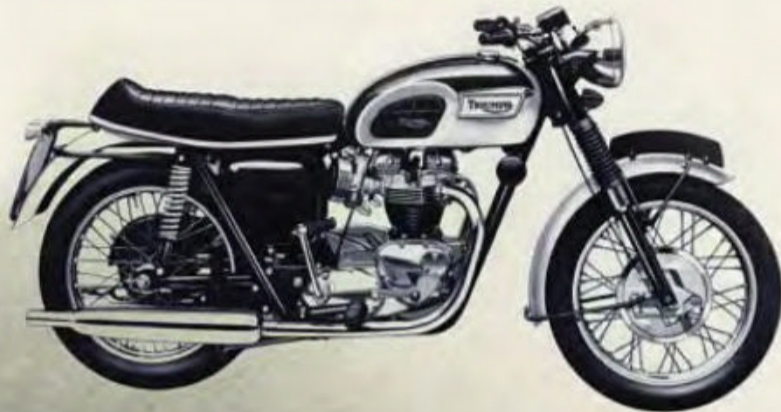
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WIN

an unused T160v with the NMM

A UNIQUE EXAMPLE of one of the greatest late British bikes is up for grabs in the National Motorcycle Museum's summer raffle.

Following the success of the winter raffle for an unused Norton Commando, the summer offering is for an as-new 1977 Triumph Trident 750. Museum director James Hewing stated: "We have a stunning prize for our summer raffle by offering another brand new/old stock machine.

"This time it's a 1977 Triumph Trident T160V which has never been run or registered and is showing just nine 'push' miles only."

Second prize is a Sealey retro style 10 drawer combination tool chest worth £850, while third prize is a luxury hotel break at the Manor Hotel, Meriden and dinner for two at the hotel's Marco Pierre White Steakhouse.

The winning ticket in the National Motorcycle Museum's winter raffle prize of a Norton Commando 850 was drawn by TT superstar Ian Hutchinson at the International Classic Motorcycle Show, Stafford. Dave Street of Aberdeenshire was the lucky winner.

The draw for the T160V Trident will take place on Saturday, October 26 at the Museum LIVE event at The National Motorcycle Museum. Tickets cost £2 each via the museum on (01675) 444123 or online at www.thenmm.co.uk

BMW'S bobber goes big



BMW IS GOING into the bobber business. With many manufacturers going down the bobber route and launching lean, low, cut down motorcycles that ape the American cruisers of the 1950s, the German automotive giant has gone bigger than most with its Motorrad Concept R18. The machine features a newly designed, two-cylinder 1800cc boxer engine.

Visually based on the flat twin engines that BMW used to build up until the end of the 1960s, the new engine features combined air/oil cooling. Unusually for a modern machine BMW used conventional

Solex carbs rather than fuel injection and the prototype is fitted with an exposed, chromed drive shaft. The electronics of the concept bike are reduced to operating no more than the starter and the lights.

The paint follows classic BMW tradition, being black with a subtle hint of metalflake and white lining.

There's a leather solo saddle. Frame design follows current bobber fashion, with rigid style rear end using a hidden under-seat shock absorber. At present shown only as a prototype, it is not clear whether the R18 will appear in showrooms in its current form.



Bigger and better Stone Circle show proves a real classic

WHETHER IT WAS due to the location, the time of year or hard work of the organisers, the second Stone Circle Classic and Custom Ride-in Bike Show was a roaring success.

Hosted by the Wiltshire branch of the BSA owners' club at Avebury, visitors arrived in large numbers from early on despite a chilly start.

It soon became apparent to the organisers that word had spread of last year's event and they estimated a higher attendance than the previous year's 700 or so. The main classic and custom

bike park had to be closed at about 12.30pm as it was full, and the exhibits took over chunks of the neighbouring cricket field. The NSA once again put on an interesting display of their varied sprint bikes, and the Butchered Classics Facebook group attended with strong numbers, while Allen Millyard brought along his newly completed Velocette V-twin and a selection of his spectacular multi-cylindered Kawasaki two-strokes.

Money raised at the show is to go to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance and another local good cause.



Credit: Lynne Edwards

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Royal Enfield's Trials tribute



ROYAL ENFIELD HAS launched a new dual-purpose version of its Bullet 500 single in tribute to the company's success 70 years ago in ISDT competitions between 1948 and 1953.

The Bullet Trials 500 uses the same 499cc, single-cylinder, air-cooled, four-stroke engine used on the standard bikes. The Trials produces 27.2bhp at 5100rpm and up to 31.7lb-ft (43Nm) of torque, which RE says provides 'real useable flexibility'. The Bullet

Trials 500 comes in chrome and silver, or just silver, with a green or red painted frame, a single sprung saddle, a luggage rack in the location usually used for a pillion and an upswept exhaust.

There are dual-purpose tyres, fork gaiters, large braced mudguards, spoked wheels and a headlamp guard. Modern refinements such as fuel injection and twin ABS discs are standard. The Bullet 500 Trials is listed at £4699 on the road.



'One-off' Rocket Gold Star prototype set to go under the hammer

BSA ROCKET GOLD STAR factory prototype '985 FOC' will be sold at the next H&H Classics auction at the National Motorcycle Museum on July 30.

This piece of motorcycling history was built at the BSA factory in Birmingham in January 1962 and was used for the development and evaluation of the Rocket Gold Star.

Copies of the BSA factory despatch records show the bike was first used by *Motorcycle Sport* for a road test and following this the factory replaced the frame. The bike was then

used by BSA factory racer Chris Vincent at the TT as his personal transport. Other despatch entries show Worcester County Constabulary testing the bike for possible police use and to Mr G Harding, a BSA dealer on the Isle of Man. Finally, the factory sold the bike to Aston Autos in Birmingham in December 1963.

Mark Bryan of the H&H Classics sales team said: "This bike really is unique, literally a one-off prototype. A bike with this sort of provenance really should be in a museum.

"Possibly one of the best-looking bikes



made by BSA. It is a great piece of history and the link to Chris Vincent makes it even more special." It comes complete with the original buff logbook, copies of the factory records, BSA Owners' Club dating letter and other related paperwork. The guide price is between £35,000 to £40,000.



Wander through 200 acres of classics

MORE than 200 bikes dating back to 1911 will be on display at the Stroud Vintage Transport and Engine Club's show this summer.

The event at South Cerney Airfield in Cirencester, Glouc over the weekend of August 2-4 is now in its 45th year and is one of the biggest steam, vintage transport and countryside events in the UK.

The sprawling show site covers around 200 acres of an ex-wartime airfield and one of the largest display areas is the motorcycle section. Among the marques on display are Honda, Cotton, Meteor, Yamaha, Harley-Davidson,

Moto Guzzi, AJS, James, Triumph, Royal Enfield, Rudge, Baker, BMW, Norton, Velocette, Panther, Francis Barnett, Matchless and Greeves.

There will also be a selection of Lambretta scooters and the welcome return of the BSA Bantam Club. Cotton, based in nearby Gloucester, will be well represented thanks to the Cotton Owners' and Enthusiasts' Club showing off competition, road and trials bikes.

The show also features classic cars, traction engines, fairground rides, big band performances and a Wall of Death. Visit www.glosvintageextravaganza.co.uk

From pints to pistons – Monty’s Classics settles in at former pub

IT’S PROVING FAR from ‘last orders’ at Monty’s Classics, as the supplier of British spares to the enthusiast is now firmly in place at its new premises, a former pub on the border between Devon and Cornwall.

Bar staff at The Cross House in Metherell, near Callington pulled their last pints more than a decade ago and after a lot of work the bar and restaurant are now a Mecca for British bike fans hunting for elusive parts rather than thirsty locals after a pint.

Monty has an encyclopaedic knowledge of Triumph, Norton and BSA parts and worked for 20 years at Terry Hobbs’ shop in Plymouth.

For two decades now he and wife Ann have been building their own business. Monty makes a point of only stocking the best parts that are available, many of them sourced from the suppliers to the original factories. He aims to provide a choice between genuine parts and good quality pattern parts.

Monty and Ann ride their own classics regularly, his usual hack being a 1939 Triumph 100, while Ann rides a 1952 5T sprung hub bobber. These two bikes sit among a



selection of other machines which are dotted around the former bar. The stock of spares is vast and those seen on the website are just a fraction of the stock. Making a phone call will unearth much more information and advice about your bike from Monty and Ann’s impressive memory banks.

Visitors are always welcome but call in advance to make sure the shop is open and to ask for directions, as the Cross House is hard to find and mislocated on some sat-nav maps. Call 01822 617010 or visit montysclassicmotorcycleshop.co.uk



Beezumph triples head to Cadwell

CADWELL PARK WILL echo to the howl of 120° triples at this year’s Beezumph rally on July 25/26.

Organisers at the Trident and Rocket 3 Owners’ Club are celebrating their 40th birthday and are pulling out all the stops.

There will be a Doug Hele Centennial area with the prototype P1 Trident on display. Other bikes there will include the reproduction Hailwood Rocket 3, Boyer Trident race bike, P&M Trident, and either a space frame or monocoque works Norton Commando.

Beezumph is a two-day rally, with camping available from Wednesday night until Saturday. Thursday will see an organised ride out around Lincolnshire, including a stop off at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre at East Kirkby. In the evening, there will be an autojumble of triple and other parts followed by an evening’s entertainment, food and drink.

Friday will start early for track session riders with the compulsory sign-on and safety brief, more noise testing then all the track action will begin. Marquees will contain exhibitions by the London Motorcycle Museum, the Racing Triple paddock and George Pooley, creator of the V6 Trident. Rally tickets are £25 each, which includes entry to the event, camping, rally badge, program, Friday BBQ food, and entry to the marquee for the bands. Day Tickets are £10 which includes camping. Visit www.beezumph.com



Ace has a Triumph up its sleeve

TRIUMPH MOTORCYCLES HAS teamed up with the Ace Café to create a limited-edition model of its Bonneville T120.

Only 1400 Bonneville T120 Ace machines will be sold worldwide. The Ace models come with a matt storm grey paint job with a contrasting Ace Café stripe and dedicated Ace Café and Bonneville T120 graphics.

Ace Café has become a global brand, with branches in Barcelona, Lucerne, Beijing, Orlando and Lahti in Finland.

The new Bonneville T120 Ace builds on the success of the Thruxton Ace produced in 2015, with a stripped-back and blacked-out take on the first generation of cafe racers, designed to echo the ‘head down, hold on’ teenage ethos of the day.

Mark Wilshire, managing director of Ace Café London, said: “Triumph and the Ace Cafe go hand in hand for me, with decades of riders turning up at the cafe on the latest British Twin to chance their arm on the A406, and be top dog off the lights. This beautiful new Bonneville T120 Ace pays homage to those riders and our glorious shared history in style.”

Wemoto Jurby shirts aid supporters cause

BIKE PARTS SPECIALIST Wemoto has launched a new range of T-shirts to raise money for the Manx Grand Prix Supporters’ Club.



With the help of generous bikers and famous names in the biking industry, Wemoto has managed to raise £65,000 over the last four years by designing and selling Festival of Jurby T-shirts to support the MGPSC charity. The 2018 fundraiser brought a total of £16,590, which was handed over to the club at this year’s official TT opening.

The money helps the club to fund its life-saving helicopter ambulance, used during practice and race days of the Manx Grand Prix. The MGPSC also supports injured riders and their families, such as Royce Rowe, who received their help back in 2017. The 2019 T-shirts are available from Wemoto for £10.

This year’s design celebrates the famous Kate’s Cottage part of the Isle of Man Snaefell Mountain Course. To support the effort visit www.wemoto.com and search in ‘clothing’.

Draganfly website proves a Triumph

THE CLASSIC EXPERTS at Draganfly have completed their online Triumph spares catalogue.

All the Triumph sections are online, with the catalogue including exploded diagrams and original Triumph part numbers. The Triumph shop contains 10 sections ranging

from 150cc Cubs to 750cc Triples. You can also access lots of useful information to help with your order and the further restoration of your Triumph on the website.

Use the original Triumph part numbers to search stock, check prices and order securely online. Visit www.draganfly.co.uk



Letters



Magnificent Motorcycles
Sunday 1 September
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Llandudno Promenade

The British Motorcycle Preservation Society is proud to announce 'Magnificent Motorcycles' - a display of Classic Bikes (up 1980) along with other clubs - Whistle Stop Café, Goldwing, Wirral Wobblers and others.

Talks by Blind Veterans UK's Billy Baxter - 'The Fastest Blind Man on a Bike (current Guinness World Record holder) and Blood Bike Wales.

Get involved!
 To display your Classic Bike visit our website. Park up your bike before viewing other magnificent machines and take time to explore nearby local attractions. Access from opposite St Georges Hotel, LL30 2LG

For more information
 Event organiser – John Dean
 T: 07816 066465 E: johnatsilvergate@aol.com
 W: www.bmpswnwales.org.uk



IN AID OF

 All donations raised at this event will be passed to Blind Veterans UK to support their work at their Llandudno Centre.
 To find out more about the charity or to find out how to get involved in fundraising contact
 suzanne.evanson@blindveterans.org.uk
 01492 868723
 Blind Veterans UK
 Registered Charity Number 216227.

• BRITISH MOTORCYCLE PRESERVATION SOCIETY •

Annual Classic MOTORCYCLE SHOW
 10am to 4pm
 6th & 7th July 2019



Show Details
 Glyndyfrdwy Station, near Cowen LL21 9HF
 Ring Len 07592 370572 or Mike 07977 090991
 Pete 07709 777912
 email: leonard@mev@gmail.com / ac.rjw@btinternet.com
 Visit our website
 www.bmpswnwales.org.uk

LIMITED MOTORCYCLE JUMBLE STALLS AVAILABLE

In Association with

LLANGOLLEN RAILWAY Classic Transport Weekend
 For Steam Weekend ring 01978 860979 www.llangollen-railway.co.uk

Shortage of classic meets in the North West

Whilst at Stafford show this year I visited the Triumph Owners' Motorcycle Club stall and expressed concern at the lack of events in the North West.

There are very few motorcycle jumbles in that area, other than the British Preservation Society event, which we have been hosting at Mochdre near Colwyn Bay for the past 30 plus years and there is one other annual event down at Oswestry. The flyers above are events we have arranged for this year.

These type of events provide a very valuable source of parts for collectors of older bikes.

Our annual show started in Erias Park Colwyn Bay in the Seventies then moved to

West Shore Llandudno, but now a new event has been created alongside the Blind Veterans' Association on North Shore, Llandudno.

We find it very difficult to understand why there are no such events in the Liverpool/Wirral/Warrington areas, when in years gone by motorcycles were very popular, and even now we see ride outs from these areas to the North Wales areas. There were many major dealerships in the this area, there must be hordes of spares in back yards and garages etc.

I have recently had an email discussion with Dave at your sister title *Old Bike Mart*, to hopefully gain some support for our plight. In recent issues of *Classic Bike Guide*

I've seen there are very few such events North of Stafford Showground.

Regrettably we see so much promotion of events in the Midlands and South which means us travelling many hours to events.

Chris Langdon
Secretary of the British Motorcycle Preservation Society North Wales

Matt: Anyone else feel the lack of classic bike events in the North West? I've a friend from the Manchester area who has just started riding and is very envious of all the meets in other parts of the country – any ideas let us know!

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Dalton & Company was founded by William Dalton in Belper, Derbyshire in 1908 – but it is as Silkolene that it became universally known and as it will be remembered in history.

During the early years of the British

motorcycle industry, Silkolene developed their oils to be used by motorcycle manufacturers such as Triumph, BSA, Norton, AJS, Royal Enfield, Brough Superior, Velocette Matchless and Vincent. These 'new' motorcycle brands would go on to shape the modern and diverse global industry it has become today.

Silkolene Classic Oils are blended from modern base stocks and additives to internationally recognised specifications and

are available in four-litre metal containers complemented with an authentic label design dating back to the very origins of the world famous Silkolene name.

With its instantly recognisable rich red colour and Classic Silkolene logo, these oils are much sought after by classic motorcycle enthusiasts around the world. The new look 'Classics', feature original names hailing back to the Derbyshire countryside where they were developed.

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Products

Arai SZ-R VAS helmet

I'VE SPENT MOST of my life riding in full face helmets, and more recently in open face lids. I always disliked the flip-up types as they were neither one thing nor the other, but I appreciate they have their uses. But full faces don't give the classic experience, while open face lids do, but also with flies, dirt and if it rains, riding gets a little unpleasant. Oh, what to do...

I'd seen our friend and regular contributor Alan Cathcart wear this Arai SZ-R and liked the idea, but until this year Arai had not imported them to the UK for some time. Now they do, and I think I've found my new favourite helmet. It works for my modern Triumph Scrambler just as easily as my old bikes, safety with an Arai is a given for me (I may have, erm, used them for a few occasions..) and the SZ-R comes right around the cheeks for as much coverage as an open face can. Yet the opening is almost perfect; I've had to check more than once I am wearing a helmet as you can hardly see any part, yet just out of your periphery it is there to look after you.

Fit for me is perfect, I don't know I'm wearing it, with or without glasses. And the interior comes out for washing. The visor is so much easier than goggles or pop-studs and acts as a peak when up.

It's optically perfect and despite the top vents and infamous side pods Arai use to mount the visor, it is quieter than the sibling full-face, the RX-7 range. I also thought it would be a nightmare in wet weather, with air coming up from the bottom, but I rode over 100 miles in the rain and there were no issues thanks to the visor being very low, other than a little misting from my breath being routed up via my scarf.

Fact – Arai helmets are ruddy expensive. But over the years I've – unwittingly – used them for their primary function – to protect my head and I've never been let down. They are made by hand, have a lot of thought put into them, including the variable-



density EPS lining and, crucially, they fit my shape perfectly.

You can buy all the replacement parts should you need to and they'll last for years if you look after them. It never ceases to amaze me when I see riders on really expensive bikes, wearing knackered, out of date helmets or cheap crap that I wouldn't use as a flower pot. But it's up to them; I don't have that many brain cells, I choose to look after them.

It all sounds like I'm paid to say it, which I'm not. As journalists we can generally ask for any helmets we like from distributors to test. I've tried and tested nearly all on the market over the last 25 years and I'll admit I always come back to this make.



It's essential to try a helmet before you buy, as we all have different shaped heads, and I've tried some that are superb, but just don't feel comfortable. But

now with the SZ-R I've found my new favourite for every day riding.

■ £529.99
■ Whyarai.co.uk



Shark Race-R pro Carbon Helmet

AS A RELATIVELY new rider I have only tried a few styles, but I have found that the Shark Race-R pro Carbon seems just right for me, as I'm considering how it feels to me, not comparing it to others.

I think the helmet looks great, has an air of quality and is a light weight (1250g) carbon fibre shell with a variety of four vents – two top, one forehead and one chin that can either give air to your mouth or up the inside of the visor (by using a slightly fiddly internal deflector), reflective logos, magnetic D-Lock and a sporty style aerodynamic shell which uses the carbon fibre to give a clean, stylish design feature.

And importantly you can remove and wash the insides – great for make up removal.

When putting the helmet on, you may need to loosen the neck pad which, while it does reduce the draughts and road noise, can make it tight to put on. It's quiet, comfy and the visors are easy to change, but on long journeys the interior leaves some funny round marks on my forehead.

No helmet fits all and the previous ones I've tried like the X-Lite and Duchini felt very different. This gives me a reassuring snug feel, I quickly got used to operating the visor and vents and it is so light. There are loads of different styles and shop around, as the prices are a lot cheaper than the quoted RRP.

Kirsty Garner

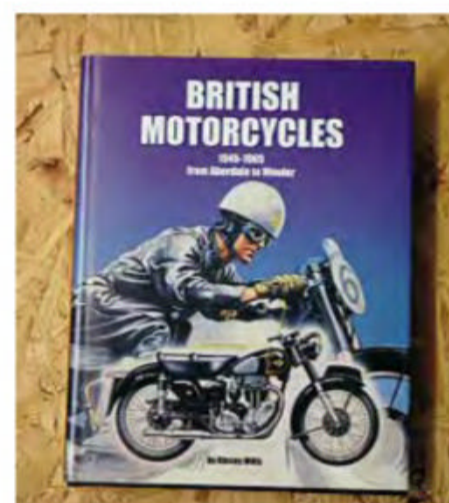
■ RRP £589.99 (but we found them for £349.99)

■ nevis.uk.com



British motorcycles 1945-1965, from Aberdale to Wooler

WITH 600 PAGES this is a big beast of a book! It makes it too long to read from cover to cover and is best used as a reference, and good at that it is. To have so many bikes featured from just a 20 year period is quite something, but it includes great artwork from brochures of the time and solid detail. You have the usual makes and models in there, but in between are some more obscure machines that will have you intrigued. For those getting into classics, it's a great read and will help when you spot a bike you're not sure about. For those more experienced, it is still a



comprehensive, interesting read.

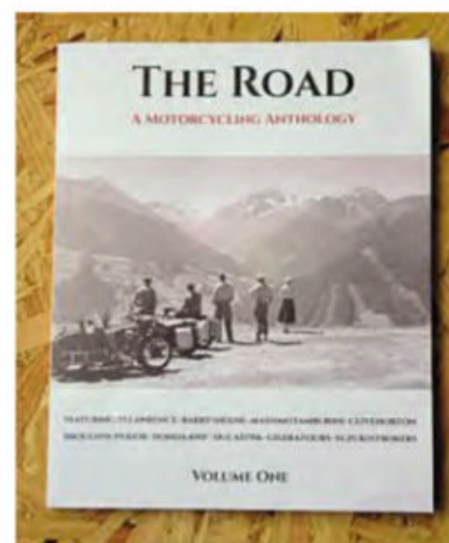
■ £60 (Just £50 for a signed copy if you quote code BB18)

■ herridgeandsons.com

The Road – A Motorcycling Anthology

WHAT'S THIS? AN advert for another bike magazine? Are you mad? I had to share this with you, as it is brilliant, just brilliant. Greg Pullen, Italian classic bike expert wanted to share features that were longer than those in a magazine, but shorter than warranting a book, hence an anthology.

Pullen's previously edited *Benzina*, an Italian-based magazine, but *The Road* has no such self-imposed barriers. T E Lawrence and his Brough Superior mixes with Sheene and his Suzuki two-strokes. Cartoons



mix with photographs, and the writing is sublime.

Issue one is available from the website and issue two should be out sometime around summer. I can't wait.

■ By Greg Pullen

■ £18

■ Theroadanthology.co.uk

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A large selection of piece parts are also available to aid customers who wish to convert a currently unsupported engine.

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www.autocar-electrical.com



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Z400 Twin
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Z550 A1-A3
Z650 B1-B3
Z650 C1-C3
Z650 D1-D3 (SR)
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Z650 F1
Z750 Twin
Z900
Z1, Z1R
Z1000, 1100



RD250A-D
RD350A,B
RD400C,D
R5 350
TX500,
TX650, 650A
XS1, XS1B
XS2
XS250, XS350
XS400, XS500
XS650B-F & SE
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XS750C,D
XS850
YD250, 350
YDS, YDS7
YR5



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CB450D,K
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CJ360T
CL100, CL100S
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CL350
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CL450K0
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GL1000K
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SL100, SL125
SL350
XL100, XL125



CL100
CL100S
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GS850GT
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GT250, GT380
GT550, GT750
T250, GT500



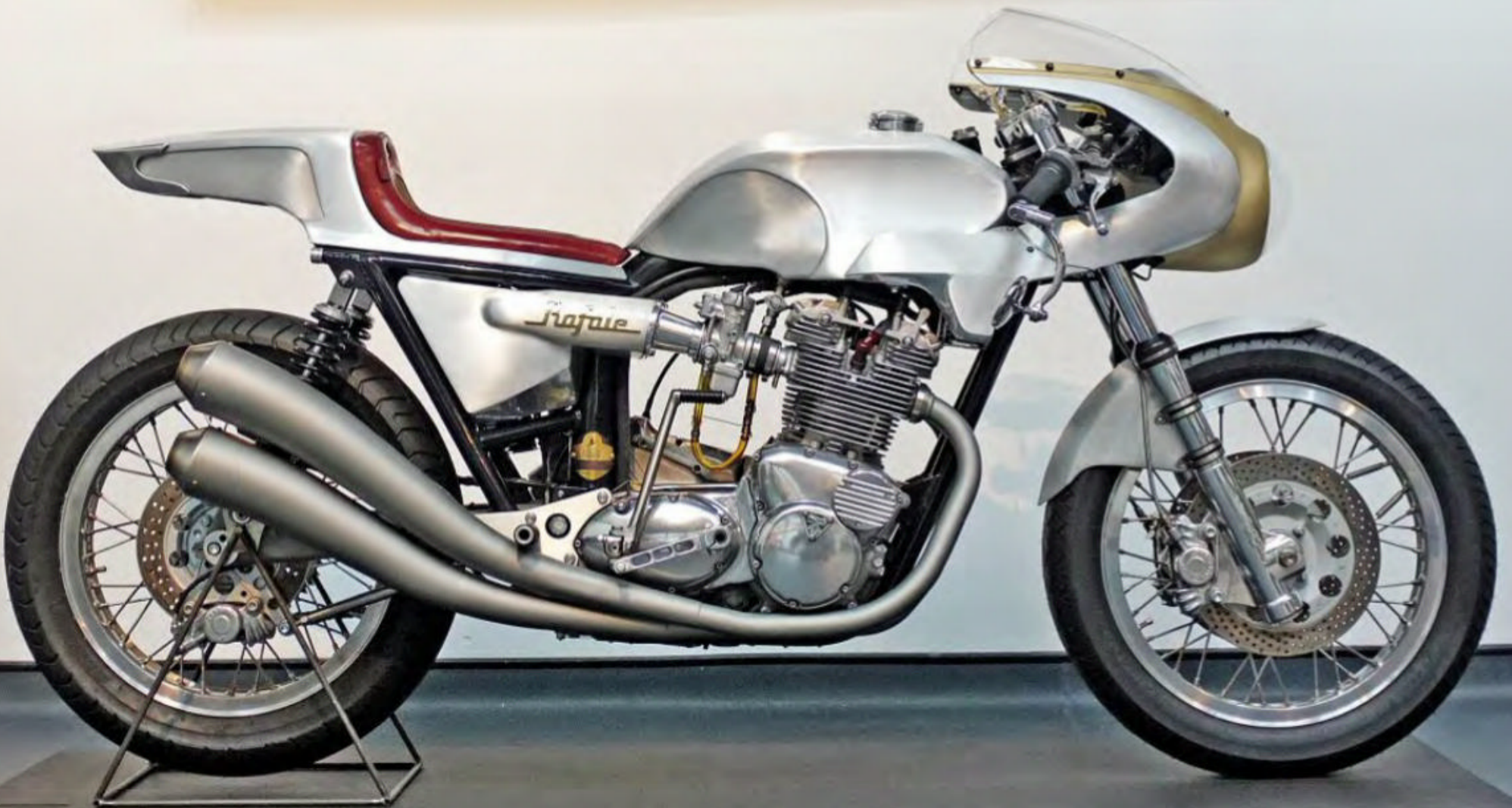
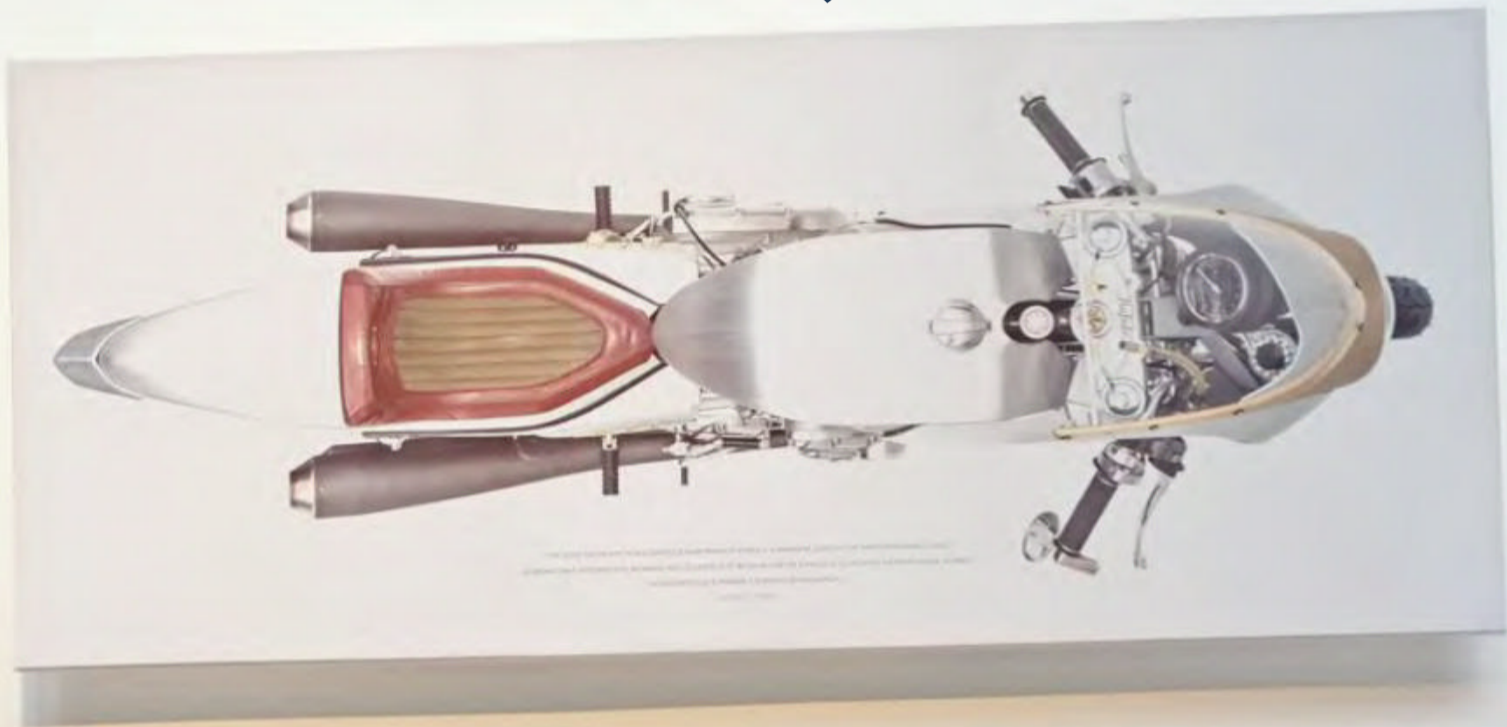
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T4
850
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Bike Shed show 2019

Tobacco Dock, London



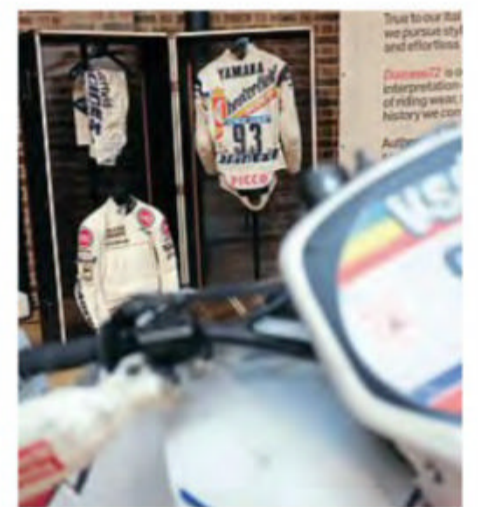


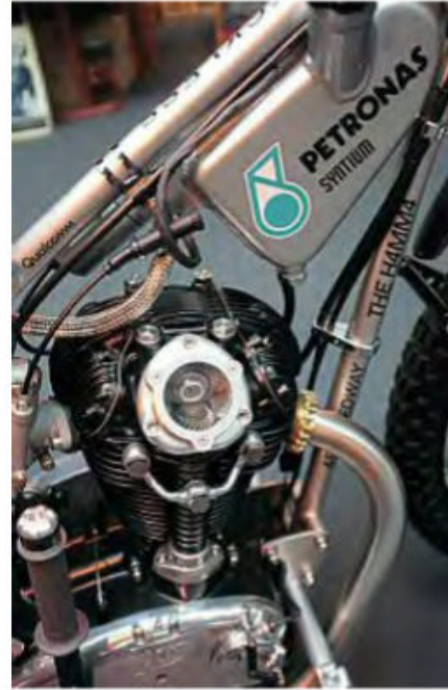
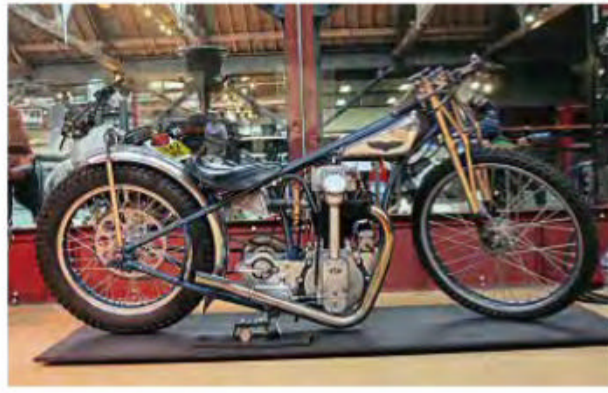
Places to go

THE SEVENTH YEAR RUNNING OF the best UK custom bike show was bigger and better than ever. And the classic and vintage theme was everywhere.

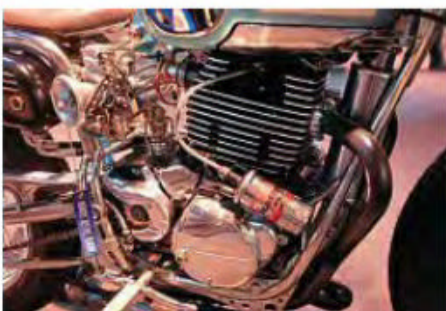
The Bike Shed started as an internet blog, following a modern sportsbike rider, Dutch, through his change to custom bikes and the scene that he found. It gained momentum, (as many others were finding modern bikes not to their taste anymore), grew to a show a few years later, then gained a permanent base in London with somewhere to meet, eat and enjoy bikes; London style.

The show is continually morphing, each year getting bigger, better and of a higher quality.





Gone are the days of stripping air-head BMWs and fitting nonsense tyres – the quality of the bikes this year was truly inspirational. Whether the bikes came from professional builders or keen amateurs, the metalwork, choice of parts and innovative designs were sublime. Some I liked, some I didn't, but all were superbly finished. Most bikes were based on models that are Seventies and newer, but Meriden Triumphs were plentiful, and there was even an NSU-engined speedway-style bike.





The styles become more diverse every year, but the classic-inspiration is evident in most. Even the major manufacturers play their part, like Yamaha and their Yard-built programme, where they invite builders to use a modern model as a base and a freehand to come up with something special, or Triumph, who have encouraged many of their dealers to take a Bobber and let their imagination run wild. In a world where most things are bought off-the-shelf it's great to see, like the company showing the crowds how they shape aluminium using leather sand bags and English wheels.



With a gorgeous venue (Tobacco Dock is a Grade I listed old East London tobacco warehouse with wrought ironwork and vaults), a diverse range of visitors (we saw families as well as actor Tom Hardy looking round), good food, drink, music, clothing and lots and lots of bikes to see, the Bike Shed show was once again, a superb show and a wonderful break from the usual bike shows. **CBC**







CBG Buying guide

Should you be tempted, here are a few tips to stop you getting carried away...

- Speak to those in the know – clubs, owners, specialists. Is this the bike for you?
- Get some quotes – how much are parts, how easy are they to work on and how much will it cost to insure?
- See if you can have a go on one. This may be tricky, but if you have comprehensive insurance a kind owner or dealer may let you try one out.
- If you can't do all the jobs yourself, will your local dealer be prepared to work on it?
- If you're unsure of any of the above, email us at editor@classicbikeguide.com and if we can't help, we'll try to find someone who can.



BSA Rocket Gold Star

Too little, too late or the ultimate evolution?



Yamaha XT500

Do it all, take you anywhere, Yamaha's single bucked the trends



Ducati 250 Desmo

Such a beautiful machine to grace a magazine

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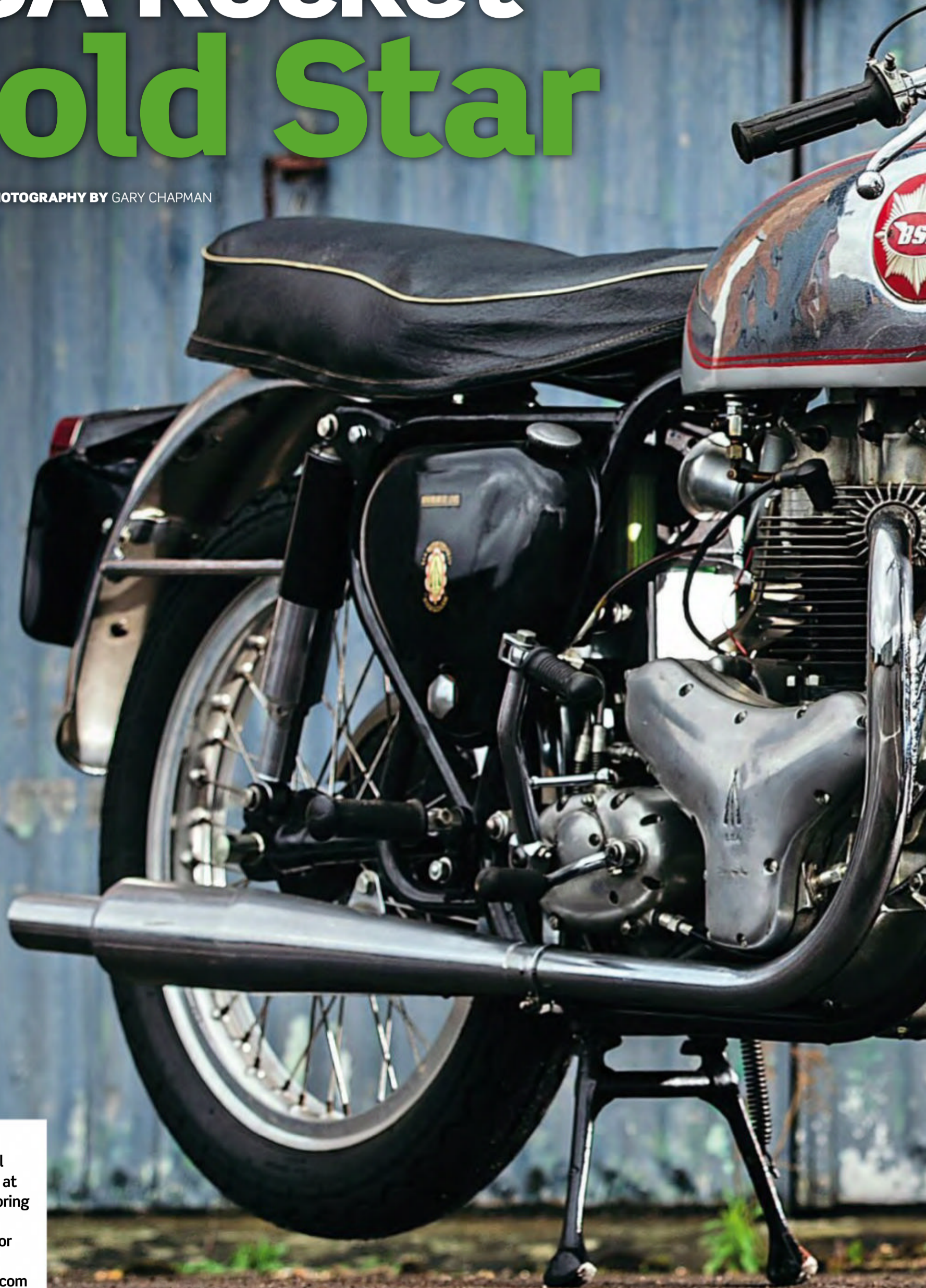
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BSA Rocket Gold Star

WORDS BY OLI PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY CHAPMAN



The bike we see here is a faithful replica and sold at the Bonhams Spring auction at the Stafford show for £6785. www.bonhams.com



WHAT IS IT?

A legendary British supertourer and club racer



WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT IT?

They're stylish, the engine is dependable, and the handling is race-bred



WHAT'S BAD ABOUT IT?

The things that are bad about any early 1960s road bike on today's roads – brakes and electrics. Gearbox and clutch handling are a challenge.

HOW MUCH?

Rocket Gold Stars are the preserve of those with deep pockets. A verified original will cost £18,000-£22,000. A well-built replica can be had from around £6500



I SAW MY FIRST BSA ROCKET GOLD STAR IN THE EARLY 1980s. It was lurking in the back of a barn, covered in dust and bird poop, propped up between a Vincent Comet and a Rapide. Even in such inauspicious surroundings and auspicious company the class of the RGS shone through.

The RGS has poise and a legendary reputation that makes it one of the most desirable BSAs ever made. And yet when it arrived in February 1962, it was already out of date, at least as far as BSA's management were concerned. BSA had not, until 1962, turned out pure racing big twins for the UK market. Tuned off-road twins had appeared in BSA livery in the US, as Hap Alzina, the US West Coast importer had created a tuned version of the Super Rocket, dubbed the Spitfire Scrambler.

In 1959 Eddie Dow, tuner and Gold Star specialist, built the first of 20 bespoke café racers, also based on the Super Rocket. These specials had parts from the Gold Star including clip-ons, rear-sets, close ratio gearboxes and tanks. Dow tried to get BSA interested in building their special at the factory, partly to ensure a continued flow of the Gold Stars his business was based on.

BSA

650 ROCKET GOLD STAR



Competition Equipped



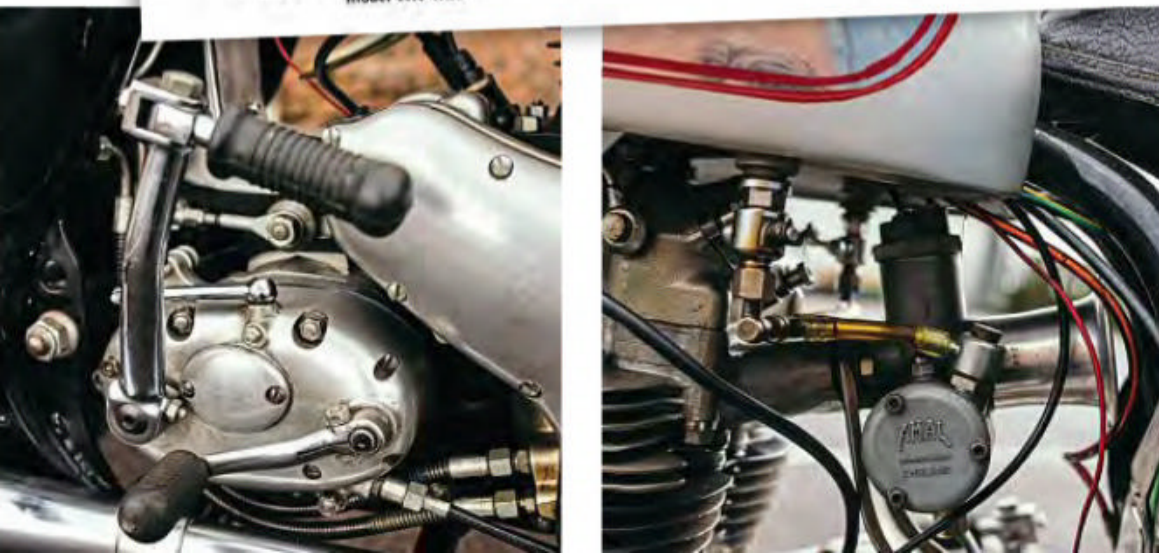
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BSA 650 ROCKET GOLD STAR
model A10 RGS



At first the BSA factory rejected the idea but by 1962 they had come up with the Rocket Gold Star. Whether they were inspired by the Dow conversions or simply decided that a street racer based on the obsolete Gold Star frame and soon to be replaced A10 engine was a good way of using up left over spares is a moot point. Whatever the reason, the Rocket Gold Star that resulted from the work in the design shop became a legend.

With a breathed upon A10 Super Rocket engine in a modified Gold Star frame, the RGS was built to use up some of the stock of A10 engines while production of the A65 and A50 unit twins got into gear. The RGS only stayed in production for 18 months, and once the engines were used up, that was the end of production. The Rocket Gold Star was a fitting end for BSA's pre-unit models. This was no sad end for the A10. While other manufacturers' big twins were reduced to hauling sidecars, or as a lardy tourer at the end of their production runs, the RGS saw the pre-unit BSA twin bow out in full-throated style.

The 46bhp engine had a Spitfire camshaft and had the compression ratio raised to 9.0:1, from the Super Rocket's 8.25:1. The engine was easily tunable to boost

output to 50bhp or more by the simple fitting of what was effectively a straight-through megaphone racing silencer. There were bigger exhaust valves and each engine was bench tested before fitting.

The engine used a magneto ignition with a manual advance/retard, which was shortly to go out of production, if indeed it hadn't already. Electricity was provided by a dynamo, mounted at the front of the engine. There was a single Amal Monobloc carburettor and a Siamese exhaust system, exiting through a single Gold Star silencer.

The forks and front wheel came from the Gold Star too, and as the bike was intended for track and road use, the RGS lost the metal tubular fork shields of the Super Rocket and they were replaced with rubber gaiters secured by clips to short chromed shrouds; a weight reduction method that set the style for café racers for the rest of the decade.

The handlebars were reversible, converting the riding position from a touring stance to a mild racing crouch by turning them upside down. The rubber-mounted instruments were fitted individually on brackets fixed to the fork tops, the rev counter being unique to the RGS and Super Rocket. RGS models either had conventional headlamp brackets which shrouded the top of the forks or, if clip-ons were specified, replaced them with slender brackets and a QD headlamp with a plug and socket to make removal easier for racing purposes. ▶





The standard wheels had eight-inch front brakes. At the rear a seven-inch item was mounted on BSA's signature QD crinkle-edged rear hub. Among BSA factory options were alloy rims and the Gold Star's 190mm alloy front brake with a cast iron inner. Suspension at the rear was by shrouded Girling shocks while at the front the fork springs could be stiffened. Other options included the RRT2 racing gearbox, a five-gallon tank for endurance racing or a two-and-a-half gallon steel or light alloy item for the US scrambler models.

The stock gearbox was an extremely close ratio set-up on the first bikes, which was changed after the first year to make the bikes easier to ride. The footrests could be fitted in the same place as on the Super Rocket, though they could also be rear-set on mountings just behind and below the swing arm spindle with the gear shift reversed.

Although the RGS was kitted out like a production racer, despite BSA's best efforts it couldn't make an impact in the high-profile races like the Thruxton 500 and the Silverstone 1000. But a Rocket Gold Star could reach 60mph in first gear and a test bike was clocked doing 124mph at MIRA. It was easier to ride and more comfortable than the Gold Star, 10mph quicker than the Super Rocket, weighed just 395lbs (179kg) and was faster than its closest rival, Norton's 650SS. The bike's road performance, style and panache meant the lack of high-profile racing success didn't matter to buyers. It was one of the best-looking motorcycles ever made, and for many buyers this was the important thing.

Fewer than 1600 Rocket Gold Stars were built, a number that included 272 650 Gold Star Spitfire Scramblers for the US market. By modern standards you might expect a Rocket Gold Star to have been a premium product at a premium price, yet you could buy a new one at the end of 1963 for £323, which, adjusted for inflation would set you back £6834 at current prices. This would have still been well beyond the budget of your average coffee bar cowboy, but ownership was within dreaming distance at least. A new A65 Rocket cost £320 at the same time.

That Rocket Gold Star I saw in a barn in 1982 never made it into my possession, sadly. Even then people knew what they were worth, and the owner's asking price of £7,000 for all three bikes was well beyond my pocket. I had to stick with my Honda CB200, and continue to dream.





The real thing...

As the reputation of the RGS grew in the years after production finished, so did the tendency to make fakes and replicas, some of which were passed off as the real thing. This was usually done by adding real or reproduction RGS racing parts to a hybrid, using a Gold Star frame with an A10 engine in it. Even more unscrupulous individuals would use the B31/B33 frame or try to pass off the A10 frame as that of an RGS. With a real RGS being much more sought after and valuable than a lookalike, creating these fakes or replicas was, for a few years, a way of making a killing. But these bikes can be spotted by careful observation.

To find out whether a bike on offer is a replica rather than the real thing, the first thing to do is to check the rail on the bottom right of the frame cradle. The Gold Star had a bulge in the rail, needed to stop it fouling the single cylinder engine's oil pump, while the RGS frame rail is straight.

Other frame differences found on non-RGS bikes included a larger hole for the swing arm spindle on the twin's frame, as the A10 had the brake actuating mechanism on the right-hand side, operated by a rod running through the spindle. With a Gold Star rear wheel, the half-width hub is operated on the left. Replicas may have sidecar mountings, thin gauge stand mount plates, tyre pump mounting lugs, a steering lock lug and welded engine mounts. RGS frames were stamped GA10, where all standard A10 frames were stamped GA7.

A real RGS frame has rearset lugs at the bottom of the pillion peg loop, cast engine mounts and was made with heavier gauge steel. On the engine the RGS had staggered fins at the front, and most had HHC stamped on the front of the crankcase to indicate that it had a high compression engine.

Less obvious differences between the RGS and a Gold Star can be found by looking at the mudguards,



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which on the RGS have a beaded edge on the rear guard and at the front of the bike. These six-stay guards are hard to come by. The original tank, by a long way the prettiest, should have chrome panels, with a maroon pinstripe and a silver paint job. The rear numberplate mount should have open sides and was originally fitted to the Bantam of the mid-1950s. Fitting twin carbs, something BSA never thought of as needed, was attempted by tuners of both the original bikes and creators of replicas using aftermarket manifolds, with mixed results, usually negative.

This list is far from exhaustive, but it's a good starting point. Thankfully today fakes are less likely to be passed off as the real thing than they were. This is partly because there's a lot more information available to help you spot a fake. Interestingly, because of the desirability of the RGS among enthusiasts, these replicas, once scorned, can be highly respected today and dealers and sellers are much happier about being scrupulously honest about what they have on offer. An honestly marketed, well-built replica can be worth many thousands of pounds more than a restored A10.



WHAT THE PAPERS SAID

THE ROCKET GOLD STAR was tested by *The Motor Cycle* in November 1962. Taking BSA's new but old sports twin out on the road in terrible weather conditions didn't dampen the tester's enthusiasm. The RGS was: "A scintillating high-performance road burner: good brakes, excellent rider comfort and docile traffic manners. An 85mph top-gear spread speaks volumes for the tractability of this sporting engine," gushed the writer. "And on top of this the 646cc BSA Rocket Gold Star has effortless, surging acceleration through the gears and a tireless 90mph cruising gait."

The weather definitely had an effect on the test, as the report concluded that the 105mph top speed could "certainly have been bettered had the November weather been co-operative."

The tester pointed out that the use of a single carb was a benefit, rather than a hindrance, suggesting about the single

Monobloc: "This is perhaps one of the prime factors in the sweetness of the carburation at the bottom end of the scale." The engine would pull from 800rpm, with "beefy usable power" available from 1500rpm to 6.800rpm.

The challenges of dealing with the Gold Star close ratio gearbox and slipping the clutch were skipped over, while the tank that was filled with 100 octane five-star petrol reportedly failed to deal with ignition pinking at full throttle. The engine was declared to be "not in the turbine smooth category," but was: "No rougher than one would expect of a vertical twin with high kick pistons and was commendably free of any noticeable vibration period," from which one might conclude that it vibrated all the time.

The test bike was supplied with the wheels unbalanced and out of alignment, standard foot rests and a reversed touring handlebar that put too much pressure on the rider's

wrists that was moved to the touring position, and there was a plea for a set of flat bars.

Proving that they made them tough in those days, the tester reported "Straight-ahead steering was precise up to 90mph, but then became progressively lighter until at maximum speed 105mph on a wet road, the front wheel tended to wander slightly. Tightening down the steering damper provided a partial cure." This was as if 105mph on a powerful road bike in the wet with a skittish front end and ribbed tyres was something to be brushed off lightly. Brakes were deemed "good", the seat was comfortable the switchgear "well placed". The lighting "adequate" at full beam and "satisfactory" at dip. The Rocket Gold Star, the report concluded: "is that rare bird, a high-performance motorway express which is almost equally at home in less exciting urban surroundings" **CBG**



BSA ROCKET GOLD STAR 1962-63

ENGINE: Air-cooled ohv twin **BORE/STROKE:** 70mm x 84mm **CAPACITY:** 646cc **POWER:** 46bhp **LUBRICATION:** Dry sump **IGNITION:** Magneto **CARBURETTOR:** Amal Monobloc **TRANSMISSION:** Chain **GEARBOX:** Four-speed foot change **FRAME:** Twin downtube duplex cradle **FRONT SUSPENSION:** Telescopic forks, hydraulic damping **REAR SUSPENSION:** Swinging arm. Twin three-way adjustable shocks **FRONT BRAKE:** 8in/203mm sls drum **REAR BRAKE:** 7in/177mm sls drum **TYRES:** 3.25 x 19 Front 3.50 x 19 Rear **WHEELBASE:** 57in/1432mm **GROUND CLEARANCE:** 6in/152mm **SEAT HEIGHT:** 30 in/762mm **WEIGHT:** 415lb/188kg

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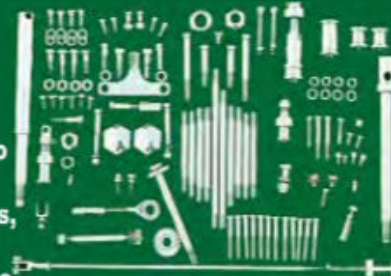
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Yamaha XT500

The bike that started the adventure bike trend is still a great bike

WORDS BY OLI HULME PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHIPPY WOOD

BY 1973, WHEN THE LAST BSA B50 and Triumph Adventurer off-rovers had rolled off the production line, the big four-stroke off-roader was thought to be dead. To seriously take to the dirt, if you wanted plenty of power you went for a two-stroke single of the hairy-chested kind, motorcycles that would eat the unwary for breakfast. Peaky, terrifying machines like Kawasaki's 350 Bighorn, Yamaha's DT400 or Suzuki's TS400.

Only Honda were turning out a serious mass-market four-stroke single, the XL350, which was a trifle anaemic by comparison with the fire-breathing two-strokes.

Nobody, however, had told Yamaha engine designer Shiro Nakamura the big single was no longer needed and three years later his efforts resulted in a motorcycle that started the adventure bike trend. All those large off-rovers with aluminium luggage you see today can trace their origins back to Nakamura and Yamaha's efforts to build a big trailie that made a great road bike.

A chunky four-stroke launched at the end of 1975 and introduced to European markets in 1976, the XT was like nothing that had been seen before. The engine of the XT500 at the heart of things was an all-new single, well put together on modern machinery. Dated, poor-quality electrics and enormous flywheels were a thing of the past. The conrod was short, the barrel oversquare. The XT's engine had a single, chain-driven overhead camshaft and only two valves with a flat-topped piston.

There was a light, yet enormous clutch with watch-like construction and 15 plates, with the old-style chain driven primary drive replaced by gears. The crankcase was vertically split and oil-tight while the pressed together crankshaft, camshaft and transmission ran in ball, needle and roller bearings.

A heavy but small diameter flywheel was used and the points were driven from the crankshaft using an idler gear, rather than Honda's use of the camshaft, making the top end of the XT neat and tidy. It was only Yamaha's second four-stroke engine.

Nakamura followed it up with the XS750 and XS1100 powerplants. ▶





WHAT IS IT?

The first modern off-road musclebike



GOOD POINTS?

They're useful off-road, easy to ride on the road, softly powerful, easy to work on and reliable



BAD POINTS?

Starting can be a challenge, there are a few minor weak spots and some bits are hard to find

COST?

A basket case will cost you £2,000

An oily rag runner or restoration project
£4,000 plus

A good quality show bike
£7,000-10,000



'Although the XT today has a reputation for being fearsomely difficult to start, it was built for a generation brought up on kick-starts who either had no problems or accepted them as being part of motorcycle ownership'

The XT's equipment was borne out of the company's experience making two-stroke off-riders. There were rubber mounted indicators, a neat and tiny headlight, and instruments that actually worked. The petrol tank was steel at first, but this was quickly replaced by a shapely double skinned and aluminium tank for weight saving purposes.

The exhaust system was tucked away and painted black and there was no chrome on this motorcycle. The wheels had alloy rims and the front drum brake, while small, was simple and effective.

The dry sump engine carried its oil in the frame, just as BSA/Triumph had used on their last singles and twins. Like the British singles the oil filler cap was neatly positioned just aft of the headstock and topped off a box section frame top tube with the reservoir running down into the rear downtubes.

The first XT used a flywheel magneto, points and coil ignition set-up borrowed from Yamaha's big two-strokes and a six-volt electrical system. The Yamaha was a better starter than the big singles that had come before it, with the kick-start geared to make the job easier. Although the XT today has a reputation for being fearsomely difficult to start, it was built for a generation brought up on kick-starts who either had no problems or accepted them as being part of motorcycle ownership.

Yamaha never tried to fit an electric start to the OHC engine, not even in recent years when a softened-up 400cc version of the XT's engine was still being used on the SR400 roadster. Nakamura's engine, or versions of it, had stayed in production for four decades.





Because the engine was shorter than the old British singles, the compact unit meant that the bike could have more ground clearance than those old thumpers, though by today's standards the bottom of the engine was quite close to the ground. The first XTs had an exhaust downtube that ran along the front downtube, looping along the line of the cradle frame up to a box tucked away at the right-hand side upper rear.

1977 models saw this get a redesign with the pipe running in a tight curve along the top of the crankcase after early users found the earlier route was vulnerable when the bike was used off road. The new pipe allowed the use of a more substantial alloy bash-plate. The exhaust, being painted rather than chromed, suffered badly from rust worm, and a good

original pipe is worth a king's ransom.

The suspension was of its era for Japanese machines, that is to say a little squidgy at both ends, a concession to the bike's main purpose which was as a road and green-lane bike for America rather than a serious enduro bike. This was despite the message on the side panels, which were mock racing numberplates bearing the Enduro XT logo.

Later improvements included stronger

fork yokes and work to the headstock and forks to improve road handling with the fork spindle moved to the front from the base of the forks. There was a longer chain guard and flutes in the front mudguard. These were to aid engine cooling, and not, as some said at the time, to stop the wind catching it and flipping the bike backwards when wheelieing.

The engine got bigger cooling fins as more riders started to use the XT for long distance treks rather than brief runs into the hills, the alloy tank became polished, and the big wheels got stylish gold anodised wheel rims. While all of this was going on Yamaha stuck resolutely to the use of a 6v system and its consequently weedy headlight until 1986 when they finally gave it a 12v upgrade.

Yamaha had tried to replace the XT with the more mechanically complex XT550, which featured a four-valve head, twin carbs and a monoshock, but still no electric start. The old bruiser swept away the young pretender and the 550 only lasted just a few years, while the XT stayed in various catalogues around the world until 1989. The XT500E, with an updated XT550 engine, a big tank and electric start, replaced it until 1996.

SPECIFICATION:

MANUFACTURED: 1976-1989 **ENGINE:** Air-cooled ohc single **BORE/STROKE:** 87mm x 84mm **CAPACITY:** 499cc **COMPRESSION:** 9:1 **POWER:** 32bhp@5,500 rpm **LUBRICATION:** Dry sump, oil in frame **IGNITION:** Coil and points **CARBURETTOR:** Mikuni 34mm **TRANSMISSION:** Chain **GEARBOX:** Five-speed foot change **FRAME:** single downtube cradle **FRONT SUSPENSION:** Telescopic forks **REAR SUSPENSION:** Swinging arm, twin shocks **FRONT BRAKE:** 6.3in (160mm) drum **REAR BRAKE:** 6in (150mm) sls drum **TYRES:** 3.00 x 21 front 4.00 x 18 rear **WHEELBASE:** 56in (1420mm) **SEAT HEIGHT:** 33ins/840mm **DRY WEIGHT:** 319lb/145kg





Buying guide

Although the original XT wasn't considered by most pundits to be a serious off-roader, that didn't stop it becoming one in skilled hands. In the Paris-Abidjan-Nice desert challenge at the end of 1976 18 XT500s entered and 10 finished, with one winning with Gilles Comte at the handlebars.

A highly modified XT won the 1977 World Motocross Championship and the bike became a legend when Cyril Neveu won the first and second Paris-Dakar rallies, leading four XT500s home in 1980.

The XT500 is a bike designed for America's deserts that became hugely popular on the European off-road scene, powered by an engine that became much-loved on the Japanese home market and lasting decades in the SR400. There was nothing like the XT500 before its launch and much of what followed paled in comparison. The XT was the first of a wave of big off roaders with modern equipment. In the process it managed to not only save the big single from oblivion but created a whole new genre of adventure motorcycles.



'A highly modified XT won the 1977 world motocross championship and the bike became a legend when Cyril Neveu won the first and second Paris-Dakar rallies, leading four XT500s home in 1980'



TAKE TO THE HILLS

IT HAS TO be at least 30 years since I last rode a big Yamaha single, the XT's sibling, the SR500 roadster. That particular bike was a bit of a pain to start, so I must admit the idea of kicking over the XT was a bit intimidating. Back then I was less bulky than I am today, when I have more weight available to push the kick-start downwards.

Mark, the owner of this fine example of an early XT, one of five in his stable, admitted that the bike could be a bit hard to start, especially if its tiny 6v battery was low on juice.

After Mark kicking it a few times failed to bring the beast to life, it was clear the XT was in a bit of a mood, so we left it to get used to the idea that it was time for a ride and we tried again after a cuppa, but even a short attempt at a bump start wasn't a success, managing only to lock up the back wheel. Another former owner had told me that the XT would eat plugs for breakfast.

There is an official way to start an XT. On the right-hand end of the camshaft there's a tiny glass window. Using the neatly designed decompressor lever on the left-hand bar, you turn the engine over using the kick-start, until a mark on the end of the cam visible through the window indicates you are on top dead centre. Push the lever through 90 degrees, return it to the top, disengage the decompressor and then, with no throttle, give it a good hefty swing on the kick-start to get things going.

Yamaha's own history records that the decompressor was developed when Yamaha Motor's technical director tested

the prototype and wrenched his ankle when he tried to kick it.

A slight technical issue with Mark's bike, possibly down to the low charge on the battery, meant that if you tried to start it while holding the front brake on you sent what little juice there was in the battery to the rear brake light, or possibly down to an intermittent short, meant that despite the magneto ignition the electricity needed to get it to fire wasn't available.

Fortunately, the arrival of photographer Chippy, the owner of a Honda XR650 and used to starting a Japanese big single, got it going after a couple of kicks, and it settled down to a comfortable tickover.

It was surprisingly vibration-free for such a big single, though I was concerned that it might be a bit of a handful on the dirt, what with its weight and the enormous 21-inch front wheel. And then I sat on it, engine softly thumping away and realised my concerns were unfounded. Combining my dusty memories, Mark's advice and Chippy's technique I was able to start it now it was warmed up a bit, and with some nice fresh petrol squirting in through the big carb and the oil warmed up and circulating things looked good.

The first thing to do was to get the XT off-road and take some pictures and the target was a narrow lane, just wide enough for the bike. The path went straight up a hill, and the surface was covered in dust, gravel and dry grass, and was surprisingly steep in places.

I headed for the hills. Well, hill. Recent ▶



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experience with a modern road/trail bike off-road had proved it to be skittish in the dirt, and the idea of dropping someone else's classic wasn't one that I wanted to contemplate.

I slipped the clutch, headed for the track, and to my complete astonishment the XT just stomped up the hill without so much as a twitch. The thing was sure-footed with all the engine's grunt going to the back wheel in a nice steady flow, with the short distance covered swiftly.

Riding it back down the hill a few pictures later was equally unfussy. I suspect that anything more than a little green laning might have shown up some flaws, but for gentle mud plugging it was in its element. Now it was time to take the big Yam on the road. The XT grunted off, thundering away down country lanes with confidence.

A bit of poorly maintained and deserted tarmac is ideal for an XT. Despite its size and towering seat height of 33 inches, the XT is quite low once you are on it, as the seat is big, soft and comfortable. It's one of

those bikes you sit in, rather than on. As everything slopes up to the tall front end, you aren't exposed too much to the wind and the bars are just the right width, not too narrow to control it on the dirt, not so wide that on the road slight movements can cause unexpected change of direction.

It's powerful enough to keep you out of trouble, it's stable and it rumbles along at a remarkable rate, forgiving ham-footed gear changes thanks to the big gobs of torque coming from the back wheel. It's got an impressive turning circle too, able to easily turn through 180 degrees on a lane just wide enough for a tractor. The equipment is good enough to make this 40-year-old machine perfectly capable in modern traffic.

There are lots of them about, a reasonable stock of new parts is available and there are plenty of second-hand spares too, thanks to the number resting in sheds. It's not perfect, the painted bare metal exhausts are hard, or expensive, to come by, as are items of trim like the many steel exhaust heat shields dotted around the system, and the toolbox suspended on the

rear frame rail which is just asking to be ripped off by an errant branch or be crushed by a rock in a tumble.

Problems with top end lubrication resulted in aftermarket external oil lines to the rockers being developed. The legendary challenge of starting them is one that puts some potential buyers off, though a purposeful mindset can overcome this and 12v and electronic ignition conversions for the earlier models can be found. You'll be lucky to find a roadworthy one for less than £4000, and a minter can set you back as much as £10,000. The XT is a big comfy teddy bear of a motorcycle that's capable of a growl or two on the street or in the dirt. And it will take you round the world, if you ask it nicely.

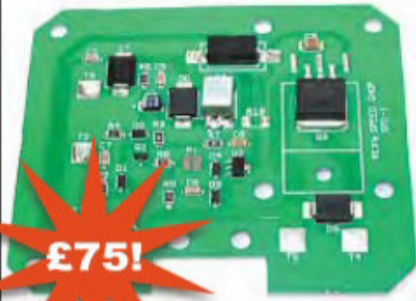
Mark expressed personal bemusement at his ownership of five of the big Yams. "I'm really not sure how I ended up with so many of them, or why. I just really like them."

■ Thanks to Mark Turner for lending us his fine XT500



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Ducati 250 DESMO

WORDS BY OLI

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHIPPY (MRS DOUBTFIRE) WOOD

DESMO IS A WORD THAT MEANS EVERYTHING TO Ducati aficionados. It's the thing that makes Ducati's engines special. Born out of their racing programme, Ducati's Desmodromic valve actuation system, has valves that are both opened and closed by cam followers, rather than relying on coiled springs.

The advantage of Desmo valves is that at high revs the valve actuation stays much more precise and prevents valve float, allowing for a much tighter valve overlap. Desmodromics were not a Ducati invention. Designers had been dabbling with the idea since 1889 when Daimler-Benz patented a Desmo-type system. Versions were made by JAP, Mercedes, Norton and MV Agusta. But it was Ducati that built the first mass-market engine using Desmodromic principles. The first Ducati Desmo engine arrived in 1956 when a 125 with Desmo valve operation won the Swedish Grand Prix.

There followed 10 years of development of the Desmo engine by Ducati's design genius Fabio Taglioni on the track, which was where most of the hunt for speed took place in the Fifties and Sixties. In 1967 Ducati launched the wide-case single, first on the track as the 250 and 350 Sport Corsa Desmo or SCD incorporating the new crankcase design, while the road model was launched in 1968. Then, in 1969 road versions finally arrived in the showrooms.

The engine was dubbed the wide case because the front rear of the crankcases had been widened to fit a wider front and rear frame loop. Wide case engines had a vertically split aluminium crankcase with the cylinder slightly inclined, by 10°. The camshaft was driven by a shaft using straight cut bevel gears from the crankshaft.

Fabio Taglioni and his team took the opportunity afforded by the redesign to incorporate a stronger connecting rod and big-end bearing and to increase the capacity of the lubrication system. There was a wet sump, the increased crankcase space reducing the chances of oil leaks, with the five-speed gearbox integrated in the crankcase that held a wet clutch. The single-down tube tubular steel frame used the engine as a stressed member, with no lower frame rails.

The racers had featured three cams, but these first road bikes used a single camshaft with both opening and closing lobes for each valve and hairpin valve springs, which were used to make the engine easier to start and were borrowed from Ducati's earlier 160 Monza. These Mk3 Desmo Models that arrived in the UK in 1969, were visually identical to the original Mk3 Singles, which had more conventional valve





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HOW MUCH?

They are hard to find, especially at the bottom end of the market. Expect to pay anything from £10,000 for a good runner to £18,000 for a restored example. Good replicas start at around £6000



gear, if anything on a Ducati single can be described as conventional.

With uncharacteristic Italian understatement, the only way to tell the difference between a Desmo and a standard Mk3, was the letter D on the side panels, and a different colour scheme. The 250 Desmo had a top speed of 93mph and when fitted with a factory megaphone exhaust, it had a claimed top speed of 99mph. This was impressive stuff for a four-stroke single, and those few Ducati owners on L-plates had the bragging rights that they owned the world's fastest road-going 250 until the late 1970s and the arrival of Suzuki's GT250 X7 twin.

Development of the Desmo single as a road bike continued. The Desmos were offered with optional touring bars, but few riders wanted them. Far more likely would be the purchase of a racing kit with a race cam, jets, a megaphone exhaust and a fairing. The Desmo tank had twin filler caps, Dell'Orto carbs, a white-faced rev counter mounted on the right-hand headlight bracket, and clip ons. The first Desmos also had stock footpegs, which made for an unorthodox riding position, until the buyer had saved up for a pair of rearsets.

In 1971 a motorcycle was launched that is so beautiful it still sends people weak at the knees. Known simply as the 250, 350 or 450 Desmo, the tank was a slender metal flake silver fibreglass offering, and the Australian press dubbed it the 'Silver Shotgun'. In 1973 there was a new seat and

side covers, and while the engine was unchanged, there were major updates to the running gear. There were factory rearsets, the left footpeg flipping up to allow clearance for the left foot kickstart. There were beefed up 35mm Marzocchi forks with a double-sided Grimeca single leading shoe drum brake at the front and Borrani 18in alloy wheel rims. There was Aprilia switchgear and a chromed Aprilia headlight with a tiny peak and the speedometer in the shell, which was hard to see when locked into a racing crouch, as it was obscured by the steering damper. The tail-light was the tiny item used on the 750 GT.

Ducati engaged Leopold Tartarini of Italjet to give the Desmo another refresh, and the final version, available in 1974, was styled after the new 750 Sport. The single had a steel tank in the same striking yellow with black stripe paint as the twin and a larger glass fibre rear mudguard and seat hump. Inside the engine there was a bigger crankpin. The headlight mounted speedometer and add-on rev counter were replaced by a tiny pair of Smiths clocks in an elevated binnacle. The top speed remained the same, as efforts to wring any more power from the engine stalled. The 450 Desmo in standard trim nudged 100mph. The very last Desmo single, in 1974, was available with a Brembo disc and Ceriani forks in place of the Marzochis, with an extra four spokes in the front wheel. Engines were hand-built, and the rockers polished. The electrical system was still 6v, but the bike had electronic ignition. The single engine was an incredible piece



of engineering and extremely expensive to make. Though it wasn't that powerful in the 250 version, it was a match for anything else, and combining it with Ducati's genius at frame design meant it was the bike to beat on the track or the street.

These last 600 250 Desmos combined a lightweight frame and engine package with high quality and stiff suspension, quick steering and excellent brakes that were way better than anything fitted to its lightweight rivals, whether drum or disc. The ride was a world away from shifting a big Ducati L-twin around. These were the qualities that made the 250 Desmo so quick in the real world and helped build the Bologna factory's reputation for being the builder of some of the finest sports bikes around.

The Desmo single was getting a little dated by 1974. It was expensive and complex to build and packed with issues, mostly caused by ancillary parts of variable quality. The single left the range at the end of the year, partly due to the realisation that the big 450 had reached the limit of its development, and something new was needed, especially in the US.

Unfortunately, that something new was a 500 parallel twin that was poorly received and Ducati's reputation for building fine middleweight sports bikes did not recover until the launch of the Desmo-equipped Pantah 500.

The Desmodromic system born in the single would become synonymous with Ducati, which still uses the set-up on its L-twin bikes. ▶





MOTORCYCLE OR WORK OF ART?

RICH LLEWELLIN OF DUCATI SPECIALISTS LOUIGI Moto built the stunning and multiple award-winning Ducati 250 Desmo you can see here. Rich is a bit of Ducati obsessive, making engines of great beauty and incredible mechanical sophistication, including developing many engine refinements, such as a redesigned Desmo single cylinder head that is so finely balanced it can do away with the hairpin valve springs.

Originally this bike was supplied and maintained by the legendary Ducati dealership Mick Walker Motorcycles and Rich extensively restored the Desmo to period perfect specification using many new old-stock parts, including a full engine rebuild. Rich has also built an immaculate 250 racer, combining narrow case and wide case parts, that was raced at the Classic TT last year.

The 250 Desmo, with its original frame and engine numbers, is one of the rarest of all Ducati Desmo singles ever made and might be the finest example of its kind. It was fitted with the Grimeca brake, as Rich preferred it to the Brembo disc, both as a piece of equipment and for its appearance.

The restoration is an amazing piece of work by a motorcycle artist. Perfect from tail hump to front wheel, it's hard to look at without feeling something stirring in your soul. Rich's favourite part of the machine's aesthetics is the sexy, swooping curve around the front of the petrol tank. "It's the way it kicks up at the front. It just looks exactly right."

However, there is a problem for the average rider. While many complain that bikes are too tall for the short in stature, the problem on the Desmo is the opposite. You'll need short legs to be able to get your knees into a comfortable position, and for me they ended up somewhere about my armpits, while the clip-ons are incredibly low. If you didn't have curvature of the spine before you rode it, you certainly would after a few months in the saddle. If ever a motorcycle was built for slim, short and lithe riders, this is it. It'll be hard work to ride, and it will need to be ridden regularly too, to keep the engine in trim and everything working properly, which means that its beauty will require continuous care to keep it from deteriorating. You can almost understand why some become lounge ornaments and museum exhibits.

Genuine Desmos command premium prices, and Desmo Replicas are a popular conversion. You can spot the difference between a Desmo and a non-Desmo engine by looking at the cam cover on the left-hand side. The real thing has the word Desmo on the four-sided cover, while non-Desmos have a curvier profile. Rich sold this Ducati last year, for around half the price of a sporting L-twin from the same period. ▶



"You'll need short legs to get your knees into a comfortable position, and for me they ended up somewhere about my armpits, while the clip-ons are incredibly low."



THE SHIPLOAD THAT NEARLY SCUPPERED DUCATI

WHEN THE DESMO SINGLES ARRIVED IN UK showrooms in 1969, Ducati had a tarnished reputation in the UK.

The official importer, Vic Camp, had developed the brand as a supplier of specialist sports bikes for a select clientele at premium prices. The trouble started in 1967 when Ducati shipped 3500 small capacity bikes to its US importer, Berliner Brothers of New Jersey. These bikes, mostly 160 Monzas, were not ideal for the US market, which wanted big bikes.

Berliner was also the AMC importer, selling Matchless and Nortons in the US and was suffering from the ongoing collapse of the British industry and running out of money. This was a change of fortunes, as Berliner had tried to buy Ducati a few years previously and had paid for part of the development of a prototype big V4 Ducati Apollo for the US market that never went into production. Berliner Brothers rejected the entire shipment of small Ducatis as they already had a stock of unsold bikes.

Still committed to buying the shipment, Berliner leant on their supplier of AMC bikes in the UK, Bill Hannah, telling him that if he didn't take the Ducati stock off their hands, they wouldn't buy any more Matchless bikes from him. Hannah, backed into a corner, but at the same time seeing a money-making opportunity, took the shipment and distributed them himself, seriously affecting Vic's business and flooding the market. These bikes ended up in unofficial British dealerships that had no spares back-up, which damaged Ducati's reputation. Vic refused to sell spares to anyone who had bought a Hannah imported bikes. One result of this was that in 1970 you could

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To help out buyers, dealer and author Mick Walker bought up a large quantity of the unsold bikes to strip for spares, supplying the orphaned UK Ducati owners with what they needed to keep their bikes on the road, and establishing his own successful Ducati dealership in the process. It took a few years for Ducati's reputation to recover in the UK. Not that Ducati in Italy cared, as they were having their own financial worries and the company was taken over by the government. To bring the story full circle Mick became the official Ducati spares importer in the mid-1970s.

Thanks to Rich Llewellyn for providing this Desmo for our pictures. If you have a more modern Ducati and you want it to be looked after properly, contact Rich at louigimoto.com. Just don't expect him to answer the phone every time and try not to ask him to fix your Multistrada... 

1974 DUCATI 250 DESMO

ENGINE: OHC single with a bevel drive cam and Desmodromic valve operation

BORE AND STROKE: 74 x 57.8mm **CAPACITY:** 249cc **COMPRESSION**

RATIO: 10:1 **CARBURETTORS:** Dell'Orto 29mm **BRAKES:** Front Grimeca

2ls Drum/Brembo disc, rear drum **TYRES:** 3.25 x 18in front, 3.50 x 18in

rear **WHEELBASE:** 1360mm (54in) **WEIGHT:** 127kg (280lb)



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STEVE COOPER

LESS IS MORE, SO STEVE THINKS

Ever noticed how every period Yamaha not sold here doesn't feature the ovoid rear light?

"A significant proportion of us tend to inhabit fringes many never venture anywhere near; let alone to."

FOLLOWING HOT ON THE HEELS OF SUCH TRITE TV trivia as Cash In The Attic may we suggest a new show called Shit In the Shed. Apologies for the profanity but if you have cable/satellite TV then you already know that junk sells; where there's muck there's brass as the saying goes.

I've now had my suspicions confirmed that the classic motorcycle scene is spinning spectacularly off its axis. Folk will buy the most bizarre, careworn, damaged or even ruined 'stuff' and yet there's a tautological truism to most of this. We are all unquestionably classic bike fans but a significant proportion of us tend to inhabit fringes many never venture anywhere near; let alone to.

I have an unhealthy obsession with sub-250cc machines yet have little if any affinity for mopeds. Anywhere between 90 and 200cc has me getting all unnecessary and especially so if the subject matter is Japanese. Show me a box of used small Yamaha twin parts and I'll be happy.

Now you might, quite rightly, think that the focus of my time and money is odd to say the least, unless, of course, you too are similarly cursed.

Just a decade ago who would have countenanced the fact that Puch Maxi mopeds would become collectable? Basic transport for grannies and district nurses in the 1970s these odd little fellas are now very much in vogue as evidenced by a feature within these hallowed pages not so long ago. And it's not just the Maxi model either, which explains why I had more enquires than Puch parts when I accidentally stumbled across some closing dealer stock. Everything I had sold and, to my utter amazement, even a book of suggested retail prices was snapped up!

And in amongst the Puch stuff was some even more obscure Yamaha step-through parts that hailed from the time when Yamaha was still playing catch-up with Honda's ubiquitous Cub. Who would have thought that a leg shield fitting kit for a Yamaha U5 actually had a commercial value? All of which goes to show... err... something.

The rise and rise of small bikes previously scorned, derided and ignored is now something of a phenomena. Riders, enthusiasts and

restorers are all waking up to the less egotistical, more esoteric, machines. There is a very genuine move away from the narcissistic, look-at-me, high end stuff to real world, every day accessible, two wheelers and it's something that's not going to end anytime soon. If you doubt any of this look at a Facebook page entitled 'Great Fun on Small Bike'; loads of people having the most improbable adventures, cracking days out, quality shed time etc. etc. with small capacity machines.

On the whole, small motorcycles are cheaper to buy, run and maintain; even better they're not massively expensive to insure either and add in the 'Historic Vehicle' over-40 rules and they're even MoT and Road Fun Licence exempt! Seriously, what more could you ask for?

And there's another, very valid, reason why small bikes are on the up. They are remarkably better at not showing their age than us lot. Chances are any tiddler will still be up for a serious thrash, even if their jockeys aren't. The motorcycling demographic is getting older and those riders carrying the largest numbers are often in need of something easier to manoeuvre, start and ride. A Thruxton Velo or Gold Star Beeza may look the business, but factor in a liberal dose of arthritis and many of these steeds are likely to be staying in the stable.

It's little different within the Japanese scene – the 20-something of the Sixties who went into debt for a brand-new 1970 CB750 is now 70-plus and those big old Hondas can be a genuine pain to move about.

Small bikes and their parts are being hoovered up at a fairly aggressive rate by an ageing band of enthusiasts and prices are beginning to rise appreciably. What was a £400 project a decade ago has now become a four figure 'pile of potential'. I know this simply because I, like so many others, am fuelling this rise in popularity. That said, the bargains are still out there if you are prepared to do some legwork and look for something that appeals.

Perhaps just one word of caution here? Although small capacity machines are generally cheaper to own, run, repair and the like, they aren't appreciably cheaper to restore... I've yet to find a chrome plater who bases his prices around the cubic capacity of the parts he's working on! **CBG**

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

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PAUL MILES

THE LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE MOTORCYCLIST

Old bikes don't necessarily mean you're limited to short journeys, finds Paul

"I then asked him what's the most miles he'd ridden in a day – 1600 was the reply."

AS RIDERS, I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY WE ARE perceived by the great washed as being a trifle odd. Why dress up in all that smelly bike gear they ask, getting cold and wet (or very occasionally hot and bothered), when you could be in a nice car with heated seats or air conditioning?

Why, in a car you can even chat to your significant other for hours on end about upcoming DIY projects you still haven't done (because you're always too busy with that blimmin' bike!) and eat travel sweets as Snooze FM plays another floor filler.

Bearing in mind the likelihood of even one of those scenarios being true, and it's usually most of them, I consider the 'why not use a car instead' question to be largely vacuous. I ride motorcycles for lots of reasons and one of them is the simple joy to be gained by not having to listen to a passenger, or some deluded regional jock who persists in thinking Howard Stern wasn't all that, really. I love the solitude, the 'motorcycle emptiness' of riding, being at one with the machine and nature as we power along the road. For about 45 minutes.

I've ridden many miles in my time, including trips abroad and urgent dashes to a relative or friend hundreds of miles away; we all have. But now, a long journey, and this astride a relatively modern motorcycle mind, is about 150 miles. At about fill 'er up time I simply have to stop, grab a coffee, check my phone and make use of the, ahh... facilities. Even better, now my tastes have increasingly leaned towards ancient flat tankers with one gallon tanks, the altogether more satisfactory 45 minute break for fuel and coffee has become my new normal. The welcome extra relief to my backside provided by such frequent stopping is neither here nor there, am I not a seasoned girder-forked hero?

I was happy with this self-imposed limit on my riding and aware that it still exceeded the majority of my biking buddies. My round trips to London (don't go there, they hate motorcycles and you're forced to drive an electric milk float) are about 250 miles and after a day like that I'm ready for a nice cup of tea and bed. In fact, I'd go as far as to suggest 200-250 miles is the most any of us are likely to ride in a single day without unduly stressing both man and machine. Then I met John.

John Young is a man I've 'almost' known for a decade. We've exchanged messages, spoken on the telephone, nearly met at shows and events several times, but we've never actually managed to meet in person, until today. He doesn't even especially like the sort of bikes I enjoy, preferring to do most of his riding on Triumph triples ancient and modern. And he looks entirely normal, unremarkable even, just a regular bloke. But with a posterior made from Ferrous materials.

You see John rides his chosen bikes for very long distances. A regular competitor in long-distance 'iron butt' events and my long-day-in-the-saddle 250 miles would be little more than a warm up.

A few years back he took part in the US Iron Butt rally, an event demanding the entrants visit all 48 mainland states of America. That's a lot of riding, about 11,000 miles all told. Riding my nominal 250 miles a day and assuming no breakdowns, it would take me 44 days, about six weeks, to complete. John rode it in 11 days. Eleven. But not on his super-duper new Triumph Explorer: that would be too easy. He did it on a then 40-year-old Triumph Trident T150. Now, I've owned two of those and bought the second example because the first was so terrible I assumed it was a wrong'un, but no, they really are that unreliable.

Needless to say, John finished the rally on his. Still reeling from this, scarcely believable news, I then asked him what's the most miles he'd ridden in a day – 1600 was the reply. I'd need a week to match that. He did have the good grace to admit to being a little weary after that one and almost apologised for using a modern Triumph. I'll let that go just this once, John!

I'm really not certain which I find the most incredible, the ability to physically endure a string of 1000 mile plus days in the saddle, or the mental fortitude enabling him to concentrate on his riding for such a phenomenal period. I would spend the entire time fretting over the route and noises coming from my bike, all the while counting down the miles until I could stop again for coffee and a moment of relaxation. Not for me the 500-mile 10-gallon petrol tanks and twin sat navs, I'll stick to flat tanks and Dorset tea cakes, ta.

Iron butts indeed, what's wrong with a plump posterior? **CBG**

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

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PAUL D'ORLÉANS

BEHIND THE CONCORSO CURTAIN

Paul looks at the change in opinions between shiny restorations and oily rag originals

“The money thing deserves note, because the joint is dripping with it, and cash has changed the collecting game in a big way over the past 20 years.”

IT'S A CURIOUS THING, BEING A JUDGE AT A Concorso d'Eleganza, like the one at Villa d'Este. The perks are incontestably fab: a flight to Lake Como, a very nice hotel, every meal catered, drivers at your beck and call, extravagant parties, and rubbing elbows with the swells, some of whom are very interesting indeed.

We're second-tier celebs as judges for the Concorso di Motociclette, and something of an amusement to the zillionaire collectors who litter Villa d'Este's expansive verandah with 50 extravagant and extremely valuable cars. The 50 or so motorcycles to which we moto-judges are assigned are also quite valuable in real-world terms – i.e. 'you could buy a house for that' – but cost a pittance compared to what a coveted automobile commands.

The money thing deserves note, because the joint is dripping with it, and cash has changed the collecting game in a big way over the past 20 years. Before cars and motorcycles were astoundingly valuable, those who rescued them from oblivion tended to be well-informed amateurs, who'd broken some arcane historic code, and deduced what was worth finding, preserving, and tolerating spousal abuse to purchase.

Old cars and motorcycles used to be rusty old junk, and you were something of a crank for collecting them, until recently. Money has made vehicles a sensible investment, which means all sorts of terribly normal people (with a lot of money) have entered the collecting game. You can always spot the 'old school' collectors at the Concorso: they're actually old, and are characters. Whether simply eccentric or crafty old foxes who've scrambled up the money ladder by dealing in old vehicles, they're the opposite of the corporate hacks, bankers, and silver spooners (well, diamond-encrusted platinum spooners) who've entered the game in the past 10 years.

Some of the old guard had money, but most didn't really, they were/are in the game because they love superb design. Long may such connoisseurship continue, regardless of the value of these objets d'art. There's nothing stopping monied newbies being just as informed and passionate as the old guard, but I do miss the oddballs, because they're social entertainment, and know when to say the wrong thing.

The eight judges for the Concorso di Moto this year had remarkably different takes on the question of 'which is best' in our various categories. For the first time in my experience in a judges'

chambers, there was an anti-restoration tone, meaning a disinclination to award a top prize to a motorcycle simply because it was restored beyond factory specification.

I found myself in the novel position of defending the work of restorers. After all, it takes tremendous dedication to educate oneself, then search out or make from scratch the correct components for an obscure machine, to make it appear as per catalogue. A well done restoration is the second best thing to a new or exquisitely preserved motorcycle.

Of course, we've seen decades of over-restored motorcycles, and machines with perfectly acceptable original finishes being scrubbed of their history. And thus we see the current hallowed status of rusty old junk, the apotheosis of the oily rag machine, which is justice served after decades of abuse heaped upon mild oxidation coating an otherwise lovely motorcycle. How quickly do attitudes change, once they veer from the traditional course?

One of our judges heaped scorn on several 'over restored' machines, which seemed merely fresh to my eyes. He loved an original-paint 1929 Harley-Davidson, feeling its Wild One vibe, and how it launched trends in American design seen even today. To this Yank, it seemed just another barely-ridden 1920s V-twin, hardly deserving of a prize, as it was a pedestrian model with the good fortune of being ignored in a barn for decades. Perhaps it's time for a rethink about the value of patina: when is it better than a restoration? There's no question the Concorso H-D should never be touched cosmetically, as you can't replace the factory paint. But does that in itself make the machine special? Sometimes not, in my humble opinion.

The question of best of show was simple, as our esteemed chief judge happens to be French, and made sure the best machine on display was, in fact, a French bike. Thus the big award went to a Koehler-Escoffier 1000cc 'Quattro Tubes', a sporting OHC V-twin of unique configuration, and in extremely rare company, as flat-tank OHC V-twins are an incredibly rare breed. Think Cyclone, its copies from Excelsior and Reading-Standard, and a solitary AJS built to break the Land Speed Record, and you've just about finished the list, although Moto Guzzi built a few OHC L-twins for Grand Prix racing in the 1930s. Seven of the big Koehler-Escoffiers survive: they're ambitious and potent, and very beautiful indeed. On that, at least, we all agreed. **CBG**

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

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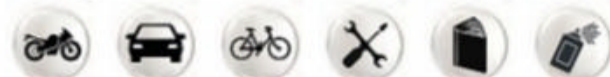


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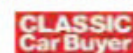
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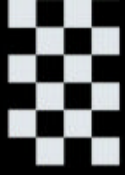
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■ DESIGN GENIUS - THE 1931 RUDGE 250CC RADIAL ENGINE

The Isle of Man TT races may be about the riders nowadays, but in times past, it was all about the bikes. It was the most important proving ground, and therefore a good performance was the perfect marketing tool for any motorcycle manufacturer. Win on Sunday, sell on Monday, as Ford used to say.

In those earlier years, engineering was key - to finish first, first you have to finish. Often things we take as fairly modern practices had been tried a long time ago in the pursuit of that win. Back in 1931, Rudge, always ones to tread their own path, created a truly radial head for their 350cc and 250cc OHV racing engines, designed by George Hack.

These four-valve heads (when did you first get a four-valve-per-cylinder car engine?) had each of the four valves and ports pointing to the centre of the bore for better flow. But the four valves were at four different angles, so Hack designed a three-rocker system to work around the complex angles. Complicated and expensive to produce, but at its first meeting, H G Tyrell-Smith broke the NW200 lap record, and at the TT Graham Walker won the Lightweight with Tyrell-Smith second and Ernie Nott, another Rudge rider, fourth. **CBG**

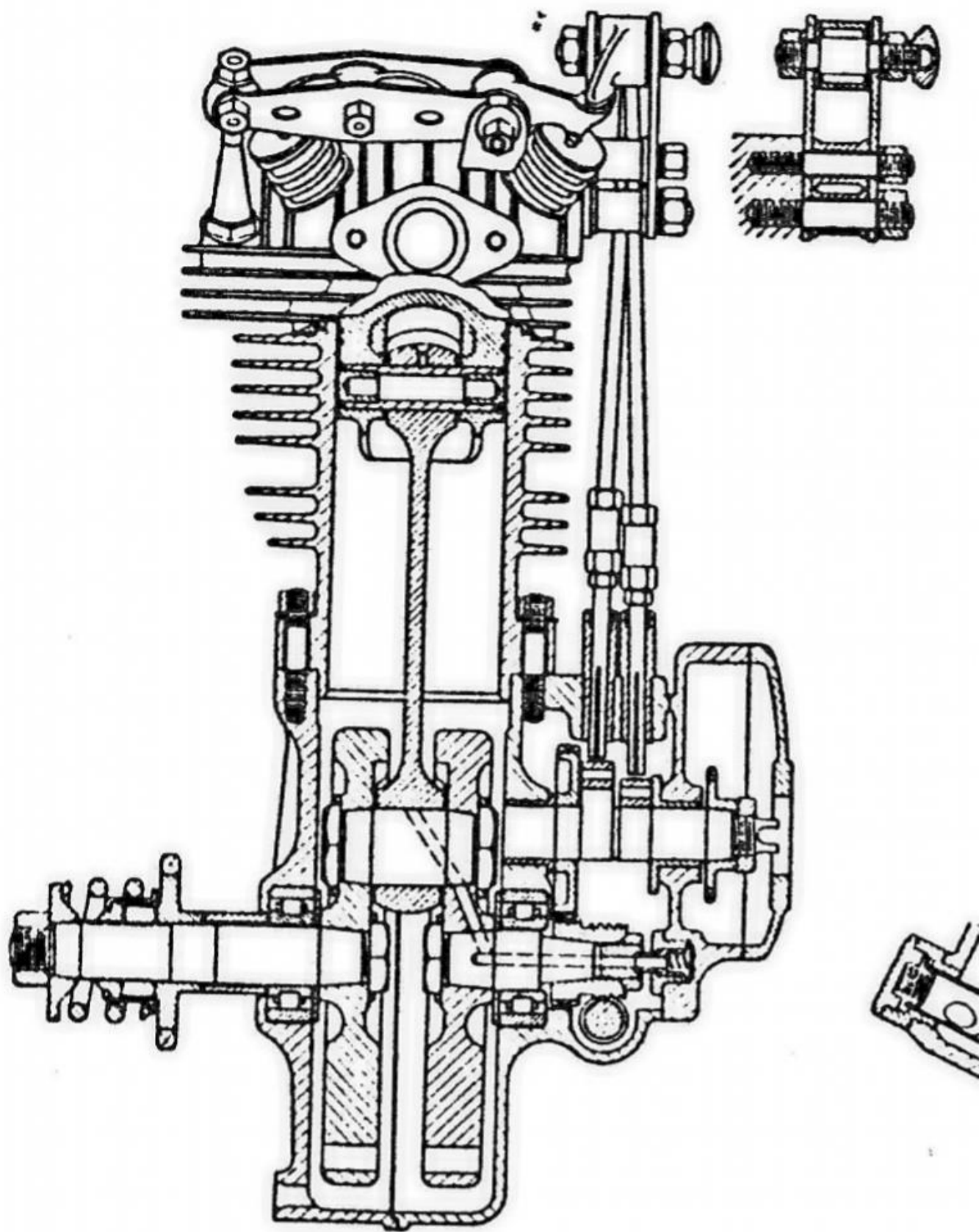


Fig. 3. General arrangement

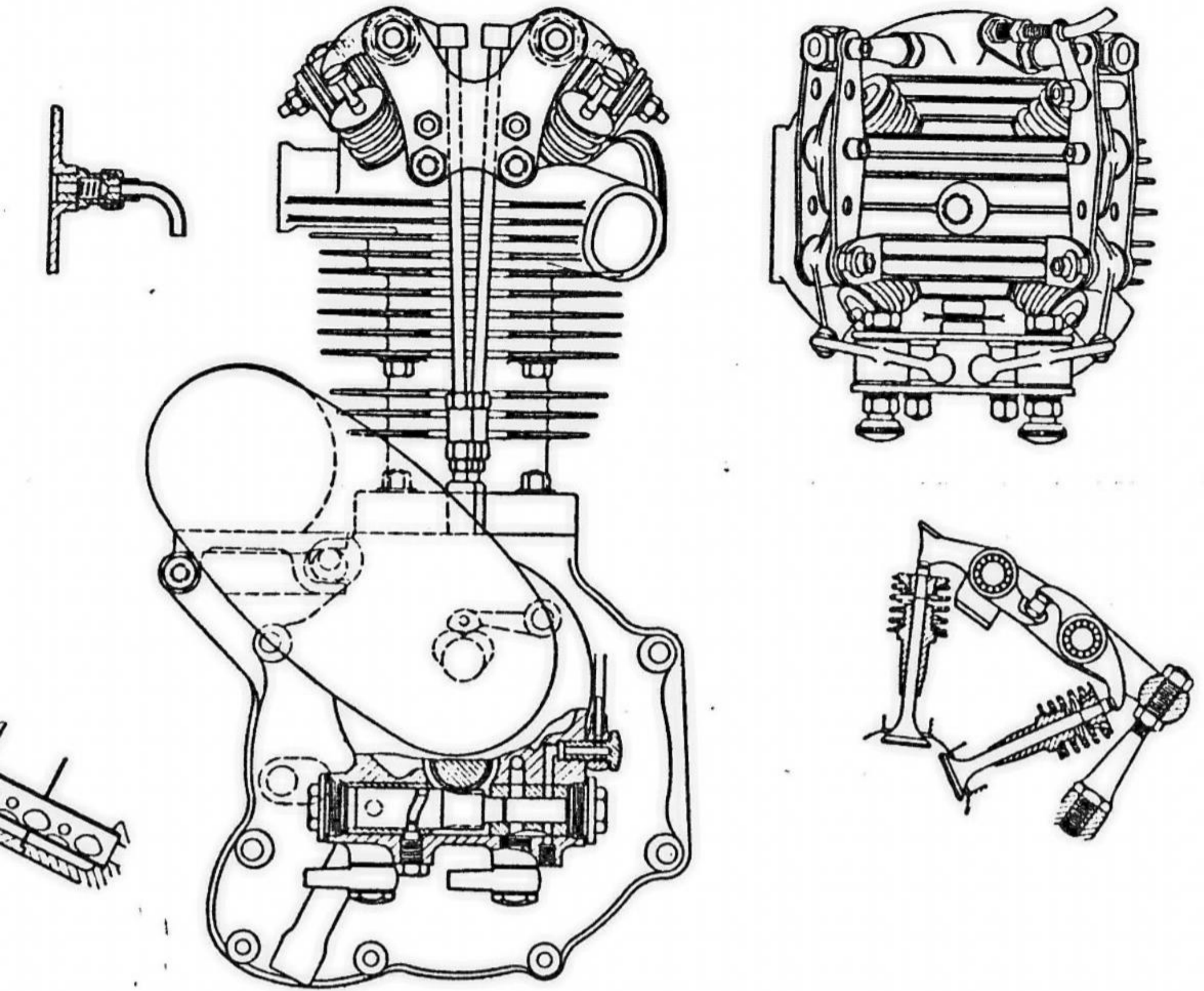
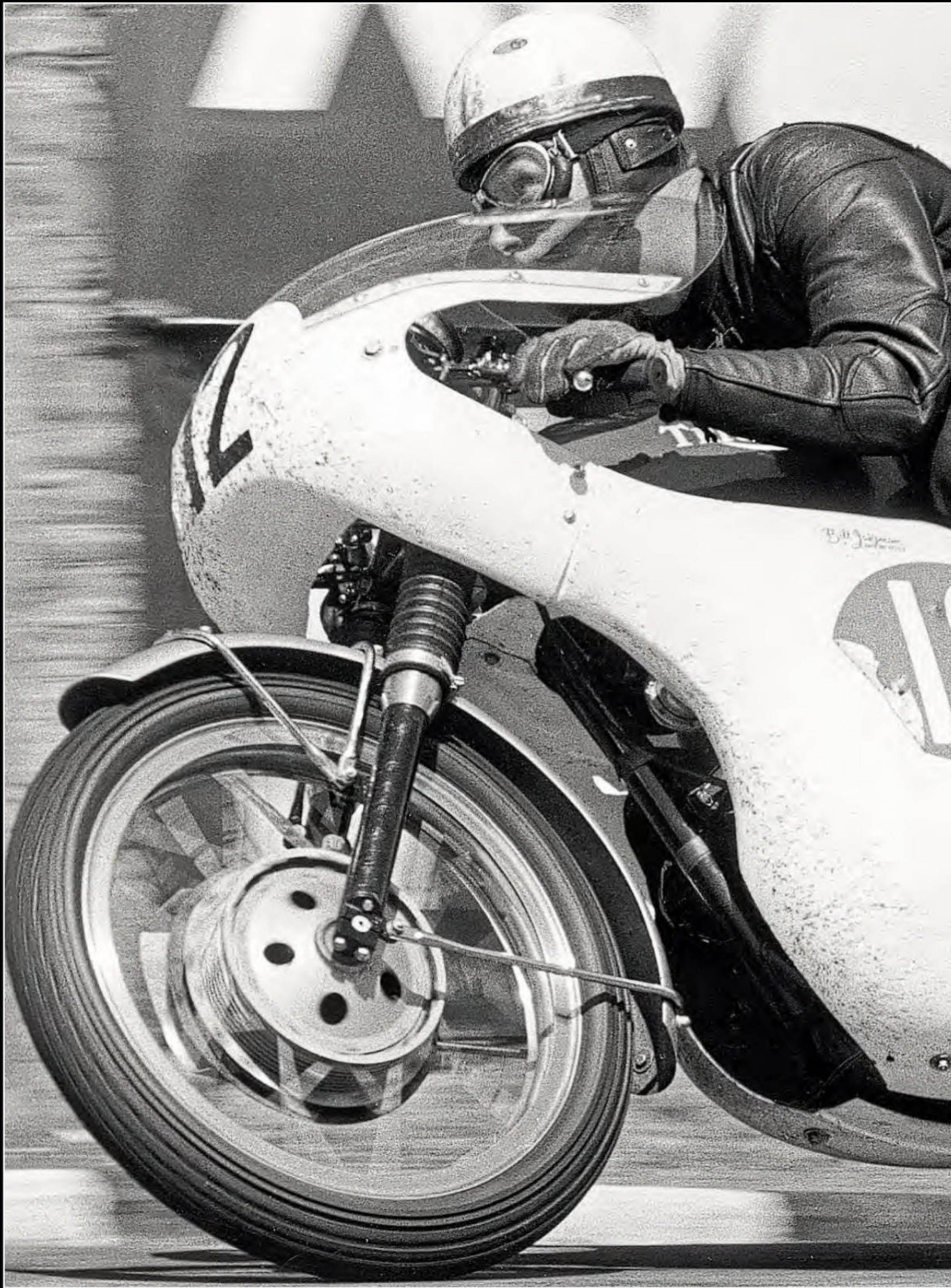


Diagram of Rudge-Whitworth 1931 250 c.c. T.T. engine.





Malcolm Uphill

This quiet, thoughtful Welsh rider gave Triumph some great victories and was the first to break the 100mph barrier at the TT on a production bike, leading Dunlop to name a tyre after his achievement.

WORDS: JIM REYNOLDS **PHOTOGRAPHY:** MORTONS ARCHIVE

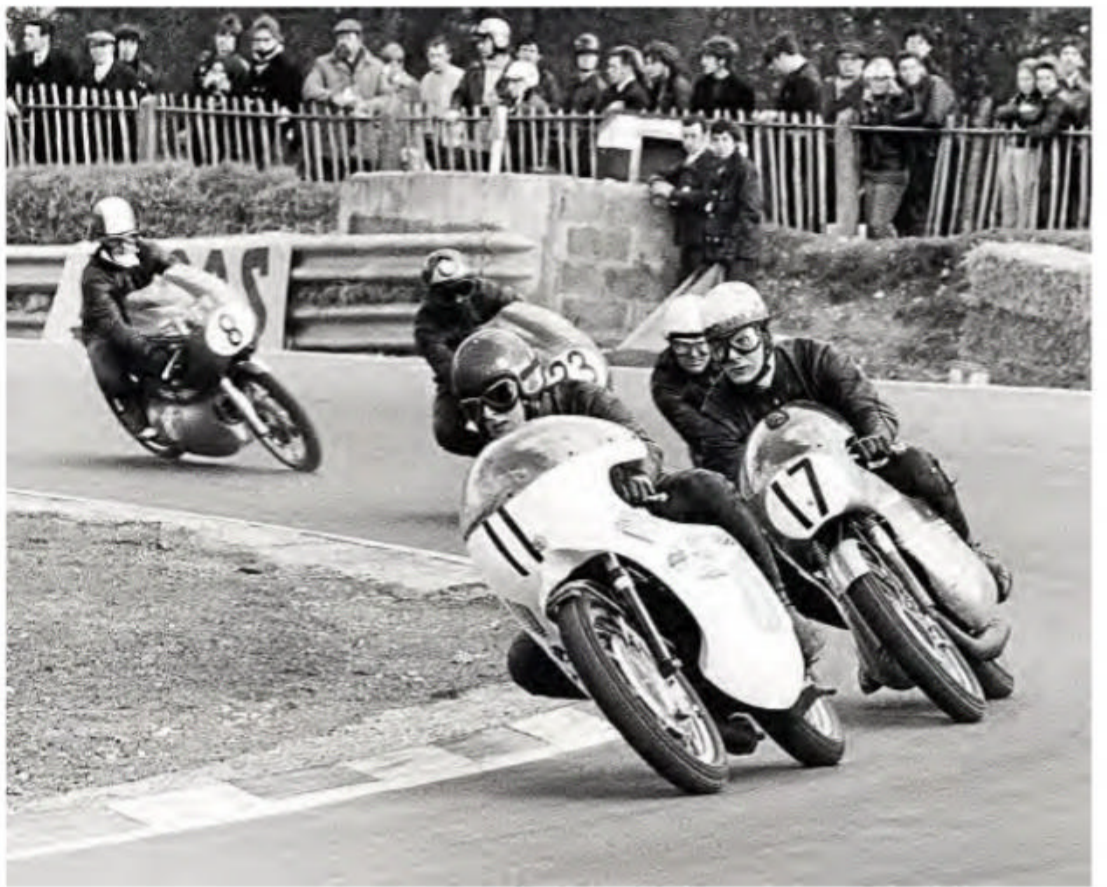
MALCOLM UPHILL STUMBLED INTO BIKING almost out of curiosity. At just 15 he borrowed his dad's 250 BSA and went for a ride, just to see what it was all about. He enjoyed this new found freedom so much that it was getting dark when he was almost home and the local bobby stopped him and asked where he was going. "On my way home, round the corner," he explained and the arm of the law told him to move on, without checking his licence or any other details. Beginner's luck, they call it.

The same innocent Beesa taught him some basic engineering when that curious streak came out again and he took the timing cover off to see what was inside. He wasn't expecting anything to fall out, but a small cascade of gears hit the floor and Malcolm had to get them back in and the engine running before Dad got up and went off to his nightshift. An urgent call for help from a biking neighbour got that headache sorted and Dad was none the wiser. Malcolm was.

Working as an apprentice in the British Rail works at Rhydney, near his home in Caerphilly, he needed transport and bought himself a 350 Ariel that opened new horizons as he rode out with his mates at weekends. One outing took him and a friend to distant Thruxton and the 500 Mile Production Race, which got that curiosity bug working again. Young Uphill went racing.

He started with a well worn 350 Manx Norton that did him no favours until he put the engineering skills he'd learned courtesy of British Rail to good use and his natural talent began to emerge. As results came and with them a measure of local fame, a dealer offered to support him. He wouldn't name the trader when we talked, just glad that he learned enough to move on. "He was buying engines, telling me they were for me to use, so I was rebuilding them. Then I found out he was advertising them as Malcolm Uphill engines and making money for himself!"

He stayed determinedly independent, preparing



Above: Chas Mortimer (Broad Yamaha) leads Malcolm Uphill (Crooks Suzuki), Paul Smart (Yamaha) and Barry Sheene (Yamaha-Bultaco) in a 250cc clash at Mallory Park on March 27, 1970.

Right: Malcolm partnered with Percy Tait at the '69 Thruxton 500 and won; John Cooper and Stephen Jolly rode the other factory entry.

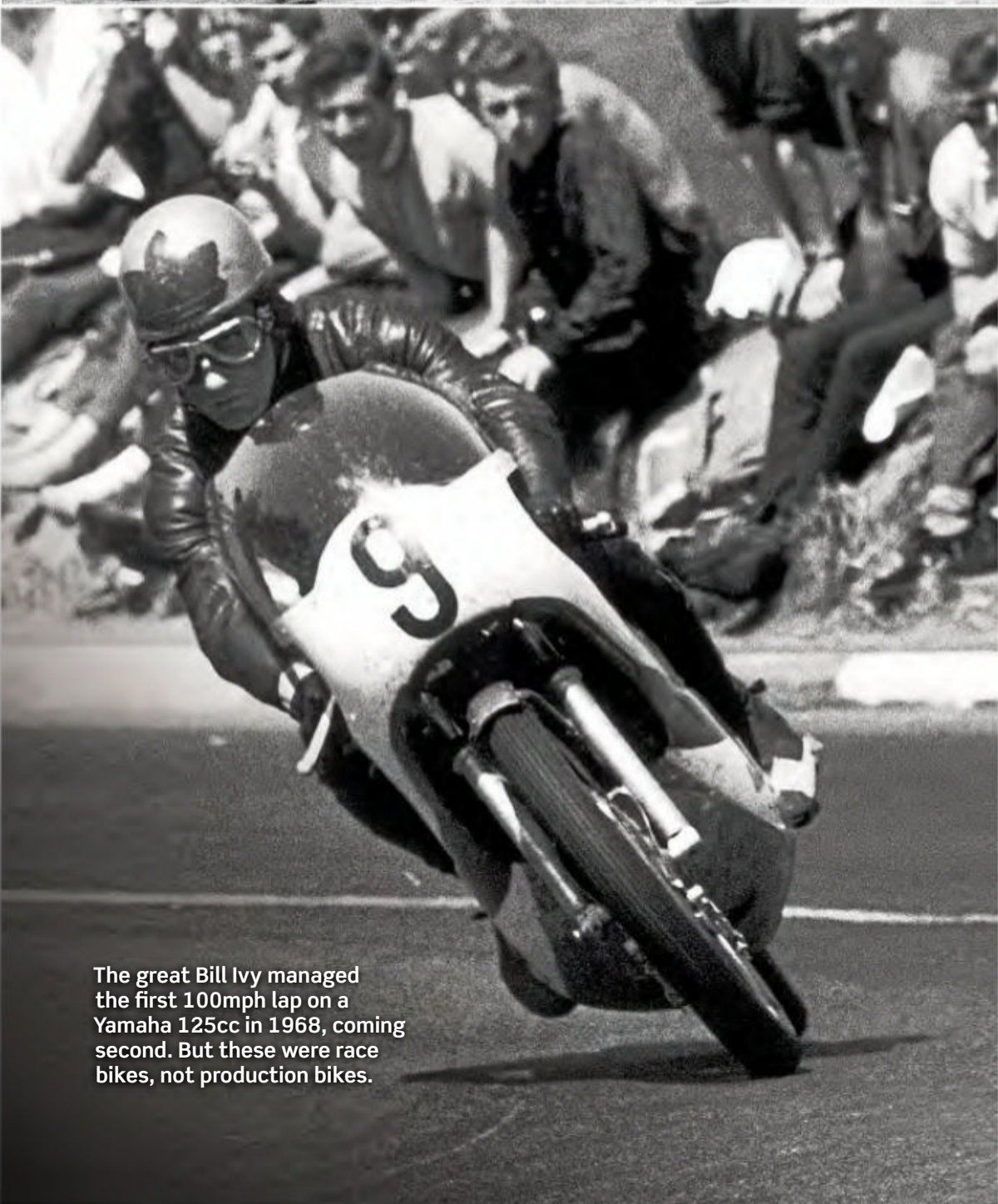
Below: Malcolm rode the Crooks Suzuki 250 in the lightweight TT of the same year, but didn't finish.

350 and 500 Manx Nortons himself and riding the wheels off them to become one of the serious contenders on the UK scene. He rode well enough to win the Senior and Junior Manx Grands Prix in 1965, which was recognised when he was awarded the freedom of his home town of Pontypridd. Ace tuner Francis Beart was a good judge of ability, he asked Malcolm to ride his Nortons, and got his first 100mph TT lap with the lad from the Welsh valleys in the saddle. It was a partnership based on mutual respect: "Mr Beart always sent me a Christmas card, right up to the time he died."

He was recruited to ride for Triumph at the 1968 TT in the 750cc class of the recently revived production race. The race had a Le Mans-style mass start, the riders lined up on the left side of the Glencrutchery Road and their bikes held by their mechanics on the other side, the bikes kept upright by the right handlebar, with the other hand keeping the folding kickstart held out, ready for the rider to take a swinging kick and hope the warm engine would respond quickly. When the flag fell, the riders sprinted across the course, Malcolm giving the kickstart a good swing and the Bonneville barking into life. But the exhaust system, swept higher than on a standard bike to prevent it grounding, was wide enough to trap the kickstart as it swung back up. Not that it mattered to Malcolm, but the effect was the kickstart pawl ratcheting away and the swarf slowly building up until it prevented the clutch operating arm moving. He stopped to see if he could cure the problem, but couldn't work out in a few seconds what was wrong and decided to carry on. The fact that he'd stopped on a hill didn't make a restart any easier, but he didn't let minor matters like that stop him.

"Somehow Malcolm got the bike bump started without the clutch, and you must realise that the gear ratios we were using for racing meant that first was about the equivalent of third gear on a normal road bike. The four-speed Bonneville gearbox that year had 23-tooth dogs and the general opinion was you couldn't change without the clutch," Norman Hyde of the development team remembers. But whatever it took, Malcolm did it and carried on, changing gears





The great Bill Ivy managed the first 100mph lap on a Yamaha 125cc in 1968, coming second. But these were race bikes, not production bikes.

all the way around those $37\frac{3}{4}$ demanding miles without a clutch, to finish fifth and the first Triumph. "You've saved our bacon," team mechanic Arthur Jakeman told him. But with money tight he wasn't an automatic choice for a factory Bonneville ride in 1969.

"I was at the factory and we were arguing about money. Eventually I said: 'You pay me £300 if I win, £200 for second and £100 for third,'" Malcolm recalled years later, still indignant about such a tight-wad approach to the matter of winning the Production TT with its obvious benefit in sales of the company's star sports model.

But his race record and professional approach to racing won him respect from the people who prepared the bikes – they realised how valuable he was. Engine whizz Jack Shemans remembers: "He knew the TT course better than anybody and the exact gearing he wanted for the conditions. He'd stand up, wet his finger and feel the wind. If he reckoned it was against him somewhere on the course, he wanted the gearing down half a tooth. Easy on the bike and such a nice, polite chap. Easy to get along with."

Practice saw just one minor problem, with the ignition cut-out button vibrating loose and causing a misfire. Malcolm's response was a quiet word with Jack, asking him to check everything, front to back, "Just in case some silly little thing gives us trouble." Jack did as he was asked and presented the bike to Malcolm with the news: "Go to 8000rpm if you're pushed." He was a favourite for the race and press speculation about a 100mph lap on a proddie bike was rife: "On the way to the start, Murray Walker pushed



Oulton Park, September 1, 1969. No. 1 John Cooper (on the 500 Honda 4) leads No. 5 Malcolm Uphill (499 Norton) and No. 24 Stan Woods (499 Norton).

a mike under my nose and asked if I would be doing a 100mph lap, and I just told him I'd lap at 50 if that's what it took to win the race."

In fact Malcolm had opted for a higher gear and kept the revs down to 7500 on the first lap. The result was an astonishing 100.39mph, the first production bike to hit that magic figure, from a standing start! Rod Gould was lying second on another Bonneville.

On his second lap Malcolm kept the revs even lower at 7200 and raised the lap record to 100.39mph, as Ron Gould's bike clanked to a stop with a broken crankshaft. He had obviously been working the motor hard, timed through the speed trap at The Highlander pub at 140, while Uphill went through at a modest 134.6. That was Jack's acknowledgement of the man's knowledge of the TT course shining through.

He finished the race a clear winner, with Paul Smart on a Dunstall Norton the runner-up. Malcolm's race average was 99.99mph and the company issued a video under that title to celebrate a really great victory. Dunlop renamed the KR81 tyres the bike wore as 'TT100' in honour of the historic ride.

He was invited to lunch at Meriden, where the company scraped together enough cash to present him with a portable radio. But Doug Hele, in charge of development work and the racing effort, recognised just what a great ride the lad from the Welsh valleys had put in and the benefit to the company's reputation. Hele had the historic bike put through a complete check in the Experimental Department and presented it to Malcolm.

He carried on racing the Bonnie and winning, even entering it in the 1970 North West 200 meeting, where Percy Tait was out on the factory's new choice for production races, the three-cylinder Trident. The Trident had a lot more horsepower than the Bonneville, but weighed a lot more as well: "I geared the bike up and sat in Percy's slipstream until the last

lap, then out-braked him as we came into Portstewart and won."

He won the 750 Production TT again in 1970, after a great scrap with Peter Williams on the Norton factory's Commando. It was another remarkable ride, the Trident's timing slipping and power dropping off dramatically. Back at Meriden, where the Trident had been putting out 80bhp on the dyno, the TT winning power unit could only manage 47!

Malcolm remained a force for the Triumph team until the company's financial woes brought racing to an end. He was offered a ride on a 500cc Suzuki that others refused to race: "It was fast but an awful thing to ride – it was going sideways down the straight!" he remembered. In the Ulster Grand Prix it threw him off and a badly broken leg took a year to heal properly, prompting him to call an end to a glorious career.

He made a lot of friends in his time as a modest star. Like the Dutchman who spoke to him through the paddock fence at Assen, asking if he had a paddock pass. "Some of the riders were selling them at a fiver a time. I just gave mine to this lad who wanted to get in and see the bikes," was the Uphill approach. That was another man who always sent Malcolm a Christmas card until the end of his life.

He died in August 1999, aged just 64, the victim of asbestosis that he attributed to his apprentice days in the railway workshop, where one of the jobs was stripping down old steam engines and the lads threw asbestos lagging at one another, not realising what a hazardous material it was. When a big crowd gathered to say their final farewell to the man, they included an old fan who flew in from Australia to help carry the coffin – few men from such humble beginnings as his had such a faithful following.

Today he's remembered by the Wetherspoons pub in South Terrace, Caerphilly. It's just called The Malcolm Uphill. Many's the pint raised in his memory. **CBG**



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- **1 JULY ISSUE OF REAL CLASSIC**
- **3 VMCC (Dorset section) Lunch Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel: 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk
- **4-7 Festival of Speed:** Goodwood, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0PX. www.goodwood.com info@goodwood.com Tel: 01243 755000.
- **5 AUGUST ISSUE OF THE CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE**
- **5-8 Unwanted MCC's Cock Out Rally:** The Rockbar, Shobnall Sports & Social Club, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs DE14 2BB. www.unwantedmcc.co.uk. Tel: 07988 521400 or 07761 931226. Email: unwantedmcc@aol.com.
- **6 YOUR OLD BIKE MART WITH YOU TODAY**
- **6 Diamond Day - NCC London Custom Bike Show:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **6-7 British Motorcycle Preservation Society North Wales' Annual Classic Motorcycle Show:** This show is part of weekend event hosted by the Llangollen Railway that includes a timetable of steam, diesel and Heritage railcars, classic bus trips and motorcycle and classic car displays. On Saturday Night on Glyndyfrdwy field there will be live music and a real ale bar. The show is held at Glyndyfrdwy Station, near Corwen, N Wales, LL21 9HF. www.bmpswnales.org.uk.
- **6-7 National Road Rally:** See website for start details - multiple starts around the country. www.nationalroadrally.co.uk. Tel: 01788 566412. Email: nationalroadrally@acu.org.uk.
- **7 Classic Motorcycle Show and Bikejumble:** Battlesbridge Antiques Centre, SS11 7RF. Tel: 01268 769000. www.battlesbridge.com/events
- **7 Berkshire Motor Show:** Prospect Park, Libenrood Road, Reading, Berks RG30 2ND. www.berkshiremotorshow.co.uk. Tel: 07990 667503. Email: stephawbery@outlook.com.
- **7 Honda Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **7 20th Leighton Hall Classic Car & Bike Show:** Leighton Hall, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA5 9ST. www.markwoodwardclassicevents.com. Tel: 01697 451882. Email: info@markwoodwardclassicevents.com.
- **7 Crich Tramway Village Classic Motorcycle Day:** In conjunction with the Vincent Motorcycle Club, Crich Tramway Village welcomes pre-booked classic motorcycles built prior to 1995. This event is rapidly becoming one of the most popular classic riders' destinations of the summer. Building on the last two years, this popular event has welcomed classic motorcycles from all over the UK. Crich Tramway Village, Plaistow Green Road, Crich, Matlock, DE4 5DP. www.tramway.co.uk
- **7 Sammy Miller Museum, Spyder Ride In:** www.sammymiller.co.uk
- **7 VMCC (Dorset section) Two in One Run:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel: 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events
- **7 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes, NW Rally:** Astley Green Colliery (off A580), nr Manchester. (TBC). For more info ring 0161 370 0893.
- **10 VMCC (Dorset section) Club Night - Car and Bike Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG Tel: 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events
- **11-13 The Rock and Bike Fest:** Carnfield Hall, Carnfield Hill, South Normanton, Derbys DE55 2BE. www.rockandbikefest.co.uk. Email: info@rockandbikefest.co.uk.
- **13 South Midlands Autojumble:** Ross-on-Wye Livestock Centre, Overross, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 7QQ. Tel: 01989 750731. Details: southmidlandsautojumble/facebook
- **13 Sammy Miller Museum, Italian Bike Ride In:** www.sammymiller.co.uk
- **13 British Two-Stroke Club Lincolnshire Branch Sausthorpe Bike Day:** Details from Andy Jones 07940 447570.
- **13-14 VMCC Festival of 1000 Bikes:** The VMCC Festival of 1000 Bikes has now become the largest classic track weekend in Europe featuring the greatest line-up of superstar riders. Mallory Park is a great circuit from a spectator's perspective with great views of

- 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.

the circuit from many vantage points. The Festival of 1000 Bikes has no restriction on paddock access and you can mix with all the superstar riders and view their works machines up close. Tickets on the gate cost £20 on Saturday, £25 on Sunday or £50 for the weekend including camping. www.festivalof1000bikes.co.uk

- **14 Naunton Classic & Vintage Transport Show & Village Fete:** 12-4pm. Naunton Recreation Ground, GL54 3AS. www.nauntonclassicandvintagegettransportshowandfete.co.uk
- **14 5th Classic Motorcycle and American Car Show:** 10am to 4pm in the White Swan car park, Hunmanby, N Yorkshire YO14 0JU. Contact John Wragg 07804 709168.
- **14 Indian & Victory Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **14 Acorns MCC Classic Scramble Solo and Sidecars, and a Round of the Welsh Championship:** M6 jct 15, ST5 4DR. Contact: Roger Simkin 07971 950921, 017852 13277. Email: rog.ers@btinternet.com
- **14 MECVC Bike Only:** starting in Weardale. www.durhamdalesclassictrial.org.uk. Tel: Graham Lampkin 07989 446131.
- **14 Sammy Miller Museum, Harley Ride In:** www.sammymiller.co.uk
- **14 South of England Summer Classic Show & Bikejumble:** South of England Showground, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TL. www.elk-promotions.co.uk
- **14 VMCC (Dorset Section) Veteran & Vintage Run:** Leigh Village Hall, Sherborne, Somerset, DT9 6HL Tel: 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/
- **14 Sunbeam MCC Garden of England Run:** Headcorn, Kent. Tel: Jo & Julian Swift 01233 756346. Email: julian@julianswift.com
- **17 AUGUST ISSUE OF CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS**
- **17 VMCC (Dorset section) Mid-Week Run:** Sturminster Newton Car Park, Church

St, Sturminster Newton, Somerset, DT10 1DB Tel: 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/

- **18 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Arnside (meet car park by viaduct). Tel: 01772 782516.
- **18-21 Faro 2019 - International Motorcycle Meeting:** Faro, Algarve, Portugal. www.motoclubefaro.pt. Tel: +351 (0) 289 823 845. Email: motoclubefaro@mail.telepac.pt.
- **19-21 International Royal Enfield Rally:** Stanford Hall, Leicestershire, LE17 6DH. Contact John Dove on 07766 947932.
- **19-21 MGCGB Summer Camp:** The Powis Arms, Brampton Road, Lydbury North, SY7 8AU. Details www.motoguzziclub.co.uk
- **20 NSA (National Sprint Association) Dakota Raceway South West:** Smeatharpe Airfield, Devon EX14 9RF www.nationalsprintassociation.org
- **20 Classic Motorcycle Show:** The Bull, Bull Lane, Cottered, Buntingford, SG9 9QP. Tel: 07963 609143.
- **20 14th Leigh Food Fair & Vintage/Classic Car/Bike Display:** Leigh Village Hall, DT9 6HL. Tel: Elizabeth Turnbull 01935 873846 or elizabethturnbull70@btinternet.com www.leighfoodfair.co.uk
- **20 Kempton Park Motorcycle Autojumble:** Kempton Park, Staines Road East, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex, TW16 5AQ. www.kemptonparkautojumble.co.uk
- **20 Scorton Auto & Bike Jumble:** Scorton, North Yorkshire Events Centre, DL10 6EJ. Tel: Bert 07909 904705.
- **20 Berkshire TOMCC Classic and Custom Motorcycle Show:** Burghfield Community Sports Association, James Lane, Burghfield, Reading, RG30 3RS. Tel: 01344 451977. www.berkshiretomcc.org.uk
- **21 Breakfast Meet:** Battlesbridge Motorcycle Museum, Essex SS11 7RF. All classic vehicles welcome. Tel: 01268 769000. www.battlesbridge.com/events
- **21 70s Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **21 Charity Ride Out:** meet from 9.30am at Morrisons supermarket, Diss, Norfolk IP22 4XF. Email: a.downes@ymail.com.
- **21 Cheshire Classic Car & Motorcycle Show:** Capesthorpe Hall, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 9JY. www.classicshows.org. Tel: 01484 667776. Email: info@classicshows.org.
- **21 Sammy Miller Museum, Ladies Day:** www.sammymiller.co.uk
- **21 Salisbury Motorcycle & Light Car Club Lightweight Run (250cc & under):** starting at the public car park (next to Michael Herbert Hall), South Street, Wilton, Salisbury. Tel: Andy Elliott 07909 778685. Email: publicity@salisburymotorcycleandlightcarclub.co.uk www.salisburymotorcycleandlightcarclub.co.uk
- **21 Founders Day, The Taverners Annual Vintage Show:** Stanford Hall, Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE17 6DH. Tel: 07837 907908. www.thetaverners.co.uk
- **24 VMCC (Essex Section) Midweek Run:** Tesco car park, Maldon. Tel: John Beckinsale 01268 763805.
- **26-28 Burning Budgie Rally:** Beaconsfield SYCOB Football Club, Holloways Park, Windsor Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2SE. www.westlondonharleyriders.co.uk. Tel: 07733 357339. Email: info@westlondonharleyriders.co.uk.
- **26-28 The Big Chill Rally:** John Bentley School, White Horse Way, Calne, Wilts SN11 8YH. oxfordukchapter.co.uk/bigchillrally. Email: secretary@oxfordukchapter.co.uk.
- **27 VMCC (Dorset section) Breakfast Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel: 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/
- **27 LE Velo Northampton Gathering:** Red Lion, Thornby NN6 8SJ. Tel: 01604 499858.
- **28 Suffolk Auto Jumble:** Church Farm, Kettleburgh, nr Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 9JX. Tel: Derek Holt 01728 724858.
- **28 Sports Bike Special:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **28 Classics at the Castle:** Bodrhyddan Hall, Dyserth Road, Clwyd, LL18 5SB. www.classicshows.org. Tel: 01484 667776. Email: info@classicshows.org.
- **28 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Linton in Wharfedale. (meet village green). Tel: 01772 782516.
- **28 VMCC (Dorset section) Jeff Clew Memorial Run:** Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 7LH. Tel: 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/
- **28 Exeter Classic MCC Annual Dartmoor Charity Run:** Registration Exeter Quay 9am. Tel: 01647 252680 exeterclassicmotorcycleclub.btck.co.uk/Dartmoorrun
- **30 British Two-Stroke Club Lincolnshire Branch club night:** Sausthorpe Village Hall, 7pm. Details from Andy Jones 07940 447570; Jay Smedley 07502 222754.
- **31 AUGUST ISSUE OF CLASSIC BIKE GUIDE**

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New

RETRO



Japanese retro with style and character

Kawasaki's all-new W800 Street and Café deliver bags of character and soul, something regularly missed by Japanese manufacturers. Adam Child travels all the way to Japan to test Kawasaki's new heritage range, which can trace its routes back to the W1 650 of 1965.

WORDS: ADAM CHILD **PHOTOGRAPHS:** KAWASAKI JAPAN

THE BURBLE FROM THE TWIN EXHAUSTS resonates across the stunning Japanese countryside, as the bevel gear driven cam 783cc engine effortlessly propels me along the road. To both sides of the road are endless meticulously kept rice fields, and ahead the dramatic, snow-capped mountain region of Kirigamine, which is home to Mount Fuji. I can feel the heat of the mid-morning sun upon my face. I'm in no hurry. I'm simply taking in the delights of Japan and the Nagaro region and Kawasaki's all-new W800 is proving to be the perfect combination of style and comfort to explore this stunning, jaw-dropping area of Japan.



“The old W800 was loved by many. It was simple and straightforward, which appealed to a generation who remember when bikes had kick-starts. Equally a younger audience enjoyed personalising and modifying the W800 and the older W650.”



However, the discontinued now 'old' W800 was in desperate need of an upgrade, and no longer conformed to tighter Euro-4 legislation. For 2019 Kawasaki have delivered an all-new W800 and there are two variants to choose from, the laid-back Street and the racier Café. Although both bikes may appear as-like the old model they are entirely new. Thankfully Kawasaki haven't wandered too far from the path of the successful W800, and older W650.

In a country led by technology where toilet seats are automatically warmed, they haven't been tempted to chase horsepower, nor overcomplicate a proven recipe. Kawasaki have kept it simple, as a retro bike should be.

The 783cc hart-plant remains air-cooled and retains the unique bevel gear driven cam engine, which Kawasaki admit was for cosmetic reasons only. They could have opted for water-cooling and even conventional chain driven cams, which would have resulted in more power, but instead have kept with tradition and air-cooled. Internally the engine has been upgraded, with new pistons, but essentially, it's the same, with a quoted 47bhp at 6000rpm which means the new W800 is still A2 compliant.

The steel double cradle chassis is all new, thicker, to improve stiffness. The brakes have received a significant upgrade, the rear drum brake has been replaced with a more modern disc item and the front also sees an increase in the single disc diameter, from 300mm to 320mm. The most significant change to affect the handling is the change in front wheel size. The older 19in front has been replaced with an 18in front to match the rear. The non-adjustable fork has also increased in diameter, up from 39mm to 41mm. Kawasaki have tweaked the handling characteristics to improve the responsiveness of the steering, hopefully giving the W800 a sportier edge.

Cosmetically it's all new and the Japanese-built W800 has some lovely detail touches. I love the fact they've stayed with the bevel gear drive cams – they've made that extra effort. The air-cooled engine is a thing of beauty. The twin swept-back exhaust appears to have been stolen from the original Kawasaki 650W, which was launched in 1965 – the first mass production large capacity four-stroke to



leave Japan. Everywhere you look there are little details; the metal flakes in the metallic paintwork and the 'old school' switch gear looks like it's been taken directly from the Seventies. The seat couldn't be any more classic, with the Kawasaki logo printed on the rear.

In Japan, Kawasaki cleverly had an original 1965 W1 on display, which clearly highlighted the family resemblance between the original and new 2019 bike. They both looked like they been produced by the same man, in the same era, only the modern-day bike disc brakes indicated to its true age. On looks alone Kawasaki need to be applauded. Over the years Japanese manufactures have attempted to build in character and induce some soul but fall short – not this time.

For 2019 there are two variants to choose from, the £8399 Street or the pricier £9099 Café. Both share the same basic platform; the Street is easily identifiable with laid-back bars, wide retro seat, chrome spoked wheels and small detail changes, like a black only

bevel cover. The Café comes with racy drop bars, black wheels and engine, plus sporty side tank pads, chrome bevel cover and obviously the front cowl.

Choosing which bike to ride first was a hard decision on my two-day road test. I went for the laid-back Street: The relatively low seat, (770mm) makes the W800 as intimidating as morris dancing. I'm 5ft 7in and was securely flat-footed, but some of the shorter Japanese test riders at 5ft 2in also didn't have any issues.

The laid-back bars, soft seat and wide rubber begs immediately relaxes the senses – let's take it easy...





“For a short blast to the coast or favourite biker hangout, I’d favour the Café, but after two days of touring, I’d choose the Street”



THE STREET

The view from the retro seat is throw-back to the Seventies. I love the simplicity of the switchgear, the ornate clocks are simple with large faces, analogue rev-counter on the right and speedometer on the left. There’s also a small digital display for multiple trips and clock.

The parallel twin has a long-stroke 360-degree crankshaft and starts with a rewarding burble. The twin exhausts sound as good as they look, a blip of the soft throttle results in an authentic exhaust tone and the odd ‘pop’ on the overrun. Kawasaki admittedly spent a huge amount of resources on the exhaust tone. Obviously it’s Euro 4 compliant, there’s a cleverly hidden cat-converter, but even so they’ve successfully created a charismatic exhaust tone.

In with the one-finger light clutch with a new slipper clutch (helps make the clutch lighter), a neat click into first gear and our adventure begins. In Japan they drive on the left, it should feel natural, but doesn’t as the Japanese road furniture and traffic takes a little getting used to. Thankfully the new W800 is effortless, and easy to ride. You can smoothly change gear at any rpm, even as low as 2000rpm and simply short-shift to the national speed limit. The torque is very flat, and the fuelling at low speed is soft. Once in to fifth gear, top, your left foot can become redundant, at gentle speeds the W800 will happily pull you around.

With 47bhp, the air-cooled long-stroke engine could never be described as quick, it’s slow revving and almost lethargic, but it perfectly matches the bikes feel. If you find yourself constantly revving the W800, then sorry, you’ve bought the wrong bike, this is laid-back cruising at its best. Back one gear will result in a punch in power, peak torque is at 4800 rpm. There is more than enough punch from 3000rpm, which takes care of brisk overtakes with safety.

I only wanted more power when exiting slow uphill corners on many of the mountain passes we encountered. The motor was more than sufficient for 90% of the time, squeezed out an indicated 100mph without too many woes; in fact the punch from 70-80mph was more than I expected from a A2 licence legal bike.

The handling, like the engine, is easy and lazy. Kawasaki have sharpened the steering over the predecessor with the smaller front wheel, but you could never describe the W800 as sharp. The wide bars allow you to have some fun in the





twisties and you can throw it around with relative ease. But when the foot-pegs start scraping you know you've having a little too much fun!

Even when the pegs start to leave trails of sparks the handling is natural, it doesn't feel like you're at the limitation of the W800's handling. The new suspension is softly sprung, but still has control and damping. Some roads in Japan were on par with UK roads, poor in places, but the new W800 took imperfections without jolts and jarring.

When you ask a little too much of the new ABS assisted brakes, the front forks travel a little more than I'd like, but they don't dive to the ground like a scared toddler after a car backfires. With a full four-fingered approach the stoppers have some rewarding bite, crucially better than the old model, and the rear disc brake is a big step from the old drum.

THE CAFÉ

Despite sharing many similarities with the Street, the Café feels like a very different bike. The seat is taller, by 20mm and firmer. Despite being higher it's still easy to get two feet securely onto the road, as it's much narrower than the Street's wide, comfortable seat. The Café racer bars

dramatically alter your body position; you're now perched further forward with more weight on your wrists. It's not as natural as the Street, a tad uncompromising around town, but not uncomfortable like some similar styled bikes.

On the open road the Café feels more alive. The aggressive, almost racy riding position encourages you to ride a little quicker, hold the revs a little longer whilst be accompanied by the same charismatic exhaust tone. Once into the mountain region of Kirigamine I preferred the racy Café, despite having the same engine and chassis I was riding a little faster, a little to the annoyance of the Japanese locals who strictly stick to the speed limit despite being in the middle of nowhere.

But the Café style does come with compromises. The short, narrow bars slow down the steering as you simply don't have the leverage the wide bars give you to throw it into a corner. At high speed it doesn't feel as stable at the Street, and furthermore as you have more weight over the front, the forks don't feel as plush, but this may also be a result of the increased speed. Despite moving the rider's weight further forward, Kawasaki didn't change the suspension set up between the Café and the Street. And personally, I'd prefer

the standard pegs to be further back, racier, not simply the same as the Street. But, arguably the Café is a styling exercise, hasn't been led by performance or handling and in terms of appeal and look, the Café hits the nail on the head.

The front cowl is a throwback to the Café Racer culture, but is more for show than any real wind protection. Personally, I prefer the looks of the Café over the Street, and on day one I did favour the feel of the racer. But after two days and over 300km of relatively steady Japanese riding, I favoured the Street.

For me, the lazy easy handling matches the laid-back stance and ride of the Street, it's the perfect match. And after riding the original 1965 W800 W1, which Kawasaki dragged out of their museum specifically for this event, the new W800 is very much like the original, but with modern technology brakes and radiality.

For a short blast to the coast or favourite biker hangout, I'd favour the Café, but after two days of touring, I'd choose the Street. And yes, I did say touring. The comfort at legal speeds is exceptional, the ride quality is impressive, I'd certainly take on some serious miles on the Street. The 2019 bike even comes with a larger fuel tank.



We took on all types of roads and the standard Dunlop tyres surprisingly coped with all weathers. There's even an optional rear rack and heated grips. At high speeds there's a little vibs, mainly through the rubber pegs and there's no mpg, range or even a gear position indicator, but who needs that?

RIVALS

If you're looking for a retro easy-to-ride middle-weight machine the market is flooded with attractive choices. Moto-Guzzi's A2 air-cooled licence legal V7 is the obvious competition. You could even throw in Harley's air-cooled 883, Triumph's water-cooled, more powerful Street Twin or Enfield's new 650 twin, and this is where the Kawasaki stumbles a little. At £8030 it's the most expensive of the wide selection of middle-weight retro machines. The Café at just over £9000 is a hefty price to pay for an A2 licence-legal compliant bike.

In Kawasaki's defence, you can see where the money has been spent. The bevel gear driven cam engine, with its

wide cooling fins is lovely looking, with perfect fuelling. The exhaust has a charismatic tone, the detailing is lovely, the Japanese made Kawasaki feels quality, which arguably justifies the increase in price over the competition.

With over 20-years of professionally testing bikes under my belt, I've lost count of the amount of Japanese retro, or cruiser bikes which ride perfectly and look great, but lack character and soul. They simply can't match that of similar bikes made in Europe or America. However, the new W800 Street and Café redress the balance. They both have genuine soul, especially the Street which can trace its DNA back to the original W1 from 1965.

Every time I rode the new W800 I smiled, even on day three I wasn't bored of the charm of the easy-to-ride Kawasaki. Grab your open face helmet, light leather jacket, protective jeans and take the W800 for a test ride. Don't go chasing the revs and performance, relax, turn off your phone and life worries and enjoy the simplicity and charm the W800 delivers. **CBG**

SPECIFICATION

MAKE AND MODEL: Kawasaki Street and Café **PRICE:** Street £8399 Café £9099 **ENGINE:** 773cc air-cooled parallel-twin SOHC 8v **POWER:** 53bhp & 35kW @ 6000rpm **FRAME:** Steel Double Cradle **WHEELBASE:** 1465mm **BRAKES:** Front – Single 320mm discs, two piston caliper. Rear, 270mm disc, twin-piston caliper **TRANSMISSION:** five gears and chain final drive **SUSPENSION:** 41 conventional telescopic forks, non-adjustable. Rear twin shocks, with pre-load adjustment **WHEELS/TYRES:** Front 100/90x18 130/80x18 Rear, Dunlop k300 **SEAT HEIGHT:** Street 770mm Café 790mm **FUEL CAPACITY:** 15 **MPG:** 55 (est) **WEIGHT:** (dry/wet) Street 221kg Café 223kg **WARRANTY:** two years free with optional four-year **ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE:** Free for 12 months **SERVICE INTERVALS:** 600 miles then 7600, 15,200, 22,800 **CONTACT:** Manufacturer www.kawasaki.co.uk

Industry interview

HIDENORI KIKUCHI
W800 PROJECT LEADER

Q. What are the differences between the old W800 and new 2019 engine?

The biggest change is the fuelling and exhaust to make it Euro 4 compliant. The internals, like the piston are slightly different, but this wasn't for performance reasons. It's essentially the same as before.

Q. You've remained air-cooled with gear driven cams, why? You could have achieved more power with water-cooling and conventional chain driven cams.

The engine needed to be aesthetically pleasing, it was important to remain air-cooled and the bevel gear driven cams are simply for show. The air-cooling fins on this bike are like the original, we will keep the bike air-cooled as long as possible

Q. The wheels have changed from 19in front to 18in, did you ever consider a conventional 17?

No we never tested a 17. We wanted to make the W800 sportier, which is why we reduced the front wheel size. If we'd have chosen 17in or quickened the steering further it wouldn't have matched the W800 character and design.

Q Did you test or look at the competition, or are the improvements due to customer feedback?

No we didn't test any other bikes. We listened to some customer feedback, understood what they wanted. We improved the bike from an engineering R+D side and also from input from marketing.

Q. Which part of the bike do you like the most?

I should say the chassis as that is my speciality, we did lots of work on the chassis and suspension, but I like the engine, I like the looks of the engine.

Q. Why introduce the Café version?

We wanted to appeal to a wide range of customers, we have seen a growth for this type of bike, which is why we produced the Café version.



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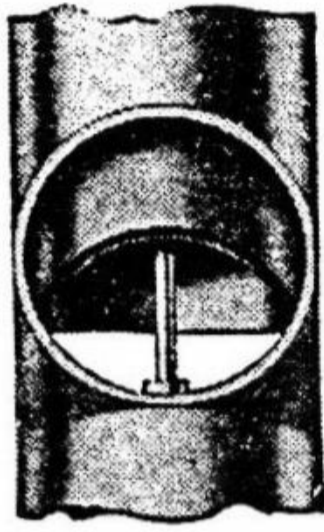
CBG Workshop

PHASES OF AMAL NEEDLE JET CARBURETTOR THROTTLE OPENINGS

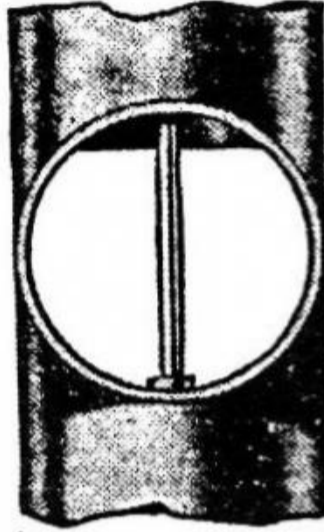
Up to $\frac{1}{4}$ open	from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ open	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ open	$\frac{3}{4}$ to full open
PILOT JET	THROTTLE CUT-AWAY	NEEDLE-POSITION	MAIN JET SIZE



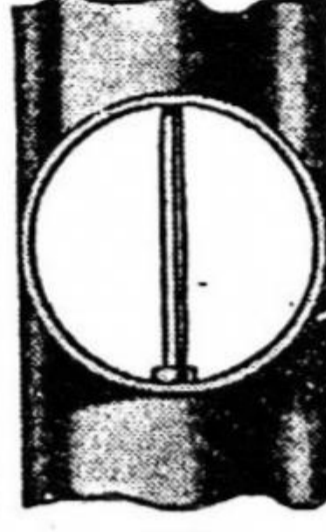
2ND & 5TH



3RD



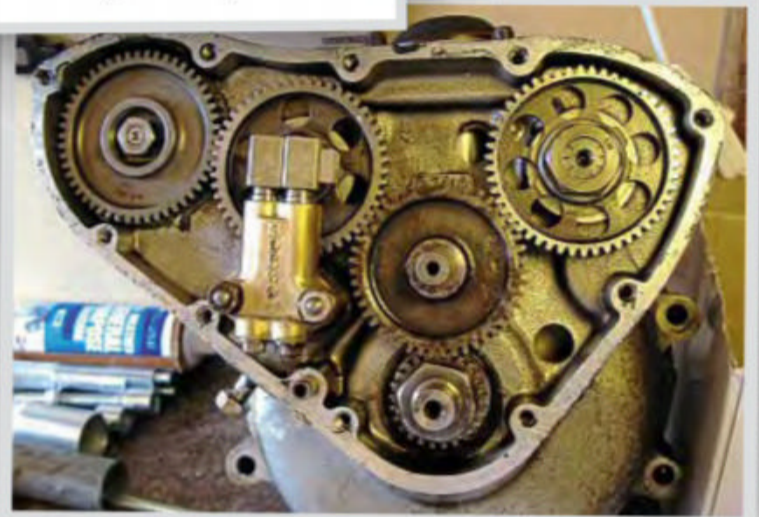
4TH



1ST

Sequence of tuning

I found this illustration in my Norton maintenance manual and it so simply describes what I've spent years trying to fathom out – what in a carburettor is controlling the running, when and at what load. It's really useful and I hope it helps!



▲ Triton rebuild

A superb story about a bike that means so much

▼ Project Norton

We get the crank and big end rebuilt



▲ Classics on the cheap

Take an unloved bike and make it your own, for as little as possible!



How's that work?

Wiring tools

Electrics need not be daunting – a few choice tools and some logical thinking will get you through.

IF MOTORCYCLE WIRING SCARES YOU witless, then you can take some comfort from the fact that you're not the only one. For many owners, bike electrics seem a black art form but they don't need to be – in fact, given the right kit it's actually hugely rewarding to sort out your bike's electrical poltergeists.

WHAT YOU NEED

First on the list of must-haves is a multimeter. It doesn't have to be expensive either, but get one that has a readout and not simply lights, so you can see how much current or voltage you are getting somewhere. The cheapest start from under £5, a £10 unit will get you well on your way and £25 will get you everything you'll ever need and more. In fact, the more expensive ones can make the whole job seem trickier than it is! Check out YouTube for tutorials as a rough guide on how to use and fault-find.

Invest in some proper connectors in the format that best suits your bike. Avoid those nasty pre-insulated types sold by car spares shops and buy from the likes of Vehicle Wiring Products, who are the default for many classic vehicle fans. A decent stock of male and female connectors, together with the appropriate slide-on insulators, should see you almost future proof, once you've bought a crimping tool. Some might argue if you crimp connectors using ordinary

pliers you deserve all you get but let's be honest here – we've all done it at least once! Using the correct crimping tool for your wiring/bike set-up is a revelation and you'll genuinely wonder why you bothered with anything else. Buy a set of medium price wire-strippers and a half decent pair of side-cutters and you're almost fully sorted.

START BASIC

Start small and learn how to replace dodgy/inappropriate/damaged connectors on your bike to gain a basic understanding of how the various tools work, along with upping your confidence levels and then progress your way up. Treat yourself to a few metres of wiring in the relevant colours and then tackle something simple, such as a brake light switch or a rear light. Once you've mastered these you can move on to ever more complex jobs.

Loom sleeving is readily available in a wide range of sizes and it's really not rocket science. A hand-held electric or gas powered soldering iron and reel of electrical solder will see you splicing in new wires. Add some loom tape to your kit and you have pretty much everything you're ever likely to need. And if you don't know what wire gauges to use for a given job, ask your supplier, as they're normally only too happy to help. Wiring isn't difficult – it's just different from nuts and bolts, that's all. **CBG**



Get the right connectors for your age of bike



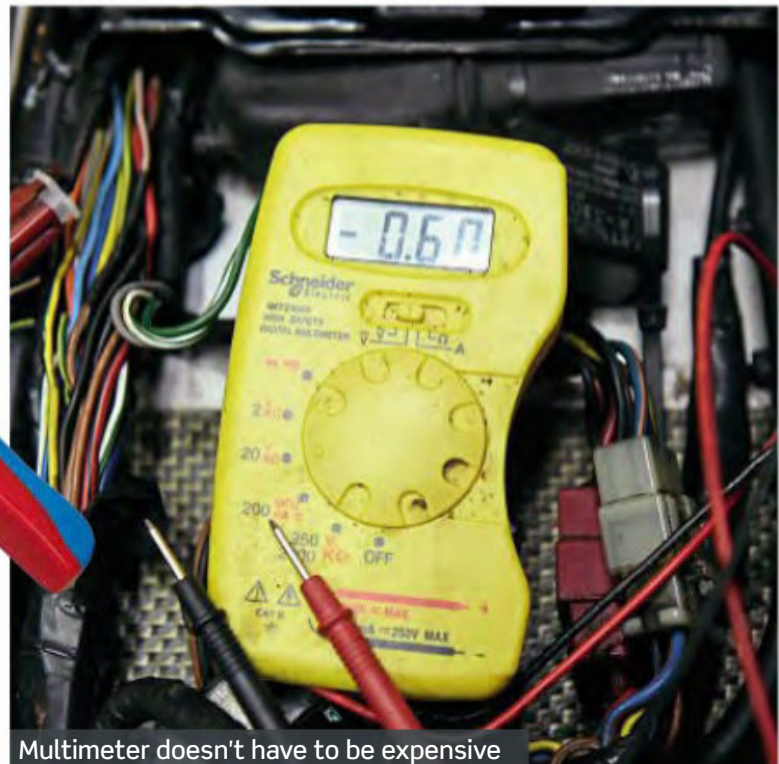
Ask the specialist for the right gauge wire



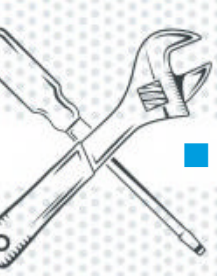
The more electrical work you do, the more sense it makes



Crimpers and wire strippers are essential



Multimeter doesn't have to be expensive



Fitting new gaiters

A split gaiter will shorten the life of your fork seals and make your bike look tired, but it's a simple job to replace.

WORDS BY OLI

IT'S AN OFTEN-HEARD COMPLAINT THAT the rubber fork gaiters you can buy these days don't last very long. Whether or not this is because the cheap rubber is just poor quality, or because the current materials legislation stops gaiter makers from using the nasty stuff in them that made them tougher isn't clear, but if you own and run an old Brit bike, the chances are you'll need to change the gaiters regularly. If you own a mid-to-late Sixties Triumph or BSA, the job is surprisingly simple, thankfully.

The original 50-year-old gaiters on my BSA Starfire gave up the ghost over the

winter, so a replacement set was sourced at the Bristol Classic Show, and I fitted them in less than an hour, using only a ½in AF spanner and socket and a little spray lubricant.

HOW TO DO IT

First, put the bike on its centre stand or raise the front wheel by using a lift or jack on a frame point at the front of the engine. Disconnect the front brake cable. You can do this at either end, but it's a lot less fiddly to do it at the handlebars and pull the cable through.

At this point it's worth deflating the

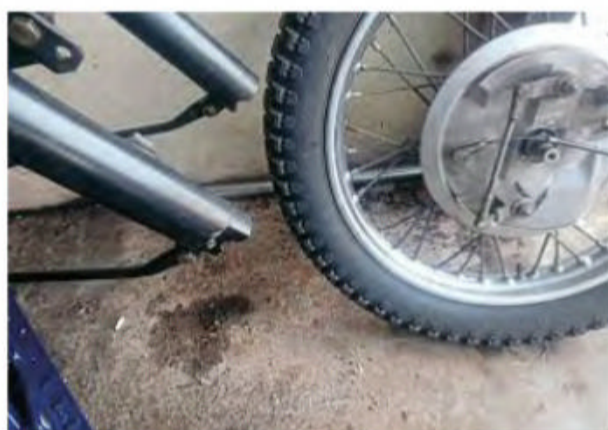




front tyre a little so that the wheel will easily clear the mudguard mounts.

Undo the bolts holding on the bottom fork caps. For ease of handling, undo the caps on the brake side first. Now the wheel should drop out, so move it out of the way. It's a good idea to check the condition of the wheel while it's off. Unbolt the mudguard. On the Starfire this involves undoing the two stays at the bottom of the forks, and the two bolts on the fork legs. Pull off the old gaiters – this should be easy to do, as they'll probably fall apart. Clean everything up and spray a little lubricant around the chrome shields at the bottom of the springs, and at the top, around the bottom of the headlamp bracket shrouds. These have a lip on them to hold the gaiters in place.

Slide the new gaiters up each fork leg, making sure the broadest end is at the top. Locate the top and bottom grooves in the rubber on the lips. Now reverse the disassembly process, making sure you refit the brake plate stay or locate it in the lug on the right-hand fork leg, replacing any split pins with new. A lump of wood, or similar under the front wheel will help when relocating the axle.

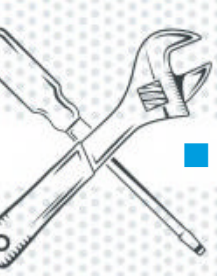


Have readers got any advice?

Would greasing them up inside help?
Let us know at editor@classicbikeguide.com and we'll share your wisdom!

If your gaiters use clips, refit them. Re-inflate your tyre, and the job is done. Stand back and admire your handiwork. Realise your new gaiters will probably split again in a year, as they don't make them like they used to. **CBG**





Triton Café Racer

Ever pondered the purpose of life? Here's the story of one man who found great purpose in finding pleasure in creativity, dedicated work, and ultimate achievement in building his dream machine, while at the same time caring for his wife, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, for 14 years. Let's call it motorcycle therapy - a subject I believe we all understand. This is Ken White's story in his own words...

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROB DAVIES AND KEN WHITE

AFTER MY DEAR WIFE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH Alzheimer's I became her only full-time carer and I needed something that would help me to cope with the daily routine of caring, a stressbuster for me. Then I had a thought. Way back in the 1960s, I had always wanted to build a Triton, but being a lad with low earnings that was never a possibility. Now, in my later years, my situation was entirely different. I had the skills, the time and the finances to take a project through from start to finish.

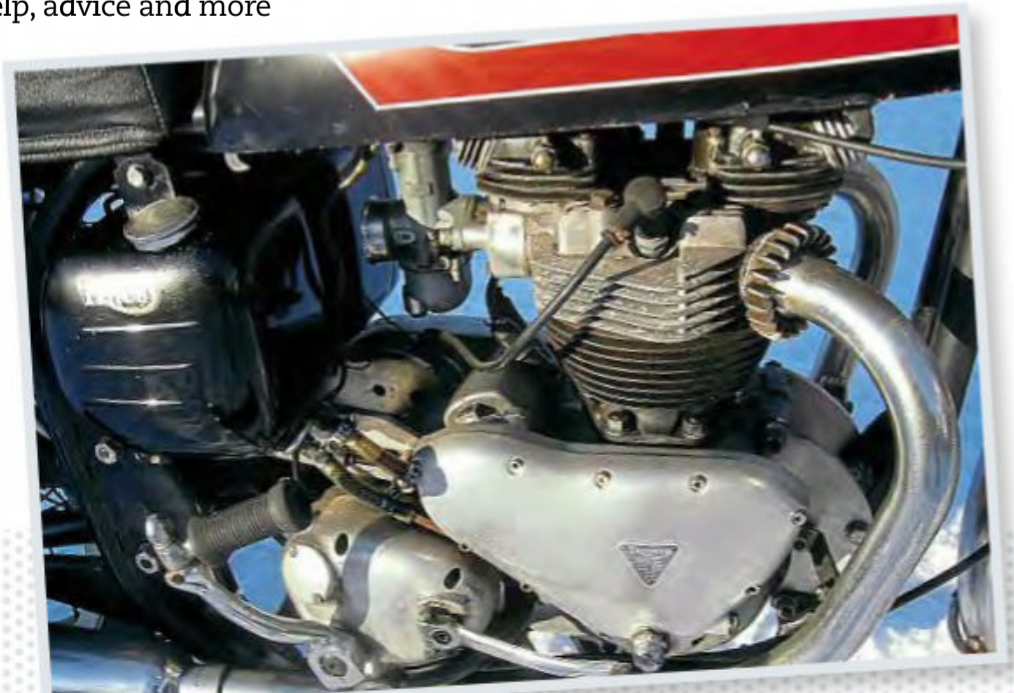
I looked around for separate parts or a complete bike for about a year, then a complete bike came along. I bought it on January 1, 2010; it was a bit rough, hadn't run, but at least the engine turned over and it was essentially what I was looking for. It hadn't been registered since 1995, had a standard 1961 6T pre-unit engine in a 1963 650cc Norton Featherbed frame. It also still had the Norton gearbox.

I felt like a teenager again and couldn't wait to start the strip down. I had so many ideas going through my

head as to how I wanted it. I also had a secret weapon in the friendship of a certain Pete Lovell who, as some of you may know, is a bit of a genius with bikes. We were tool room apprentices together in the early Sixties at the GEC, Witton, Birmingham. Pete has his own toolroom working on classic bikes, specialising in Nortons, and he also manufactures many Norton components for Norvil. He was to give me so much help, advice and more

Above: It's 2010 and the donor bike arrives

Below: It's a 1963 slimline Norton Featherbed frame fitted with a 1961 single carb 650 6T pre-unit Triumph



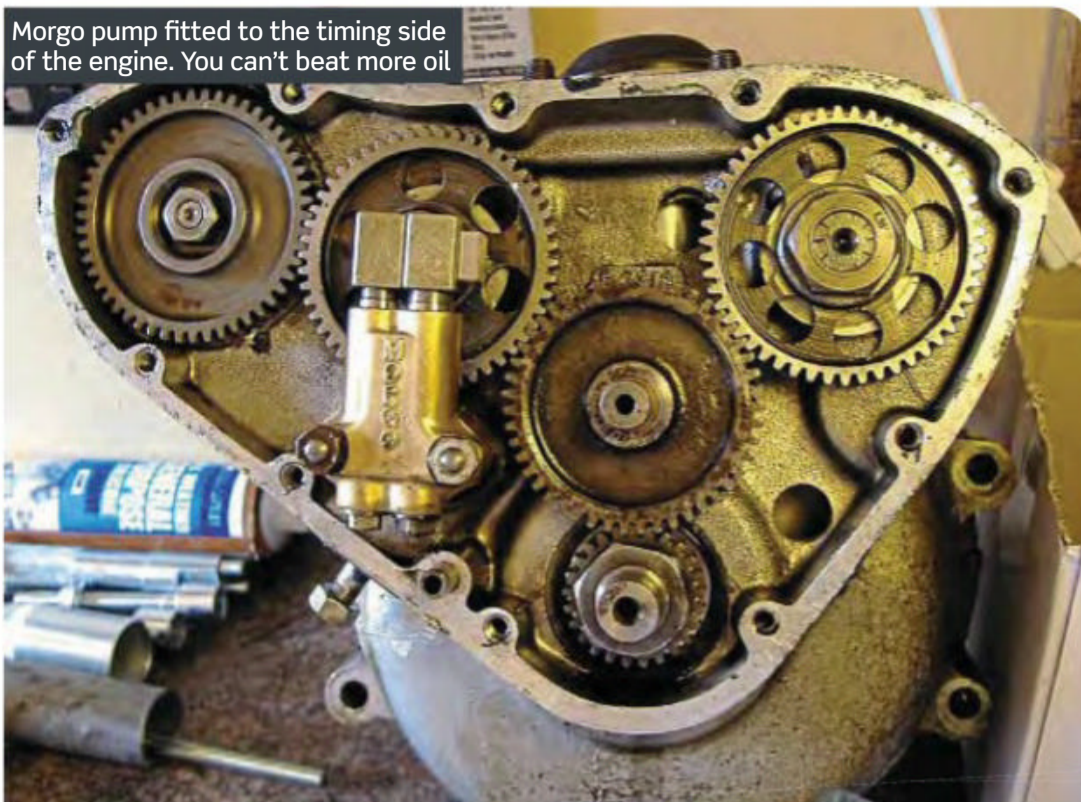
importantly, he gave me the run of his toolroom to do whatever I needed to do or make for the Triton.

The strip down was straight forward, considering the bike had been owned and worked on at some stage by a blacksmith. There was evidence of quite a bit of butchering and make do and mend on the engine. For example the exhaust pipe fixing stubs in the head had been welded in and were about an 1/8in off centre, so I machined them out, made some aluminium oversize inserts, tapped them back to standard on the correct centre and fitted new stainless stubs. The rocker boxes had been painted black, and there was evidence of quite a bit of security wiring at some stage in its life, so maybe it had been raced. However – none of these tatty parts truly mattered in the great scheme of things, because my build policy right from the start was to have everything new, or look like new.

As I was replacing every bearing, oil seal and bush, I stripped the engine down totally. The crankcases, head, rocker covers and anything else that benefited, were bead blasted. The crank was reground, and I wanted to replace the sludge tube in it, but you wouldn't believe the trouble I had doing that simple task. First, I had to drill out the retaining screw, as it withstood all attempts to unscrew and then retap the thread, then the tube wouldn't budge so that had to be drilled out too. But we got there in the end.

I decided to fit a Morgo 750 Big Bore conversion, which meant the crank would need rebalancing. I also fitted a Morgo oil pump. I replaced all valves and guides, whether needed or not. I stripped the Norton gearbox down and found it was in surprisingly good condition, so I just replaced bearings, bushes and seals. I converted the outer cover to take oil seals around the

Morgo pump fitted to the timing side of the engine. You can't beat more oil



kick-start and gear change shafts to cut out any possible leaks. Pete then assembled it for me as he's done so many he can do it blindfolded!

I decided to fit twin 1 3/16 in Amal concentrics, but as the inlet tracts were only 1 1/16 in I had to bore them out, which was easy enough. But because I was fitting twin carbs onto a single carb trophy head it meant I needed individual manifolds. I looked everywhere on the internet and couldn't find a twin manifold that would fit on the trophy head, so I made my own. The things we do for the love of building bikes, but we wouldn't have it any other way would we?

My other bike at that time was a Triumph T100T Daytona with twin carbs as standard and with twin individual manifolds. So I bought two Daytona manifolds and guess what – the mounting holes didn't match the stud fixings in the head. Now there's a surprise, so yet another mod on the head. I filled the existing manifold stud holes with alloy screwed rod, and redrilled and tapped new stud holes on new wider centres to suit mounting plates I made for the Daytona manifolds. These mounting plates had two holes in each for fixing to the head and two tapped stud holes to suit the two Daytona manifold mounting holes. All that sorted out the twin carb mounting, and although I say it myself it looked very neat and certainly not a make do and mend mod.

That was about it for the head; well until I recently decided to take the head off and modify it yet again and fit twin spark plugs.

My attention turned to the primary drive as I had decided to fit a belt drive with a Commando clutch. This belt drive also gave me a few headaches, simply because I wanted a wider belt than the standard conversion that I could get for the pre-unit triumph, ▶



Above: The head was in a right state when I inherited it. Much work needed to be done to make this of any use or ornament

And here it is, but I haven't yet got around to fitting the second set of plugs



So there they are, and yes there is an improvement over a single plug





which was a 20mm wide belt. With modifications to a new three-phase, high output alternator and its mounting ring, I managed to up rate the belt to 25mm. Pete supplied me with a 25mm belt pulley and a silver grade belt. This belt will give the strength of a standard 30mm belt.

As the commando clutch was going in a pre-unit short chaincase, the chaincase cover fouled the clutch housing because there's such a large dome shape in the cover. I didn't need to machine the clutch housing shorter, just machine a radius on the corner big enough to miss the dome of the cover and it worked. The cover also needed to be altered because I didn't want the hole through it for the old footrest fixing. I turned an aluminium plug and held it in from the back with a socket screw and Pete TIG welded the front.

After blending the welded plug with the cover and having it polished, you couldn't tell there was ever a hole there. By this time I'd assembled the forks, which I'd completely rebuilt and polished. These went into the frame along with front wheel, swinging arm and rear wheel. The rear wheel is the original Norton drum with new bearings, seals and a new alloy rim with stainless spokes. The front wheel was 100% brand new. The hub and brake are a Grimeca double sided, twin leading shoe in an alloy rim with stainless spokes. I wasn't fond of the twin pull arrangement that came with the Grimeca front brake; it was very basic and ugly. So I used a mid 1970s Suzuki front brake lever, which was purpose made in die cast alloy, with the added bonus of a built-in stop light switch.

And then my first big problem occurred. I'd had the frame and all the ancillary bits and pieces powder coated silver grey. Over the space of about a month the clear coat on the frame started to crack away from the colour coat, and it ended up looking like a spider had spun a web all over the frame. I contacted the powder coaters and they did the right thing and came to inspect the frame. Apparently, the time between putting the colour coat on and putting the clear coat on had been left too long, so they agreed to have it back and redo it. This was all well and good, except it meant that I had to strip the whole frame clean again. Oh well, one thing I have learned is that a motorcycle restorer has to become a bit of a philosopher at times.

Nevertheless it did cost me about four months' extra work because of having to care for my wife at the same time.

I then turned my attention to the alloy petrol and oil tanks. I looked around, but they were either silly prices or people wanted 40 weeks delivery to make them. As I've mentioned, my mate Pete does a lot of work for Norvil so he mentioned this dilemma to Les Emery, who owns Norvil. And here I had a stroke of luck; life is a bit like snakes and ladders – up one minute and down the next – for Les had both items in stock.

The petrol tank is a three gallon Lyta type. The oil tank fixing was just two 5/16in screwed rods through two holes, top to bottom, in the centre of the tank. Although this was rubber mounted, it did allow the top of tank to flex quite a bit. To overcome this I had a small modification done by Pete, who welded an alloy tube across the top rear corner of the tank; then I fitted a piece of rubber oil pipe through it. This allowed me to mount it, via a length of 5/16in UNF screwed rod, to the two fixing brackets under the top frame tubes at either side. This then held the oil tank far more securely.

By this time, when I was about two to two-and-a-half years into the build, my dear wife's illness was getting much worse, and as a consequence I was able to spend less and less time on the Triton.

Weeks flew by and I never even had time to get into the garage. I must admit that at this stage I started to lose some interest in the job. But then one day I

Top: The Morgo Big Bore 750 barrels and pistons are now in place and just look at the dome on those pistons

Right: Oil and fuel tank from Norvil, and reconditioned fork legs in the background

Bottom: The powder coated frame that came to give me so much trouble. But it was great in the final analysis

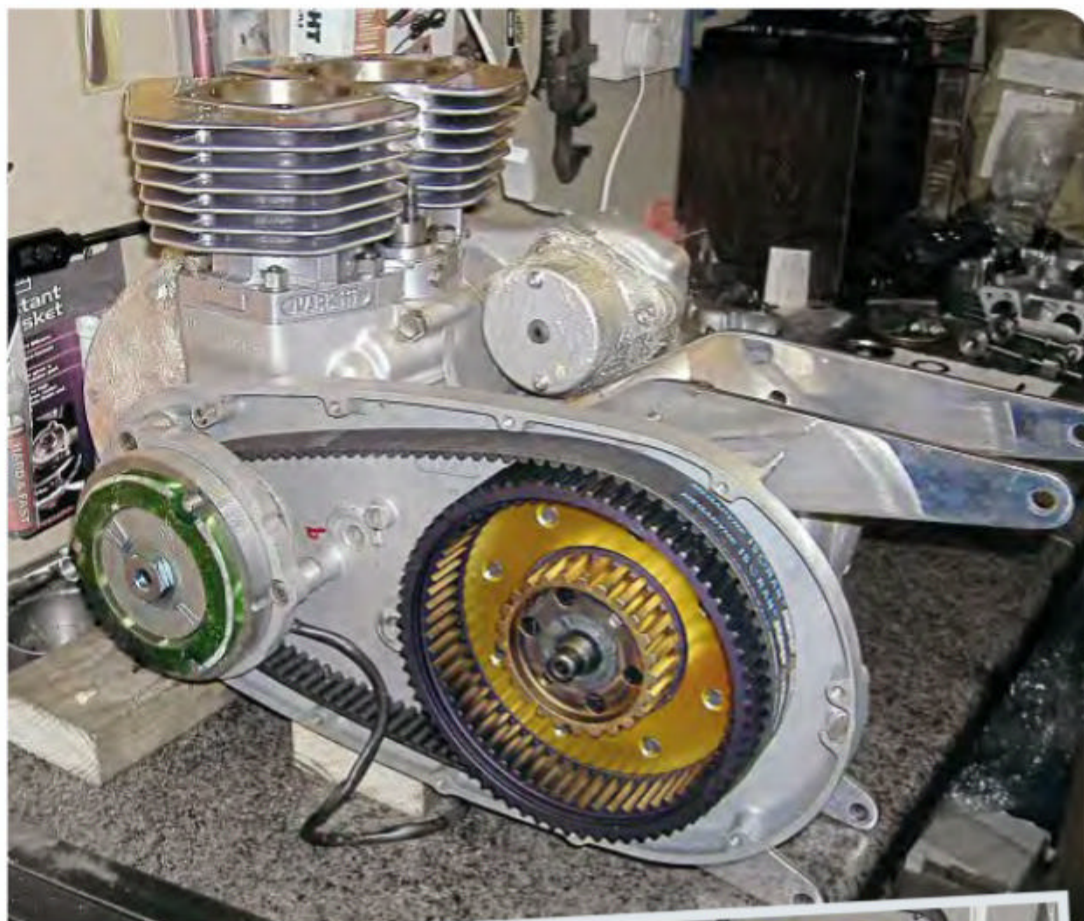


took a step back and realised that I had put too much time, money and effort into this bike to give up on it. So I changed tack and started to focus on something completely different – the seat.

I didn't want a run of the mill, usual slab type Café Racer seat with an oil tank filler cut out and I didn't want glass fibre either. I looked around at so many sites here and in America, but couldn't find one I liked. So I decided to make my own, or more to the point, get a panel beater friend to make the base for me. He had the bike for a few weeks and he made it fit the frame to suit my specs. I then had it covered by Leighton's in Birmingham; and I must say I'm very pleased with it. It's not everyone's cup of tea, but then that's why we make individual bikes isn't it?

Another modification I have done is to do with the crankcase breather. I did away with the standard Triumph disc breather that fits at the end of the exhaust cam and fitted a breather that Pete Lovell designed and makes. It fits in the standard crankcase breather pipe and is a one-way valve. This creates a negative pressure in the crankcase which not only reduces potential oil leaks, but also reduces the pressure on the pistons on the down stroke which means the engine doesn't work as hard for the same power.

For the instrument panel I used a Unity Equip all in one mount. This allowed me to mount not only a speedo and rev counter, but also the ignition switch, lighting switch and warning lights all in a neat centre arrangement. However this then allowed all the wiring and underside of the switches and warning lights to be on show, not a nice look for a minimalist Café Racer look. I meditated for some time about the aesthetics of this important area of the bike and concluded – what this needs – is a nice polished aluminium box that will fit over the underside of the mounting bracket to cover all the electrical gubbins. So I had to make the box didn't I? I made the walls of the cover, the base and fixings while the seams were welded, cleaned and the



Above: Norton clutch and belt drive and also up rated alternator

Right: Stylish gearbox brackets bring everything into place

Below: And they fit into the frame



whole outer of the cover polished. A hole for the wiring was cut in the back of the cover, and a rubber grommet fitted. Take a look and see what you think.

As I mentioned earlier, I didn't want to do the usual twin plug mod where the extra plug is fitted in the centre top of the combustion chamber. I wanted to fit the second plug so that the exit point in the chamber was dimensionally in the same position as the original plug, but on the opposite side of the chamber. This to me would give a far more efficient burn than a central plug, and because of this it means the ignition can be retarded two or three degrees. To do this I needed to sort out the centre dimensions and entry angle of the extra plugs and what size plugs and caps I could use. Pete has many original machine drawings for Norton and Triumph components and he had one of the original Trophy head drawings from Triumph. With this drawing, and my CAD/CAM software, I was able to determine exactly where to put the extra plug.

I ended up using 10mm spark plugs from a Honda. That done, I assembled the head back on the engine. The head steady that was on the bike when I had it was a right botched job, so I made a new one out of alloy, a very sturdy one. I found a piece of alloy in our scrap box that was almost the perfect shape, so I welded a



rectangular alloy plate on the bottom of it to bolt to the four head bolts. For the two fixings to the frame, because the alloy was thick enough, I spark eroded two slots to go over the frame fixings and this allowed the fixings to be hidden. This made for a very neat appearance. It was just a matter of getting it polished then.

It was at this point that I took the mudguards off to get them polished, along with the head steady, chaincase cover and timing cover etc. While they were away being polished I looked at what I needed to do with making gusset plates to cover the gap behind the gearbox and behind the chaincase. Because the chaincase is a short Triumph one, it meant that the Norton gearbox was very close to the engine, making quite a big gap behind it to fill in.

By this time as the bike was slowly taking shape, there were other ideas pouring into my head regards the finished look from Pete and Chris, but I also determined that there would definitely be no corners cut on this project.

I made the gusset plates from 1/4 in thick alloy, and designed them on my CAD system. To get the shape correct around the gearbox I would draw it as close as I

could, then print that off full size, cut it out and try it. Then just kept adjusting it until it matched what I wanted. Once both gusset plates were correct, I made a machining programme and cut them out on the CNC machine. I think they look pretty smart.

The biggest job left to do was designing and making the wiring loom, so I thought it was time I started on the electrics. The first question was – where is everything going to be fitted on the bike? I'd already bought all the cable, bits and pieces for making the loom and had decided to use 'thin wall' cable. It's surprising how much thinner a bunch of wires can be with this type of cable. I also wanted to hide the electrics and wiring as much as possible to give a clean look to the bike. With this in mind, I put the ignition black box on top of the battery box, which is situated under the oil tank, in the air flow in case it gets warm.

As I'd converted the head to twin plugs I needed to fit two coils, so I bought two 6-volt micro coils. So now I had two coils and a three-phase regulator to fit out of sight, so I stood back from the bike to get a good look at how everything was going together. The petrol tank and seat were off at this point and I noticed a lot of space

After many months, the bike is starting to take shape. You start to take heart from the progress at this stage; but there is still a long way to go.



An SRM oil feed to the rockers looks and works well





A Suzuki brake lever is a much better unit than the Norton



Twin concentric and their bell mouths certainly fill the gap

under the seat. Well it looked like a lot of space until you try to fit the bits in it. In the end there was enough space, but it was a tight fit.

I needed a U-shaped alloy bracket to go around the mudguard, but that still meant I could only fit the coils, one on each side. To fit the three-phase regulator I had to make two small wedge-shaped supports and weld them to the U-shaped plate in the centre. I tapped two holes in each wedge and then mounted the regulator on the supports at an angle. Luckily the high tension cables from the coils were exactly the right length to reach the plugs with ease; another move up a ladder. As each coil had two HT cables I put one cable from each coil to cylinder one and the other cable from each coil to cylinder two and as the Pazon ignition system is a 'wasted spark' type it meant all four plugs fired at the same time. I crossed the cables so that if one coil went down both cylinders would still fire.

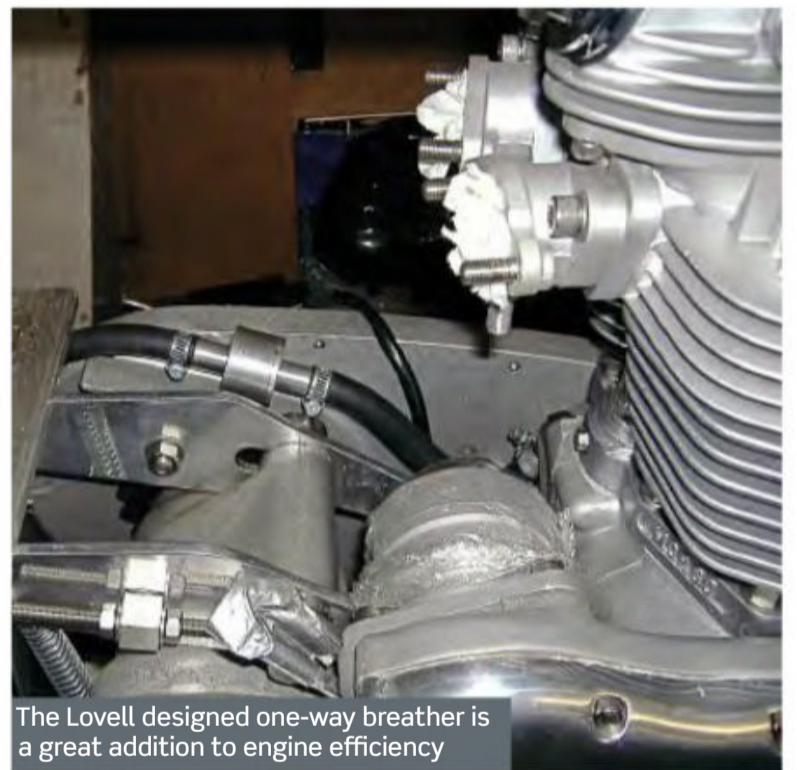
I'd fitted the tail-light, but I didn't fit the stop light switch because I wasn't sure exactly where to yet. The horn was an all chrome type so it wouldn't look out of place under the front of the petrol tank on

show. The flasher unit was a small LED type, so I put it in the headlight shell as there was plenty of room.

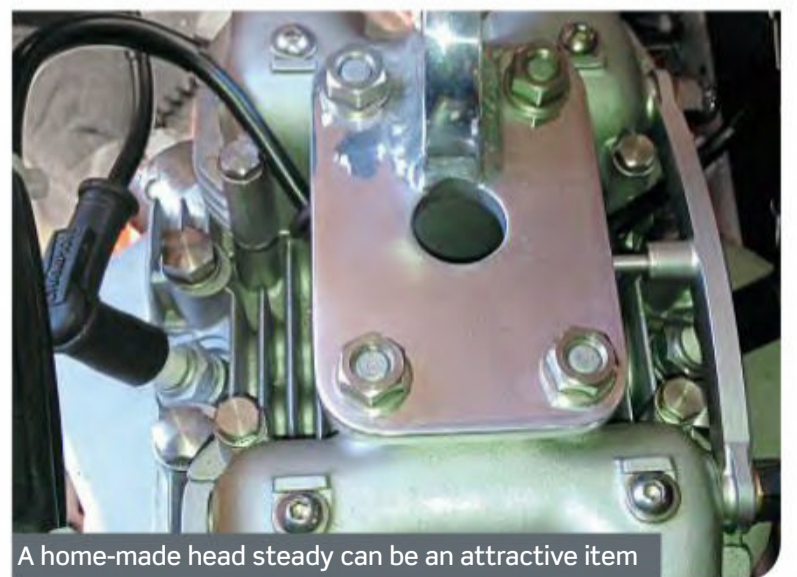
The left-hand handlebar control was a polished alloy one from a T160 which housed the indicator, dip and horn switches and of course the front brake lever had a built-in stop light switch. That was about it for positioning the electrics, so now I could concentrate on making the loom.

Just one more point about the electric components concerns the tacho and speedo. I've always liked the grey faced magnetic clocks of the Sixties period, so I bought a modern replica of each. This is where the heart took over from the brain. I gave no thought to tacho drive ratio, direction or speedo ratio. I'd already bought a new timing cover with a tacho drive mounted. It was only after the engine was started for the first time that I realised the tacho wasn't working and then it hit me as to the simple mistake I'd made.

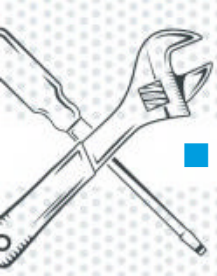
A pre-unit tacho drive from the right-hand side is a 2:1 ratio and it ran the opposite way to a unit engine drive on the left side which is a 4:1 ratio. The speedo ratio wasn't so important because the rear wheel drive box could be changed. Anyway ▶



The Lovell designed one-way breather is a great addition to engine efficiency



A home-made head steady can be an attractive item



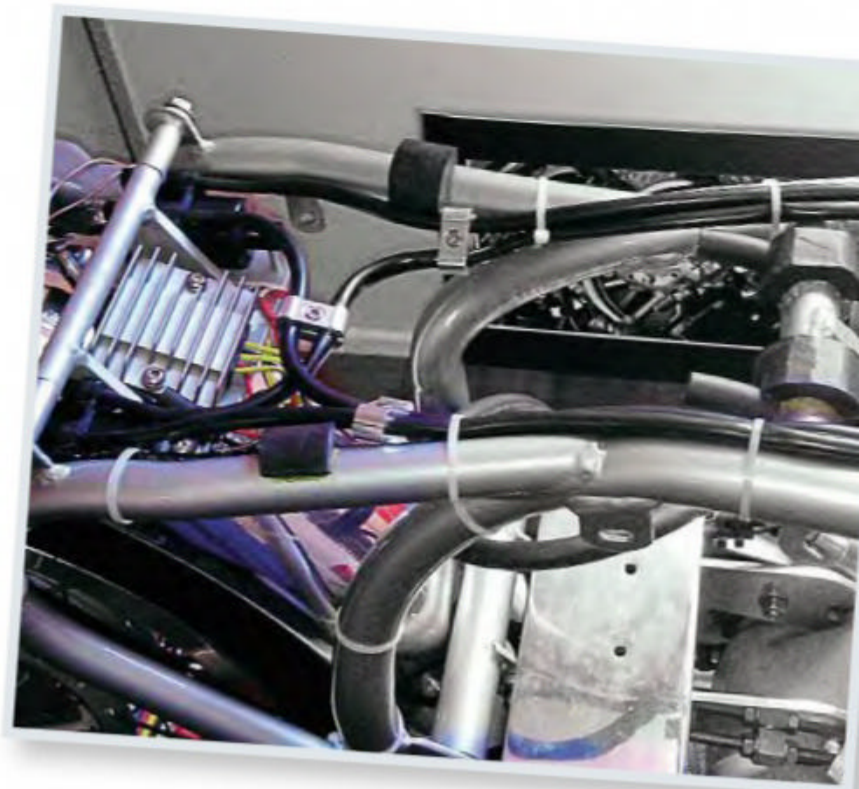
I looked at my options which were either having pre-unit clocks or get someone to alter the insides of the magnetic clocks I already had. I went online looking for clock repairers and found a dealer in Wales who sold genuine brand new clocks manufactured by Smiths Instruments Ltd. They sold all classic style clocks but with modern electronic workings. These didn't need cable drives so I decided to buy a tacho and speedo – it's only money!

This meant no worries about ratios or drive directions, they just needed programming for two cylinders, speedo drive ratio and wiring into the loom. Although expensive I have no regrets, they look great and the quality is excellent.

I then had to make the wiring loom because nothing is in the standard place. I started to utilise multi-connectors instead of bunches of bullet connectors; they save having to connect separate wires one by one. The biggest one I used was an eight connector in the headlight shell. This allowed me to take the headlight off and on a lot quicker and easier than with bullets. I'm sure most of you can relate to crimped cable joints being a right pain in the bum when they decide to corrode, well I can anyway.

So although I crimped every joint, I also soldered every joint as well; a lot of joints to solder, but they don't take long, and well worth it to do the job right.

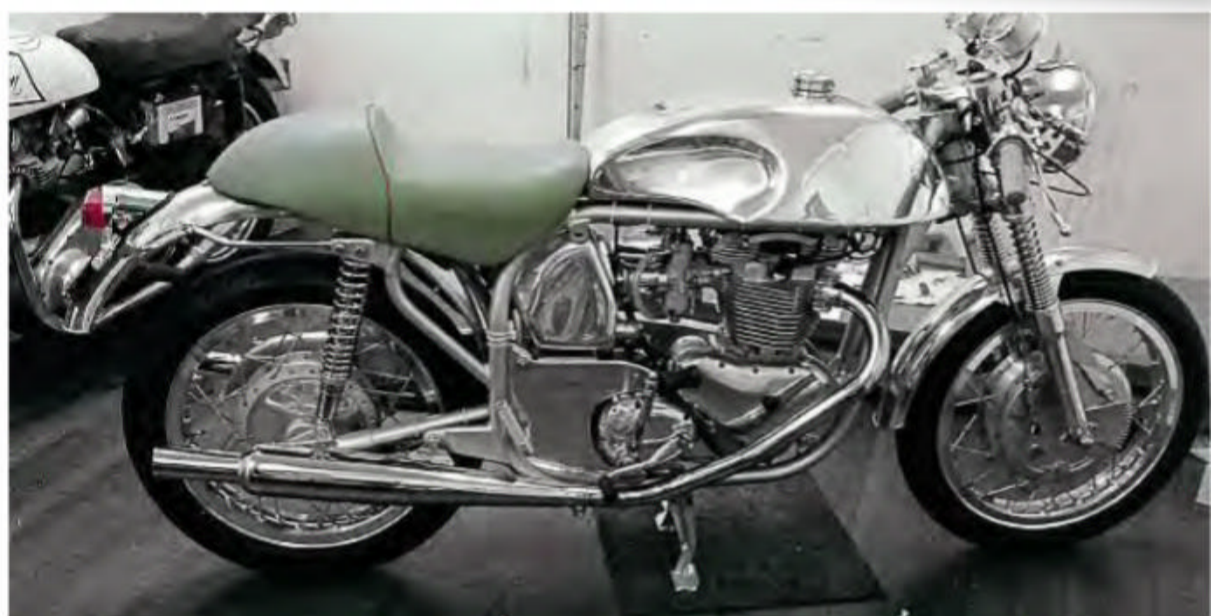
I've fitted a centrestand and some may say Café Racers don't usually have them. I fitted one for ease of servicing and because I'm what's called vertically challenged, and I can kick it over far easier on the centrestand. The mod was to peg and weld the cranked lever off a Triumph centrestand onto the left leg of the Norton centrestand and weld two radiused feet on the underside of the stand feet. This has been so effective that I really don't have to lift the bike to help it on the stand, just



Right: What goes under the seat

Below: There is no doubt about this bike, it's is one serious Café Racer

Bottom: The one-off custom seat and Grimeca brake look good together



push my foot down on the lever and it rolls on.

When I finally came to look at the rearsets, I really wasn't sure which way to go. Whether to have a linked gear lever, a looped type over the kick-start or a reverse gear lever. With my short chaincase and the gearbox being closer to the engine, it meant the loop or linkage type gear change would have to be longer than normal.

I made a bit of a mock up of both to give me a rough idea of what they would look like and I didn't like either, too untidy. Both the 'linkage' type and the 'loop' type looked very messy while the loop type especially looked very Heath Robinson.

That left just the reverse gear lever. Now what was available off the shelf? Very little it seems for my engine/gearbox layout. A standard lever reversed would have had to be bent to miss the kick-start and then rechromed and yes that would work except it would have been too short. But then I discovered that Norvil sell a purpose-made reverse gear lever, but even that wasn't what I needed. It's made with a 45deg angle which was too much to fit in with what I needed. So I would have had to bend that one too and rechrome it. I was now getting a tad disillusioned.

Would I ever find what I wanted? And then Pete had an 850 Commando come in to the shop for some work. The Commando's standard gear lever is made of alloy, albeit a short one. So I thought – alloy is easy to bend – I could weld a piece in to lengthen it. I could then shape it and clean it up and polish it myself. Pete had an old one in his scrap box with perfect bore and splines; another job done.

COSMETIC CONSIDERATIONS

One of the last things I had to design and make was a steering damper knob. I designed it on my CAD/CAM software and cut it on our CNC machine. The first one I did was flat-topped with six scallops around the circumference and a similar shaped engraved line around the top with the word 'TRITON' engraved in an arc in two places.

Then after polishing, I filled the engraving with red paint. But as I got more experienced with the CAD/



Above: If you look carefully, the primary case has had an extra viewpoint for clutch adjustments

CAM software I learned how to machine a dome on the top and how to engrave over the shape of the dome. I turned another blank knob and cut a dome on the top and engraved 'TRITON' only once this time, over the dome shape on the top of the damper knob. I polished it – but this time I didn't fill the engraving with red paint. This really does look the business, I love it.

That really is about it, apart from commissioning it, and that's when I had one of my biggest scares of the entire build. You know how you feel when you start an engine for the first time... You're wondering if you've done something wrong, or forgotten something important; that's just how I felt.

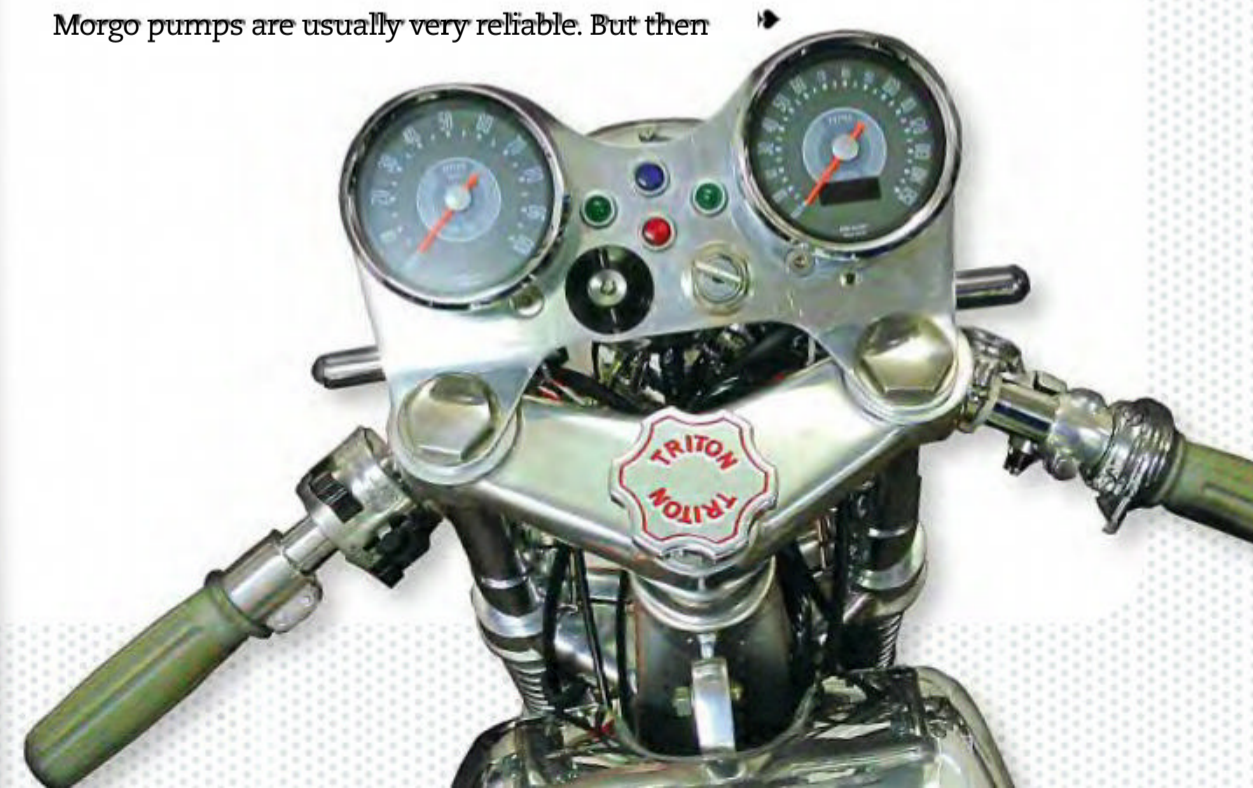
As the engine turned over and fired and there were no funny noises I got a great feeling of relief, but only for a few minutes. I looked under the back of the bike and there was a huge pool of very clean engine oil on the floor; it was coming out of the engine breather pipe. My heart sank and I turned off the engine and wondered what the hell had happened. I took the sump plug out and the sump was near enough full of oil, so I drained it and put it back in the tank. I started the engine and looked in the oil tank for signs of the return oil and I waited and I waited and nothing was returning.

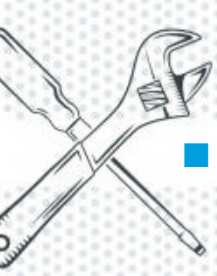
So, engine switched off, sump drained again I started looking for the problem. Was it the pump, or was it a blockage in the return circuit? I started from the oil tank and worked back to the pump. I took the oil union off the crankcase to check the gasket hadn't moved and was blocking the return hole. It was clear, as was the pipe back into the tank. Timing cover off, new Morgo pump off and check gasket was on the right way round, it was. I blew compressed air up the scavenge pipe, in the crankcase to check the circuit and it was clear. The only thing left was the pump and the flow plunger worked as it should, good strong suction, but the return plunger had no suction at all; the ball valve was stuck.

Morgo pumps are usually very reliable. But then

Left: Equip console, home spun electrical box and clip ons complete the classy front ensemble.

Below: Rider's view, and you have to admire the work gone into this gorgeous presentation





this pump, although I bought it brand new, had been assembled in the engine for about 2½ years. So maybe assembly grease had dried hard in the ball valve. I stripped the pump return plunger and did indeed find that the ball valve was slightly stuck. As soon as I touched it the ball moved off the seat and after I reassembled it, it was working fine. Having sorted the oil pump problem meant I could run the engine in safety and sort the carburettors out. I hadn't fitted air filters because I think they upset the look of this style of bike, but the pilot circuit was way too weak and the pilot jets were the pressed in type, so it wasn't easy to change them. Not impossible but a lot of hassle. I was advised to try changing the slides from a standard 3½ to a 2; this made a vast difference to being able to adjust the pilot circuit to what you would expect. It meant easier starting, tickover and pick up from very cold conditions.

Although I have increased the main jet to 240 I'm going to wait until it's run in before I start checking other areas of the carb.

Finally, the great day came when I got to take the exciting first ride down the road, and I knew that the bike was all that it had promised to be. Sometime later it went on to win a prestigious prize at the Stafford show – the years of toil and trouble had all been worthwhile.

■ *I'm sure that looking at the finished result, you will heartily agree that Ken White made a wonderful job of his Triton Café Racer. Sadly, his dear wife passed away, but Ken did his duty to her in the most loving, devoted and compassionate way that any man could; and through it all, he kept a sense of purpose and positivity throughout the whole trial. A lesson for us all there I believe.* **CBG**

Below: The earlier damping knob was the trial; this is the real business.



And finally, Ken White. One very proud owner and builder with his trophy. Well done Ken



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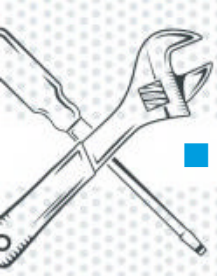


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This pic doesn't show how bad it was...

Classics on the cheap

Can't afford a Sixties Triumph? We've made a couple of unique specials with a classic twist for the price of a main service. Here's the first.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: KIRSTY GARNER & MATT

WE KNOW HOW GREAT CLASSIC ownership is, but it isn't the cheapest pastime. It's daunting for those not used to looking after old bikes with their manual ignition, finding top dead centre... and how do you explain tickling carbs? And for new riders, or those more used to modern bikes, there's the fun of changing gear with the foot you've used for braking, up instead of down for gears on some models but not others and of course a total lack of brakes.

Some modern bikes already look good, like Triumph's Bonneville family, Kawasaki's W800 and Harley Sportsters. But they also carry a price that could get you a true classic.

The two bikes here had the budget of a bag of jelly babies, needed to suit the rider and be something a little different that would fit in at an old bike meet.

SUZUKI GS500E

When a friend of mine, Kirsty, wanted to do her bike test I thought I'd let her have a go on an old GS500E I had in the shed after her CBT. Stupid idea. This poor, unloved ex-training school bike had last been

ridden in the midst of winter, then parked up. Although a battery started the engine up with fresh petrol, everything else was seized. I had to jump up and down on the pillion seat to free the shock linkage (it didn't free it, just compressed it, but made it easier for Kirsty to get her feet on the ground), you could only change gear with a mallet as the gear selector shaft was seized in the aluminium sprocket cover (so we stayed in first), the forks were leaking and the brakes were terrible. What an introduction to the wonders of motorcycling...

Somehow, she loved it and took a shine to the barely-mobile Suzuki. Hopefully that early foray helped with clutch control and getting used to the larger bike.

After passing her test first time, we were talking about bike choice as she wanted a classic bike. Then the GS500 came up again – after all, it is an air-cooled 500cc parallel twin, albeit in a modern frame. But that frame is steel, hence easily modified, so some fag-packet designs were hatched to make a new, lower, narrower subframe to make it fit Kirsty's size and hopefully look a little less modern. This meant stripping the bike.



One happy rider, one tailored-yet-cheap bike

The engine had a knock which sounded a little like the bottom end, but not, if you know what I mean. My friend, Dodge, declared it was probably the balancer shaft, but he couldn't be sure as the flywheel was so tight he'd broken his best puller! As the engine mount at the front had broken due to a corroding steel bolt going through the alloy casing, we looked for a second-hand unit to make one good one from the two. I found one at a breakers – only £99 and was alright, I was told. Muggins duly picked it up, to find it would only partially turn over, due to the small fact a valve head had broken off. So we found the best parts from each engine and with new odds and sods, bolted it all back together, set up



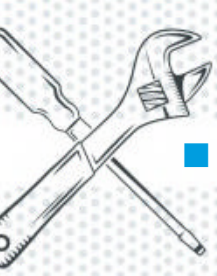
the valve shims and cleaned out the carbs. One job done.

The suspension came apart with ample big bars, heat and swearing. New bearings only cost a few quid (thank you for stocking bits for unloved bikes, Wemoto) and Kirsty cleaned up and painted the parts, along with the swing arm. The head races were fine but the forks needed a lot of work with a stone to flatten the rust spots breaking through the hard chrome, or else the new seals would be ripped apart. Meanwhile Kirsty rubbed down the wheels and painted them black – wire wheels would have looked amazing but it was hundreds of pounds so out of the question. Well, for now.

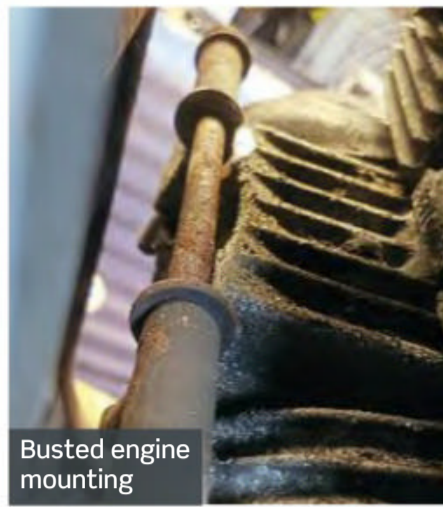
The subframe could now be cut off after taking many pictures and measurements. 15mm tube was used, mainly because you can use a plumber's pipe bender... although the bottom tube needed a shallow angle, so I hunted around for something appropriate. The perfect former ended up being the rear wheel of my neighbour's traction engine! I filled the tube with sand and bent enough to make the two sides and then used a bender for the rear tube. This was then MIG welded together 20mm narrower than the original and 15mm lower. A steel tray was fitted inbetween the two sides to give space for the electrics, though the battery remained in the same place, with a modified holder.

The tank remained standard, just painted in my friend's booth; thanks Nick!

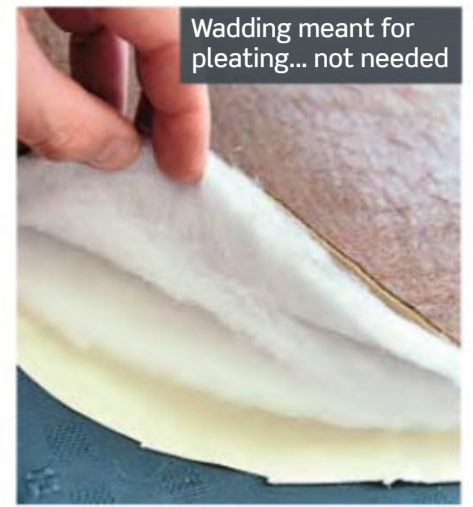
Meanwhile the bike needed an exhaust that would stand out, but not require any rejetting, so we also chose to keep the airbox. After a lot of head scratching and measuring I used the original pipes, cutting V grooves out and created a scrambler-esque high-level system, making a Y piece from sheet steel and the rest from an old piece of Opel Kadett exhaust. Bolted on this was an oval silencer I found in my spares. Kirsty then wrapped it brilliantly – it's horrible stuff to use, especially with tight bends. I know a lot dislike this look but it is a lot better looking than burns! We also made a heat



Corrosion was everywhere



Busted engine mounting



Wadding meant for pleating... not needed



Dual density foam

shield from the stainless finish from the original rotten silencer.

It was coming together. While I played with the wiring and tried to get the diodes needed to make LED indicators flash (I've since found out you can get LED-friendly relays – much easier), Kirsty made the front mudguard from an old alloy one, mating it to the modern forks. The number plate had nowhere to live, so as there was some 15mm tube left over, I made one from that which bolts to the swingarm, complete with light wires fed through it.

Kirsty made the seat from two different densities of foam on an MDF frame. The

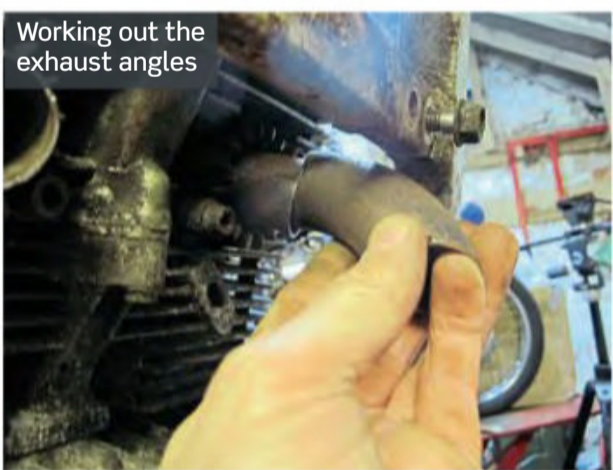
finish looks leather, but is fake, so it could go through my mother's sewing machine! The idea was to pattern the top and sides, but unfortunately I couldn't get the machine to work and mother was away, so Kirsty sewed it all by hand.

The MOT tester found no issues, but on a celebratory ride that afternoon, we found oil coming from the clutch pushrod seal. A part worth £5.35 put an end to the planned bank holiday ride, but the next week madam was away. I admit I had the steel tubing, the tools and a lot of the parts hanging around. And something to bear in mind is that Kirsty had to pay a lot

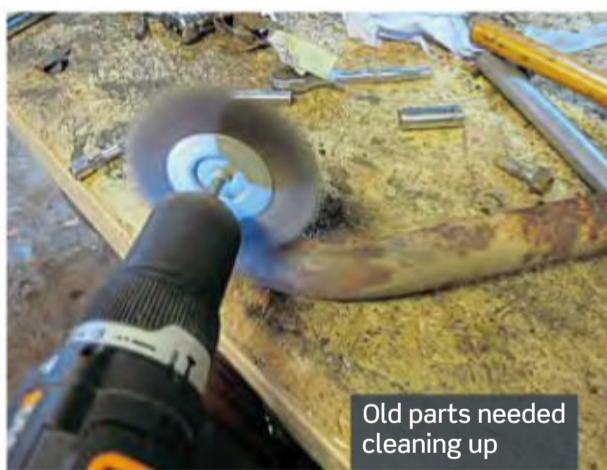
more for insurance as the frame had been altered; something I hadn't thought of. But in total, the bike would've cost around £600 to restore and get it as it is. With a GS500 worth around £300 in the state it was, that's a tailored bike for under £1000.

WHAT'S IT LIKE BUILDING YOUR OWN FIRST BIKE? - KIRSTY'S TALE

To build or restore a bike you need three things; enthusiasm, knowledge and parts. Enthusiasm is easy, if you want something enough you are probably half way there already. Knowledge, where do you even start? ... A garage? A body shop? A friend?



Working out the exhaust angles



Old parts needed cleaning up



Hacksaw finer than a grinder



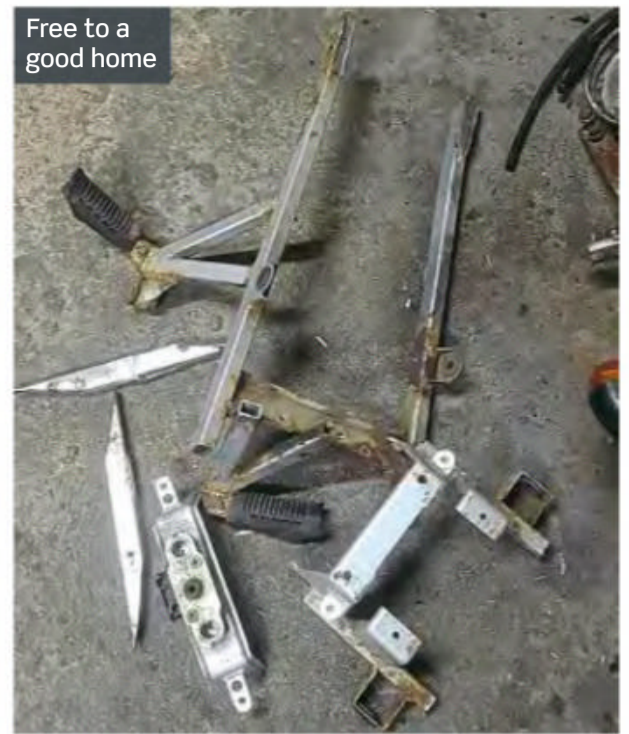
We used 80% of old exhaust



Lots of welding and grinding



Subframe lowers... formed round a traction engine wheel



Free to a good home



Starting to look like a bike



Engine was made from two

YouTube? Take your pick. And parts; do you have the right bits, bobs and tools?

It started when I tried riding the GS500 to help me get used to a larger bike after my CBT. At 5ft 4in tiptoes seems to be a regular occurrence when trying bikes but as with every new rider, having my feet down feels better. If it feels right, it's right, if it feels wrong, it's wrong. With most bikes, I believe there are options for lowering the seat height, suspension or getting built up boots.

As the suspension was seized on the Suzuki, Matt jumped on the pillion pegs, compressing the suspension and it stayed there – a new lower seat! But underneath was a flurry of rust snow. Yes, I know how it sounds but when I say it was snowing rust, you had to see it to believe it.

Despite this, and being limited to first (the gear lever was seized), we decided to work on my slow manoeuvres, figures of eight and U-turns. Despite it all, a fantastic introduction – and now to making the bike my own.

THE BUILD

Ending up with a personalised lowered bike with a chopped frame, new paint job, two engines built into one, from a knock, which I have to admit I could never hear but definitely trust was there, bespoke exhaust, customised seat and so much more, requires patience and hard work.

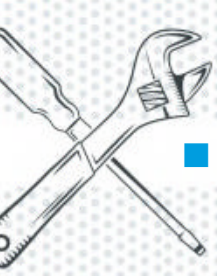
Full credit to Matt, I couldn't have even changed the lightbulb without his help. He was good enough to begin stripping / fixing the engine and getting parts ready to spray. He had also pre-chopped the frame and bent it around a traction engine wheel to give it a really interesting-style back end!

Having never sprayed anything before due to a clearly misspent childhood, I never knew how much was involved. Three words – wet and dry. If you know what this means you are unfortunate enough to have experienced the tedious and yet weirdly satisfying job of paint preparations. After dipping the paper in water and repeating as many times as

needed, primer, then paint, but unless you want the surface of your bike to resemble that of an acne ridden teen, take your time, shake your spray can well and only do thin layers to minimise your chance of drips and imperfections.

Now to the dry build. You see what you have done, what is yet to be done and how you may or may not have messed something up and need to fix it. It can be frame, forks, electrics, fixtures and fittings or just one small element. My personal favourite was the headlight; between buffing the original metal work, painting a fitting around the headlamp and routing and rerouting the headlight, indicators and ensuring the fittings are in the correct position I lost count at around 24 times of rebuilding this. But with things like the exhaust, foot pegs, mud guards etc this is an efficient way to make sure that you are on the right track to getting it right.

A custom seat isn't for everyone but normally a new frame means a new seat. With a new seat a new seat cover and



It's no beauty queen but it looks, sounds and feels great

a new seat cover requires someone to conquer the complicated art of setting up the sewing machine which you clearly need a degree for! So naturally, thimbles at the ready, I hand stitched the whole thing and stapled it tight. As I found out, sewing a straight line is difficult. Not to mention working out which panel goes where and which way around. The one thing I do recommend though – and discovered after finishing – is that if you fold one piece back on itself instead of just the standard back to back, it looks smarter! A job for the future I think.

By now I was itching to ride. But I didn't want to waste the hard work by racing through the last touches. Also, if you have any later jobs, for example wrapping the exhaust, don't skip reading the package which will probably say, 'glass fibre based, you should wear gloves'. I learnt that the hard way; the itchy hands are NOT worth it.

TIME TO RIDE, FINALLY

The Suzuki passed the all-important MOT and I taxed and insured it... so time to ride.

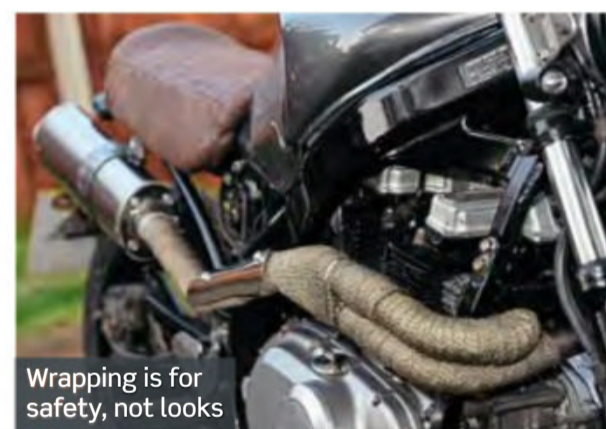
I have to admit I was pleasantly surprised. First appearances and wow! Is it a bobber, a scrambler or a café racer? No idea, but to me it is great. The growl of the engine was more than I could have hoped

for, sending an electric compulsion to get out there through my body; it was time.

Having only ever ridden new Kawasakis or Hondas, I have a very strange repertoire for a new rider with not a lot of experience. Handling was not as good as the newer bike, I found cornering a little trickier although the lean was perfect and freeing. As for how tight I could U-turn, I'm putting this down to my five months from passing my test until now!

The comfort was there (I know it was made with me in mind) but it's nice to feel confident with a good stance. Speed? I haven't pushed it. I was on roads I hadn't been on before and I took it steady. Also, as it's an older bike, engine braking isn't as exaggerated and the brakes weren't as firm as I was used to, but that's all part of riding a new bike. I ride now whenever I can, to work or for fun, every day bringing new confidence and enjoyment.

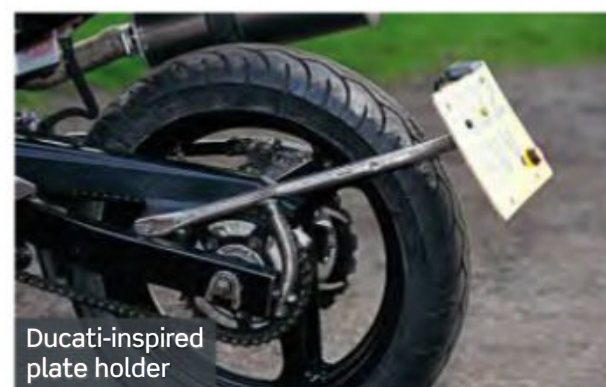
Overall, I'm really chuffed to have worked on such a project – I couldn't have done it on my own and learned so many skills. New riders need friends who share their knowledge, or maybe you're the helper keeping the mechanical skills behind motorcycling alive. If that's the case for you, I respect you so much. I'm proud of what we've achieved and the part I played to make that happen. **CBG**



Wrapping is for safety, not looks



Kirsty made her own seat



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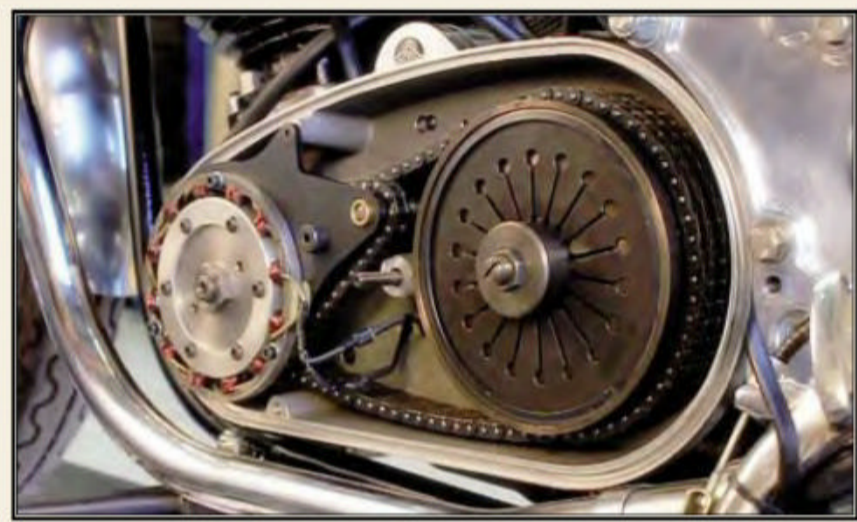
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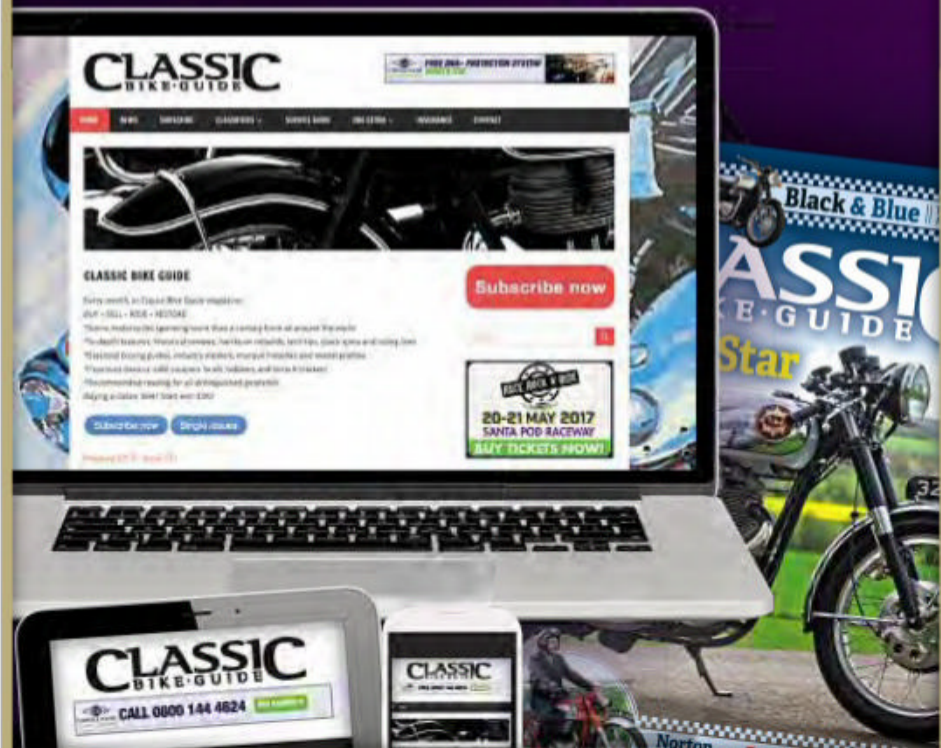


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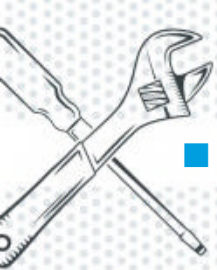
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PART
SEVEN

Project Norton ES2

Chasing the balance point

This month we get our big end replaced and flywheel balanced

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT

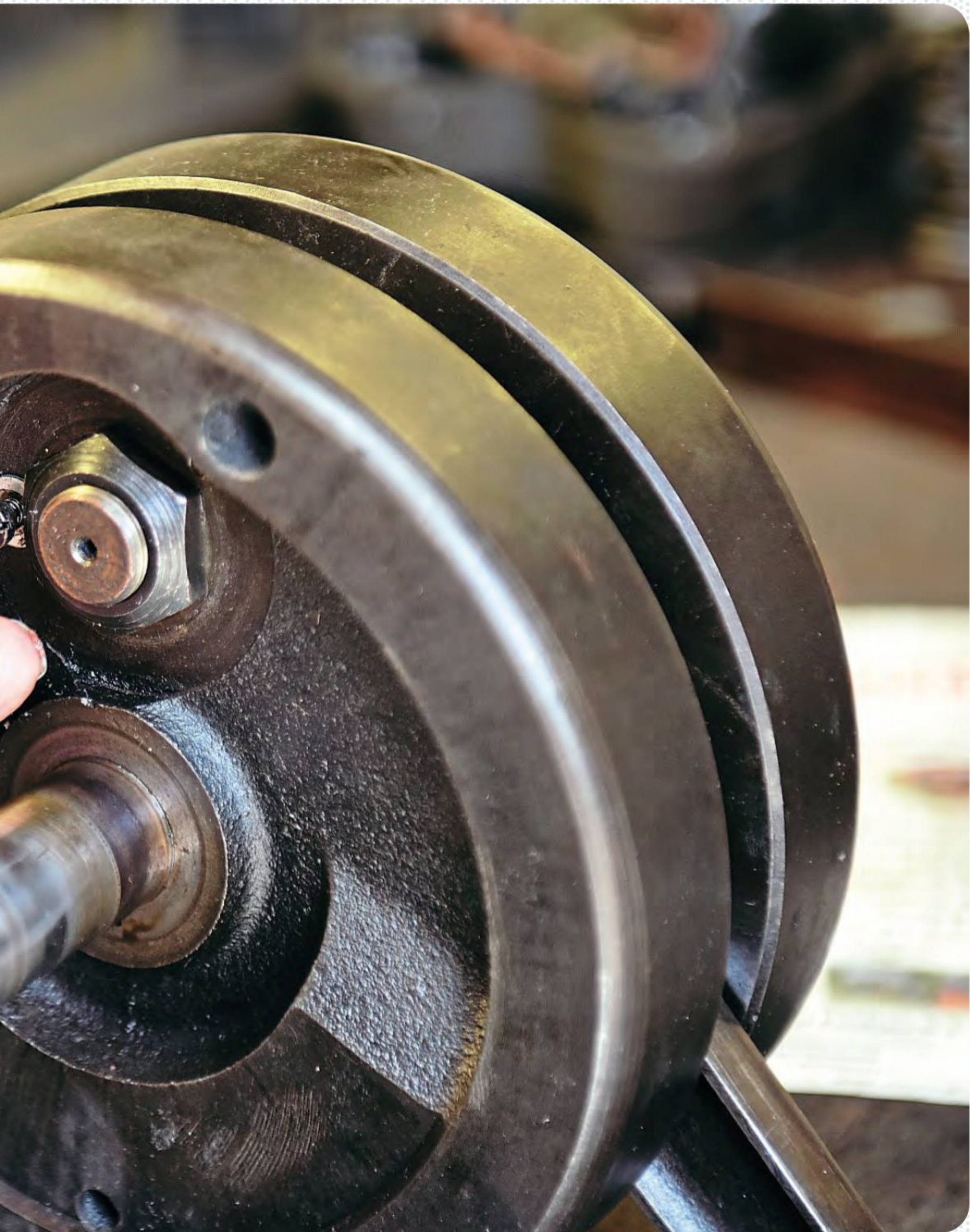
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COURTESY OF TREVOR HEDGE (TREVORHEDGERACING.CO.UK 01603 742466)

WITH ALL THE HASSLES THE worn cam followers, guides and rocker arms have caused in the last few weeks, it's nice to get a major part of the engine finished; the big end.

While there are few cranks that are as straightforward to pull apart than an ES2 – bolt together, no taper – it was still best to have this job done by a professional. After all, it is the central part and if it goes wrong or isn't balanced correctly, the bike will be horrible to ride and you'll kiss ▶







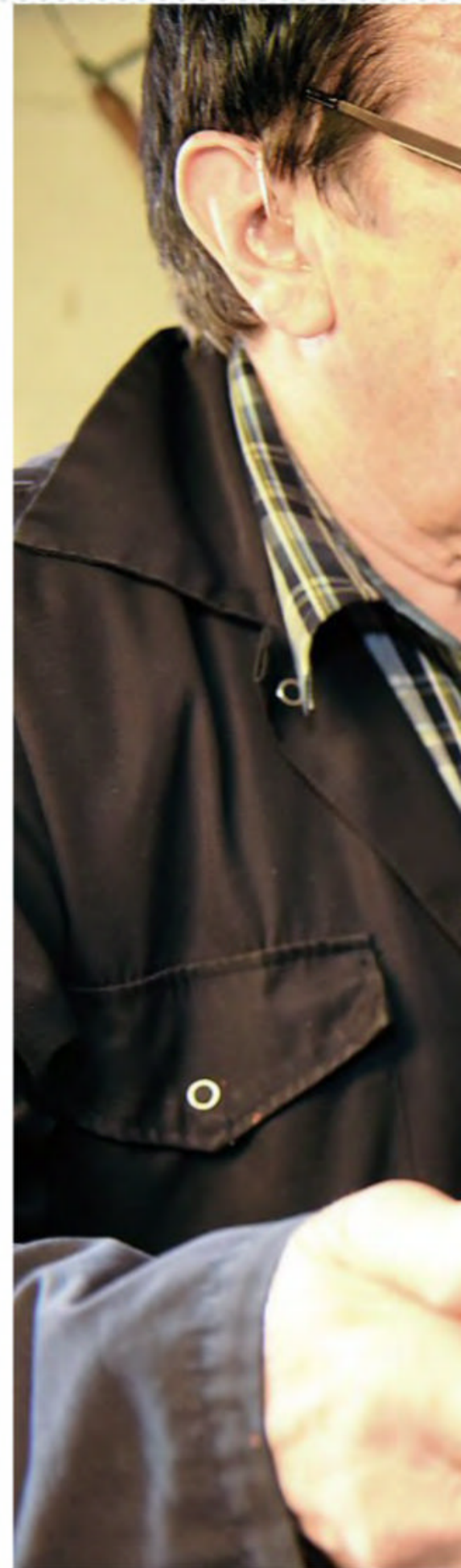
What is the BIG END?

The big end is the large end at the bottom of the con rod, which pivots around the crankshaft. The little end is at the top, where the gudgeon pin fits through to hold the piston.

Many people use the term 'big-end' when referring to the crank, or big ends or anything in that area of the engine.

Our ES2 has a three-piece crankshaft; the two webs (sides) and the crank pin. Some engines, mostly multiple-cylinder engines, have a one-piece crank, where the crank pins and webs are one part. The big ends are two piece and bolt together around the crank pin, or journal.

The big end and crank pin would wear each other away so some engines use bearings, while others use shells of a hard-wearing material.



Trevor uses a breaker bar to undo the crank pin nuts, but finds they are loose!

goodbye to the engine very quickly. The most qualified person I know for this task is Trevor Hedge, successful ex-speedway rider/ (he rode for Norwich, Wimbledon and the UK in world finals) turned engine builder. Trevor is used to large singles and has a brilliant reputation, which probably comes from working with scarily fast, high-revving speedway motors for more years than he would like me to say...

First job was to take apart the crank, which the friends I had asked to check, said felt fine. If it was down to me, I'd have left it, and Trevor agreed it felt fine with smooth rotation and did I really want to

replace the crank pin? You don't learn unless you see these jobs and I'd bought a new pin, so yes, let's do it.

Trevor rebuilds a lot of cranks, and has a marvellous old Humphries Simons jig made for the job. This heavyweight clamps the two webs securely and accurately, and would also be essential when bolting back together. So we removed the safety screws that ensure the crank pin nuts don't come loose, with large breaker bar and extension on the nut, both crank pin nuts were only lightly fitted – hinting that it had already been looked at. Again – never buy a box of bits like I did...

Still, one job that turned out easier than expected and the next job, was to press the old pin out. They are a tight fit, but with the press and correct size drift, easily and smoothly came out, revealing the roller bearings, with fairly unused grease – it had been apart! No matter, Trevor then checked all parts for any sign of trouble and gave everything, especially any oilways, a good washing in the parts washer before starting the rebuild.

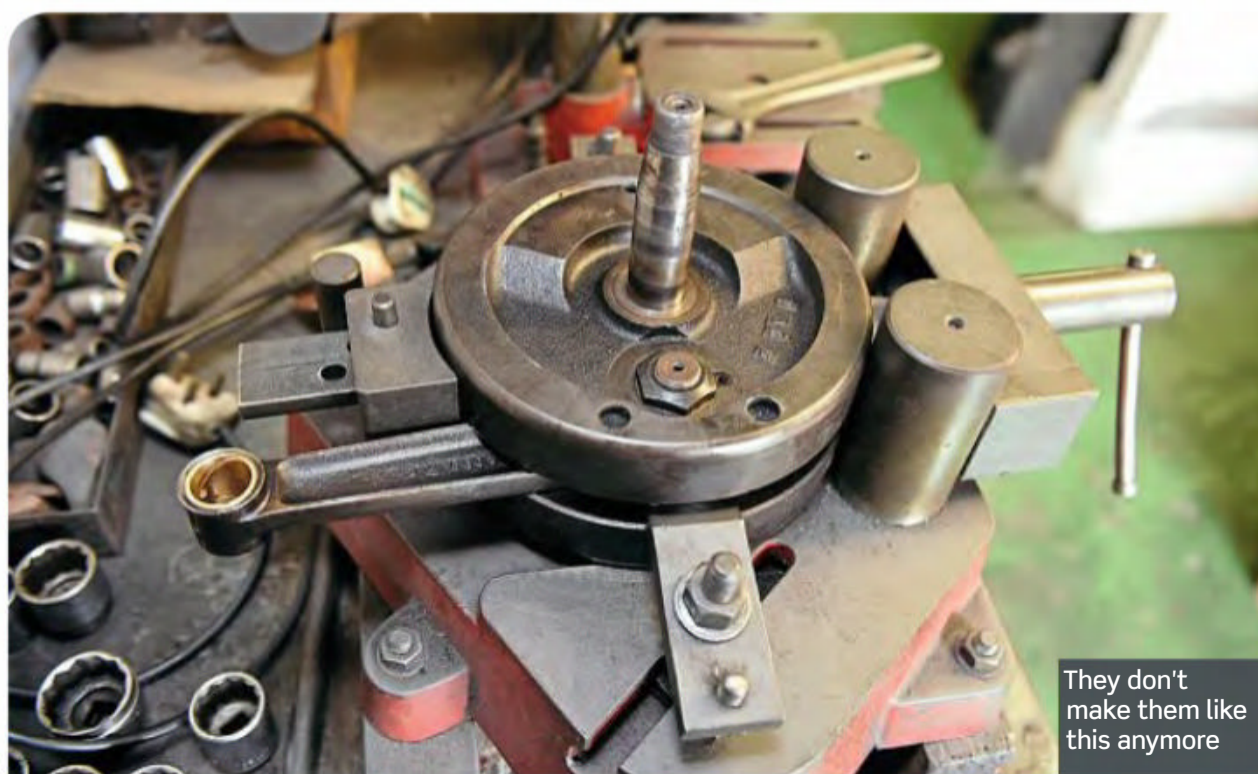
The new part wasn't cheap, at £160, but then how many big-end crank pins for an ES2 would you sell in a year? It comes as the pin, rollers, bearing outer and nuts.



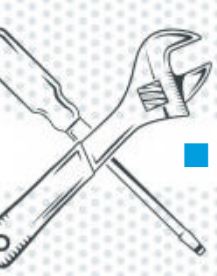
The old crank jig is superb and holds everything tight

We are lucky to be able to get these parts. It came in a strange goo that dries around the pin to protect it, so first job is to clean that all off, making sure none of the rollers get lost.

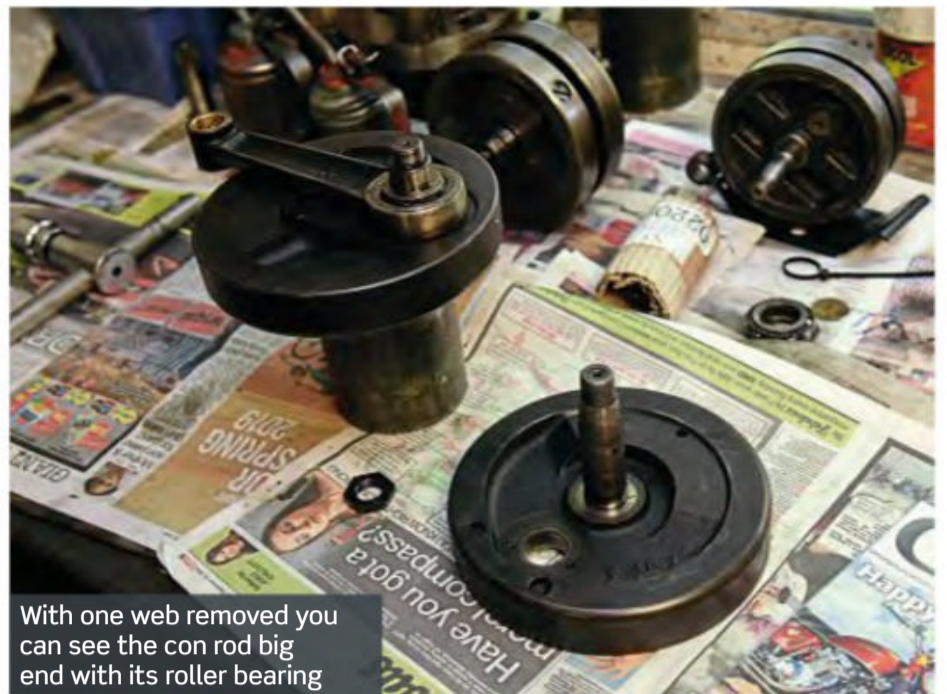
Once that was done, the old bearing outer was pressed out of the big end of the con rod and Trevor used another special tool to check the con rod was straight. You need the gudgeon pin fitted so you can mount a specially-made tool on it which helps to see if there is any twist in the rod, which could lead to stress. There wasn't – what's all this going to plan nonsense?



They don't make them like this anymore



Using the press to push out the crank pin



With one web removed you can see the con rod big end with its roller bearing



Checking con rod is straight



Rollers



New crank pin

I'd have never thought of this, but Trevor then measured the big end aperture and noticed it slightly oval, so that received a slight hone to bring it round again. This should help the bearing not have any tighter spots as it rotates. He also lightly chamfered the outer of the bearing outer to aid it going in; then we pressed it into the new bearing outer, making sure it was in square and not off-centre.

With the new crank pin clean,

It was pressed into one of the webs, making sure all was nice and square. We then greased and fitted the rollers into the bearing holder, then fitted the con rod over them, making sure everything was greased.

Next it was the turn of the second web. This has to be pressed on like the first, so Trevor spent a long time making sure all parts were correctly lined up with straight edges but all done by his experienced eye.



It takes a lot more force to tighten the new nuts!



Trevor has drifts of every size - here the new big end outer goes into the con rod

With the two crank webs pressed onto the crank pin, it was time to tighten everything up, so back to the jig. This also helps Trevor to check the two webs are correctly lined up, before the big bar is summoned to get those crank pin nuts tightened. I would tell you what torque we used, except I don't know - Trevor does it by feel! But I can tell you it was tight - hence the extension bar on the $\frac{3}{4}$ in breaker bar. The jig is essential, as you just couldn't put that torque through the pin without something moving out of true.

CHASING THE BALANCE POINT

Trevor has a lathe set up with a DTI gauge (Dial Test Indicator) on the crank main journal to show whether the crank is running true. Ideally, it should run very slightly toeing in away from the crank pin, so the webs are very slightly closer opposite the pin. The theory is as the piston forces

its way down after compression, the webs splay out under power, becoming straight under the force.

By slightly, Trevor was looking for around 0.015in toe in for each side, and after putting the assembly into the lathe one side was running true, while the other was 0.030in out - not bad, but needs improvement. But with everything tightened up, how do you adjust this?

Time, patience and a lot of experience, that's how. Trevor was marking the areas that were out with an engineer's pen, then, depending on what he thought best, would pop the whole assembly into the press and carefully squeeze the two webs at a certain place, or tighten the crank pin nuts on one side, or even hit it with a copper mallet - at just the right angle and at the exact point. How can hitting something with a hammer be so precise?

Every time something was adjusted, it

went back onto the lathe to be checked. One area would be better, but another would now be out. The white pen marks were rubbed out and more added in a slightly different place. This went on for some time, until a break was needed and tea was called for.

In the end, Trevor ended up taking the crank pin out twice, adjusting the angle and starting again. By the time he'd finished, we had 0.10in one side and 0.015in the other; as good as it would be and plenty good enough for a road bike.

Watching the crank build showed me how you can't just read how to do something and expect to be able to do it straight away. These jobs take years to learn, by making mistakes, finding the best way to do things and getting a 'feel' for how it works. It was mesmerising to watch, and you could see Trevor visualising the crankshaft assembly as it went through its cycle.



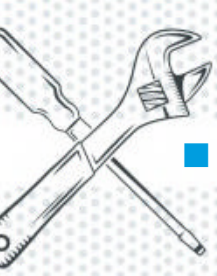
Everything is checked



Honing big end to make perfect



Dressing big end outer before fitting



The DTI gauge shows Trevor how true the crank is



The press does the work, but it takes Trevor to know where



GETTING IT BACK TOGETHER - NEARLY

With the crank safely wrapped and boxed, so as not to knock it out of true I'm cleaning the cases and head up while waiting for the cam followers to be hard-chromed, as the followers can't go in without the guides. As I need to heat up the cases to fit the new mains bearings, it makes sense to do it all at the same time.

The cams also need doing, but they can go in later. The barrel needs checking to see if I need a new piston or can get away with new rings and a hone.

Meanwhile, I'm dry-building the chassis and bodywork.

But more of that next month!

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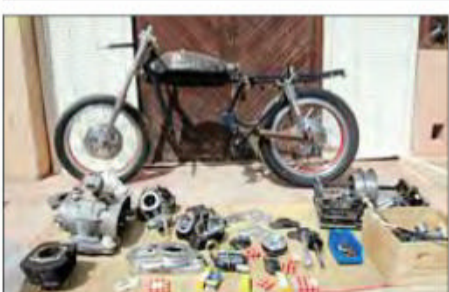
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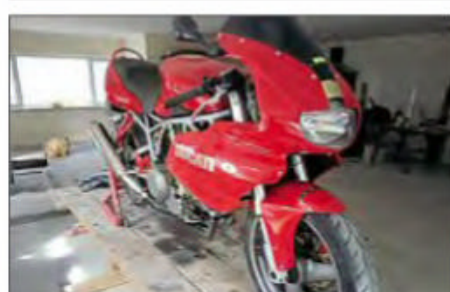
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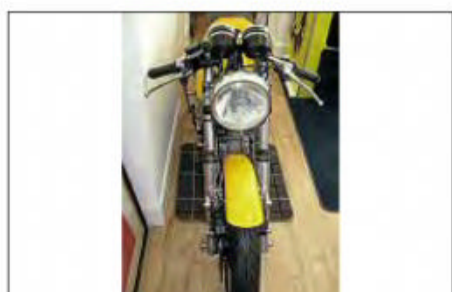
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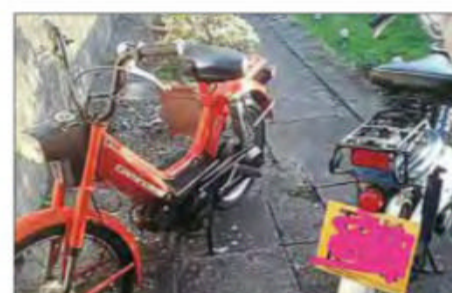
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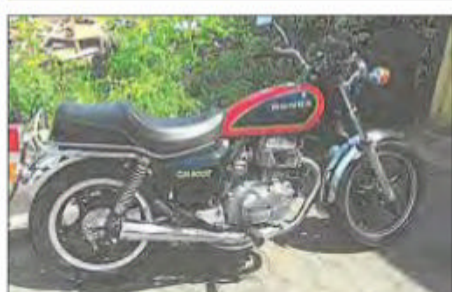
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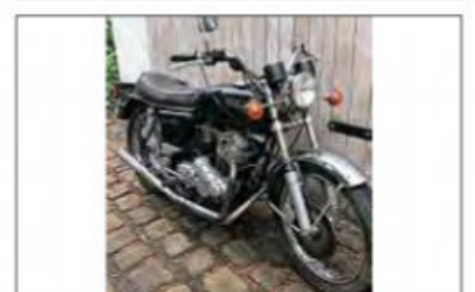
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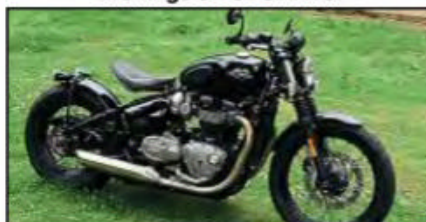
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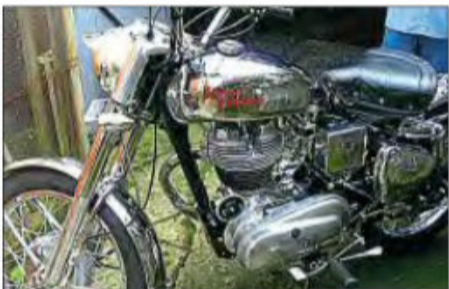
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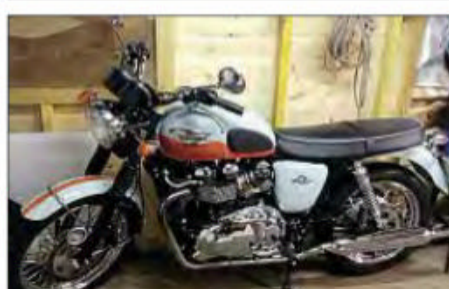
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TRIUMPH TRIDENT T160, 1977, no expense spared, too numerous to list, matching frame & engine numbers, must be viewed to appreciate, £9950. Tel. 07877 017041. East Sussex.



TRIUMPH T100 Bonneville, 2003, 26,000 miles, 790cc, engine, twin carbs, five speed, one previous owner, extras include rear chrome bike rack, King seat, £3500 Tel. 07769 863393 Devon



TRIUMPH T100S 1968 unfinished project, matching frame & engine nos, UK reg, needs wiring, damage to fins on one side of cylinder head, orig part restored, £4600 Tel. 07932 566321 East Sussex



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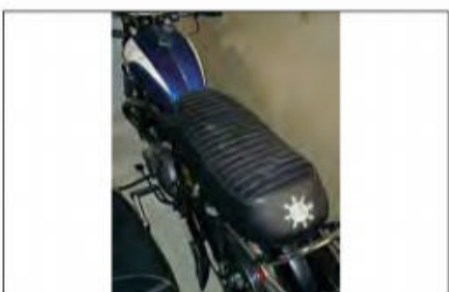
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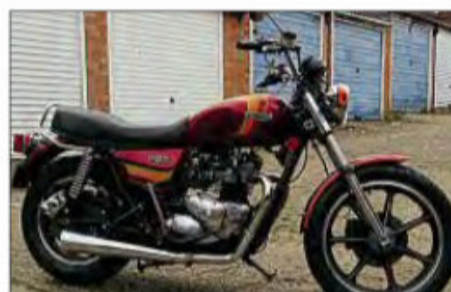
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TRIUMPH TR6C Trophy, 1971, beautiful bike, runs and rides well, tank could have been resprayed, £4850 Tel. 07365 297414 Portsmouth



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VELOCETTE LE 1965, 41,800 miles, extensive overhaul, new piston, full exhaust, new car, part re-wire, full fairing, tidy bike, £1900 Tel. 01248 681466 Conwy



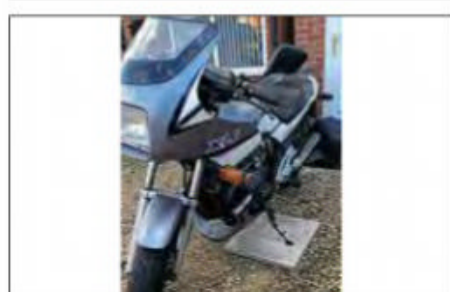
YAMAHA DT175 MX 1983, 6950 miles, second owner, good condition, quiet engine, easy starting, sensible mods for on/off road use, MoT, £1450 Tel. 01449 736367 Suffolk



YAMAHA FZ6 FAZER 2004 model, vgc, full service, engine flushed, synthetic oil coolant flushed, four cylinder, stainless downpipes, MoT, good tyres, £1900 Tel. 07563 362172 West Midlands



YAMAHA TTR250 Raid 1995, been used for green laning and occasional commuting, lowering kit fitted, original parts with sale, MoT, £1500 Tel. 01785 841257; 07447 555690 Stafford



YAMAHA XJ600 good condition, used regularly, bike has recently had a service is running well, £795 Tel. 07880 565808 Norwich



YAMAHA XS1B 650 good condition, only 9800 miles, it wants the carbs cleaning old fuel it is a good engine, all original chrome wheels and mudguards, £3800 Tel. 01782 460545 Cheshire



For Sale

AJS 250cc ohv, 1939, tidy & complete project, no paperwork, more details and photos on request, £1995. Tel. 07584 824079; 07960 447592. Oxon.

BMW R1150RT 2002, vgc, only 28,500 miles, 11 months MoT & fsh, fully functional ABS, electric screen, heated grips & hard luggage, delight to ride and own, too big for me now, £3250 ono. Tel. 07766 976237. South Wales.

BMW R65LS 1983, good condition, 1400 miles, new tyres, £2000. Tel. 01828 632269. Perthshire.

BSA A65 STAR 1964, really original clean classic, great entry level bike for the budding collector, runs and rides well, very clean bike, £3950. Tel. 07365 297414. Portsmouth.

BSA A7/A10 FRAME Triumph 6T engine, 1957 Tribsa, Triumph alternator primary cases, BSA gearbox, coil ignition, Dellorto carb, remote oil filter, Conical TLS front brake, Siamese pipes, very pretty, nice condition bike, recent work/new parts includes:- new tyres, alternator, solid state reg/rec, ammeter, rebuilt rear wheel, rear sprocket & chain, V5 present, £6750 may take p/x. Tel. 01328 700711. Norfolk.

BSA STARFIRE 1969, B40GB engine, steel tank, Smiths chrono speedo, road/trial bike 20" front wheel, high level exhaust, spares new and old, in need of restoration, part spare engine & C15T engine in bits, 2X 1970 steel A65? tanks, offers, prefer sold as job lot, T140 disc front wheel GC, £100. Tel. 01253 737690. Lancs.

HONDA C90 1986 gold, MoT March 2020, original & unrestored, tools & tool bag, 16,500 miles, £900. Tel. 07766 322558. Suffolk.

HONDA CB250N Superdream, 1978, not been on the road for at least 20 years but it cleaned up nice, only 24,000 miles, stripped the carbs and put in a new battery, new oil & filter, air filter, spark plugs, fuel tank tap, replaced the silencers & front brake master cylinder, runs with good compression, has a kickstart & electric start, originally silver but has been quality resprayed as black, got a new V5 so I am registered keeper, as it was first registered in 1978, it is tax exempt from April 1 this year, so doesn't need a MoT either, cheap classic motorcycling, £890 ono. Tel. 01227 700397. Canterbury.

HONDA CB450 1973, excellent condition, show or museum quality, all up and running, may need some fettling/fine tuning to carbs to make smoother but ticks over nicely, mostly new example, tyres, chain, mudguards, rims, spokes, etc the list goes on, restored high quality, £4000 but sensible offers ok. Tel. 07745 134757. Hertfordshire.

SUZUKI GS500E 1989, 20,000 miles, vgc, £600. Tel. 02083 045132. Kent.

HONDA VFR750FT 1996, 46,106 miles, silver, Maxtonised forks, Givi panniers, Baglux tank cover and bag, stainless exhaust system, chain oiler, new chain, sprockets, manual, spares £1800. Tel. Jim 07974 071187. Lancs.

MANX GOLDIE unfinished project, complete, unmodified rolling chassis, tanks, wheels etc, complete 500 engine, GP carb etc, may separate, pristine condition, would make superb Triton. Tel. 01276 932987. Berks.

NORTON MOD 50 1964, Slimline frame, 12v electrics, indicators fitted, alloy rims, tank treated by Tank Care Products of Norfolk, black/white, vgc, £5000 ono. Tel. 01284 762067; 07989 927650. Suffolk. Email. ptr.howard41@gmail.com

ROYAL ENFIELD Crusader, 1961, complete nut & bolt rebuild, modern electrics, runs well, 1400 miles since rebuild, sport engine, £2600. Tel. 01744 601589. Merseyside.

SUZUKI GSX750ET 1981, MoT, over £1000 of receipts on engine, fuelling, electrics, chassis, 62,000 miles, starts & runs well, £1550. Tel. 07944 295672. Middlesex.

SUZUKI TS250 1978, great runner, sounds lovely, comes with spare crankshaft on and off road tyres, spare front forks, original 1978, Haynes manual, £2000 or sensible offers. Tel. 01822 481113. Devon.

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE 1964, very rare, T120TT, matching numbers, concours collector's machine, for sale or exchange for smaller concours/rare machine with cash adjustment either way, £15,950 ono. Tel. 01522 703687. Lincs.

VINCENT RAPIDE Series D, 1956, full black shadow spec, vgc, presently in open trim but full set of enclosures and fittings included, current owner 55 years and 3rd from new, £50,000. Tel. 07814104934. Wales.

Parts For Sale

AJS 16C Don Brooks trials frame kit, includes sub-frames for long and short girlings, long girlings, engine plates, oil tank, etc, all brand new old stock, £900. Tel. 01522 753100. Lincs.

BSA A65 PARTS: crankcases (bare) DC5342, £150. Cam, £25. Engine sprocket, £15. Gear box sprocket, 1st clutch basket, £25. Primary chain (nos), £15. Tel. 01772 783774. Lancs.

BSA GOLDSTAR swing arm, 8" single sided front wheel, will need new rim, photographs available, buyer collects, £230. Tel. 07857 146199. Bristol.

GEARBOX for 1957-58 BSA, good, £90 no offers. Tel. 01495 313881. Gwent.

HARLEY-DAVIDSON 883 Sportster spare parts: Derby cover, £50. Left hand battery cover, £40. Primary chrome trim, £120. Right hand oil tank cover, £60. Gear cover, £50. Sprocket cover, £155. Tel. 01227 454689. Kent.

BSA SPARES: B31/A7/A10 bits and pieces, clutch parts, con rod, cylinder head, ring for more details. Tel. 07779 742629. Cornwall

HONDA 175cc spares: side cover left-side new points, plugs, oil seal, etc, £20 buyer collects. Tel. 07825 941887. Herefordshire.

HONDA BENLY CB92 rare spares for sale, tank, silencers, carbs, etc, all in good condition, all very hard to obtain spares. Tel. 01522 703687. Lincs.

ITALIAN PARTS: sale of large amounts Ducati, Benelli, Cagiva, Laverda, Morini plus Japanese, BMW, British etc, sell or exchange? Tel. 07833 906288. Essex.

KAWASAKI TRIALS BIKE owners manual KX250F August 2003, good condition, £10. Yamaha RD50-STD piston with Gudgeon pins no rings, new, £10. Tel. 02086 414238. Surrey.

MANX SPARES rev counter, anti vibration mounting, f/b cable with guide set, f/glass rear mudguard, oil tank protector, r/wheel adjuster, set Reynolds alloy steering adjuster, £95. Tel. 01276 932987. Berks.

MOPED/MOTORCYCLE Stanley Headlamp Reflector, no bulb holder, but good condition, 4-1/2" diameter, £5 (£3 p&p). Tel. Richard 01842 819969.

NORMAN B3/B2 SPORTS original dual seat in very good condition, multi sprung two tier type, £48 plus post. Tel. 01865 762859.

NORTON COMMANDO original F1/glass (fastback) p/tank, green c/w cap, good condition, £85. Domi Rockers T2060 T2070 T2068, £15 each. Intermediate gear/sprocket, £25. Tel. 01772 783774. Lancs.

SEAT: Ducati GTS 860cc-900cc hinged type fits 1977 onwards, good condition £225 or exchange BSA A10 frame or why? for BSA A10 swinging arm bike. Tel. 07448 733603. London.

TRIUMPH speed twin engine, complete, year 1955 approx, £1000 bargain. Also B40, project matching numbers, complete, engine in one lump, good tinware, bargain, no docs reg number with bike, £1100 ono. Tel. 07443 642408. West Yorkshire.

TRIUMPH 650 SPARES: 1960s, 4 gallon petrol tank (solid condition), Alloy head (needs repair, offers), rear frame, chain guard, top Nacelle (perfect condition), front mudguard (fibre glass with stay). Tel. 01872 273979. Cornwall.

TRIUMPH SPARES Pre-unit crankcases, 5T, 6T Speedtwin engine complete, year 1955 approx, running, very rare TR5 Square head, Trophy engine, full rebuild, perfect, many new parts, much more, £2000. Tel. 07443 642408 anytime. West Yorks.

TRIUMPH STREET TWIN 2016, £50; luggage rack, A9758179 Triumph parts, also Versys gel seat, 2013, 650cc, offers £50. Tel. 07758 640296. Essex.

TRIUMPH T120/TR6 PARTS. Pair exhaust downpipes in excellent condition, (changed to Siamese), £85; original Lucas chrome headlamp shell in good condition but no perfect, £40; Tiger Cub silencer, vgc but not the best quality, suitable off-roader, £15; BSA RGS original rear open number plate, excellent condition, £48; A7/A10 etc rear number plate (closed type) needs small repair, £15. Tel. 01865 762859. Oxon.

TYRES 300 x 19" ribbed front, S/m Mk 2, vgc, £20 ono; Honda Fireblade, front 16", Pirelli Diablo, used but plenty left, £20 ono; 165 x 15" classic Pirelli Cinturato, vgc, hardly used, £25 can post but prefer collection. Tel. 01865 762859. Oxon area.

Wanted

ALPHA BEARINGS motorcycle crankshaft tuning stand jig wanted. Tel. 07970 638403. South Wirral.

ANY CLASSIC BIKES wanted good or bad by serious mature collector, top price paid, nationwide collection. Tel. James 07845 732328. Lancashire.

BSA BANTAM wanted any model for total restoration project, anything considered. Tel. 07986 080118. West Midlands.

BSA DB32 GOLDSTAR cylinder head wanted, nos or pristine condition second hand, good price paid. Tel. 07711 956049. South Yorks.

CYCLEMOTOR Autocycle or British moped/scooter wanted, anything considered in any condition, older the better eg prewar, will travel to collect, your price paid. Tel. 07983 832076. Staffs.

FRANCIS-BARNETT Greeves, Bantam, James, Excelsior or similar two stroke wanted, any model, any condition, runner, project or spares. Tel. 07983 832076. Staffs.

GOOD LATE B33 BARREL and piston wanted. Tel. 07857 146199. Bristol. Email. surferkane@gmail.com

HONDA CB400N good condition, no dents, scratches, tears, MoT, low mileage. Tel. 01162 248831. Leics.

HONDA CB750 1969-70, wanted early oil tank, seat, rear wheel hub, may have exchanges, KO frame, with V5C or just V5C Triumph OIF, V5C wanted. Exchange rear hub for front hub. Tel. 01709 719246; 01709 876651. South Yorks.

MOTORBIKE TRAILER good condition with spare wheel wanted for single bike. Tel. John 07788 768313; 01442 865673. Bucks.

PETROL TANK wanted for BSA year 1964, good condition. Tel. John 07788 768313 or 01442 865673. Bucks.

PROP STAND for 1956-58 BSA A7, 500cc. Tel. 01495 313881. Gwent.

WANTED CYCLE MASTER Puch Maxi, NSU Quickly, any Japanese, mopeds or smaller motorcycles. Tel. 07790 168224. West Midlands.

WANTED PANTHER M100 mudguards, Armstrong rear suspension units, Burman gear change lever, tool boxes. Tel. 01162 312854. Leicester.

WANTED PROJECT can you help, motorcycle/moped, more rust the better, anything thanks. Tel. 07422 516869. Devon.

WANTED PUCH MAXI NSU Quickly, Cycle Masters or just parts. Tel. 07790 168224. Warcs.

YAMAHA SR500 wanted by enthusiast, any condition, any distance. Tel. 01539 536390. Cumbria.

Miscellaneous

EVEROAK GRAND PRIX open face helmet white, complete with peak, size 57, vgc, undamaged, no scratches, never sustained impact, with original box, plus Halcyon goggles, fair condition & good leather gloves, £125. Tel. Ron 02086 995307. London.

JACKETS: Sheepskin brown leather flying jacket ex-large, £250 or exchange BSA A10 frame. Also Levis leather flying jacket, vintage brown, size medium, £200 or exchange why? for BSA A10 swinging arm or Harley 45WD. Tel. 07448 733603. London.

KAWASAKI Z1 SCALE MODEL made by Polistil, big 1/10 scale (approx) 900cc, Z1A with working suspension and drive train in excellent condition, £95. Tel. 07504 327299. Devon.

LEATHER GAUNTLETS with Kevlar & Thinsulate, size XL, colour black, brand new and still with tags attached, cost £75 sell for just £39. Tel. Ron 02086 995307. London.

MAGAZINES: MotorCycle Mechanics magazines x 9, useful older collection from 1960/70s, £10 posted. Tel. Richard 01842 819969. Norfolk.

MOTOR BIKE COAT Weise Avenger Jacket with detachable inner lining, black, size L, as new condition, £79. Tel. Ron 02086 995307. London.

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VINCENT PUDDING BASIN HELMET original 1950's, 6.5" x 8" (internal), made by Cromwell, good original condition, non road legal, £250. Tel. 07596 108060. Essex.

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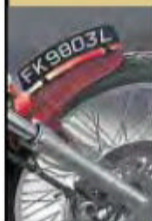
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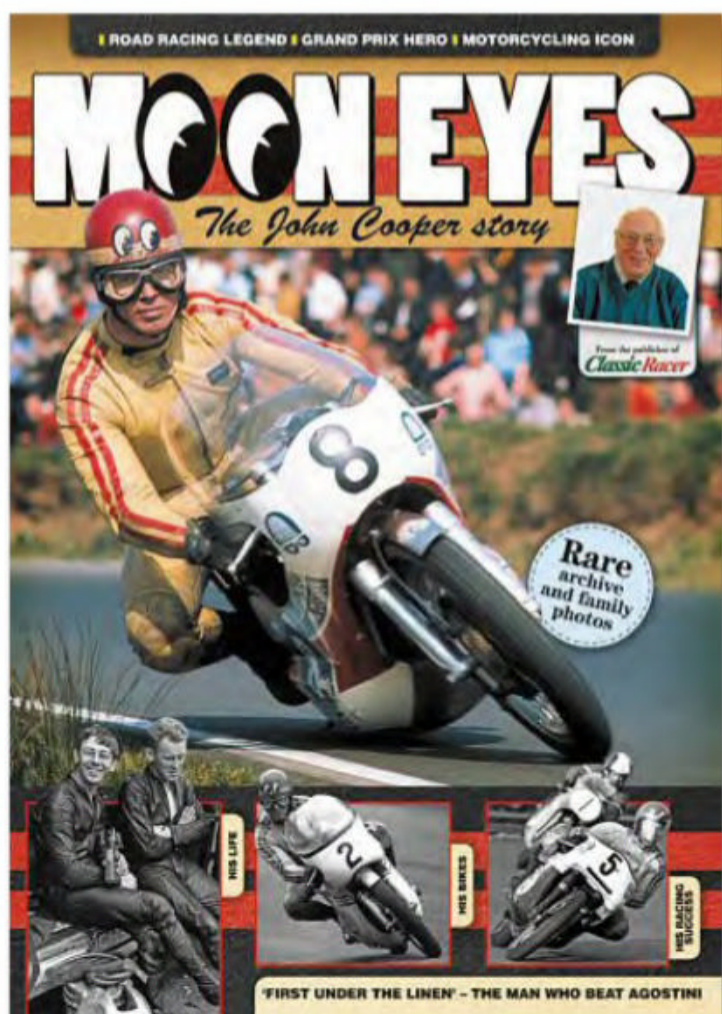
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FRANK WESTWORTH

ON KNOWING EVERYTHING...

Frank looks at 'the anorak' and maintains they have their uses

“Because I know more than any sane individual would want to about postwar AMC machinery and rotary Nortons. None of this knowledge is currently much use, as I have neither make nor model on the road.”

ONE OF THE FEW GENUINE PERILS OF A LIFE lived with a strange focus on elderly motorcycles is Death By Anorak. I doubt it's happened very frequently, or the sensationalist tabloids would be rammed with headlines demanding Immediate Action, and sundry sage souls would declaim sombrely on the BBC Home Service about the undoubted perils to the nation's youth, public morality, and things like that. But... anoraknophobia is almost a recognised psychological condition. The risk is of course to the anorak, rather than the phobic, because as the will to live fades away, so it is replaced by a murderous understanding that there may be only one way to shut up the bore...

Which is all very sad, really, because those exact same anoraks have saved my biking bacon on several occasions. They have willingly assisted when a problem has been insoluble by a mere basic human – observe that I did not mention the mounting insanity involved in rebuilding a 1971 BSA A65T – and they have often been able to pronounce with 100% accuracy upon which parts are required to fit which other parts required to fix a screamingly irritating fault on an otherwise excellent motorcycle. Have you ever attempted to fit a magdyno and its platform to a late Ariel single using incorrect fasteners? I rest my case.

Noted Experts are of course an entirely different bag of salt-free, fat-free chips. These are the guys who know why it is impossible for you to correctly adjust the clutch on your Norton Commando so that it neither slips nor drags and is decently light at the lever (it's all to do with the diaphragm spring and an understanding of stack height – of course!). Noted Experts are invaluable, and I treat every single one I meet as though she was my favourite sister. Other genders are available if desirable.

At this point I should clear my throat, smile modestly and shuffle my feet a little, because I know more than any sane individual would want to about postwar AMC machinery and rotary Nortons. None of this knowledge is currently much use, as I have neither make nor model on the road. Which is where they belong, rather than stuck under sea mist-proof covers at the back of a dingy shed. Ahem. And indeed I did occasionally share the odd nugget of precious information with a less occasionally grateful enquirer. At one point I was well known for having a decent pile of NOS AMC bits, accumulated from many misspent days

trawling early autojumbles and never, ever selling the spares which came with a bike to whichever certifiable citizen subsequently bought the bike from me.

But I gave that up pretty quickly. Have you seen how much genuine old stock cycle parts sell for? Best investment I ever made. Pass me the caviar.

Lots of folk are real, honest to goodness fans of a particular marque. Less, but still lots of them will endlessly insist that their chosen marque is the best, the rest are merely nothing. Back when the earth was young and I was slim and hirsute, Harley-Davidson ran an ad campaign which I've never forgotten. 'Anything else is less', it insisted. Around the same time Moto Guzzi were claiming that their own ohv air-cooled V-twins were 'Long-legged and easy to live with', which may be true, although I was always distracted from such careful calculation by the remarkable ads run by Life Helmets, many of which deserved considerable study. I digress...

Marque loyalists may lose out in the long term, though. I can only speak personally here, but if I'd pensioned off my decreasingly rewarding rotaries when the AA suggested that they might not renew my membership, and had rushed about riding as many modern alternative tourers as I could plant my cheeks on, I might have maintained higher mileages and happier long rides than I did. But hang on... for several years I was employed to produce a modern motorcycle magazine. I rode at least two different brand-new motorcycles every month. And – apart from one, only one – I was always pleased to return them to the supplier and drift smoothly home on my Norton.

So the marque loyalist in me was rewarded, time and again, until the last straw. A straw so unavoidably irritating that it was more a complete hay bale than a straw. I parked up the Nortons. Then sold them, deciding that my days of all-day rides were done. I mean... if a chap can't ride his dream machine any more, what's left? And then, entirely to my surprise, I tried out a bike I'd scorned for ... goodness ... decades. It was easy. It did everything. I could have been riding one like this for years without any straws breaking this rider's back. I am an idiot. Blinkered, that's me.

So be kind to the anoraks, to the Noted Experts and the marque mainliners. Share an appreciative nod, maybe a pat on a shoulder, then ride away on your own unkindly derided machine – I'll bet you have a secret smile all your own. **CBG**

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

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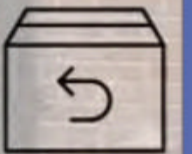
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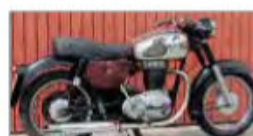
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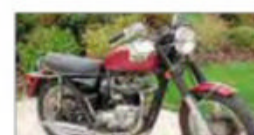
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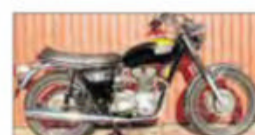
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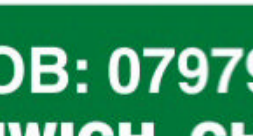
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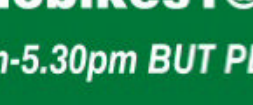
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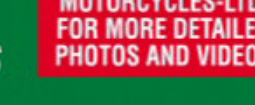
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