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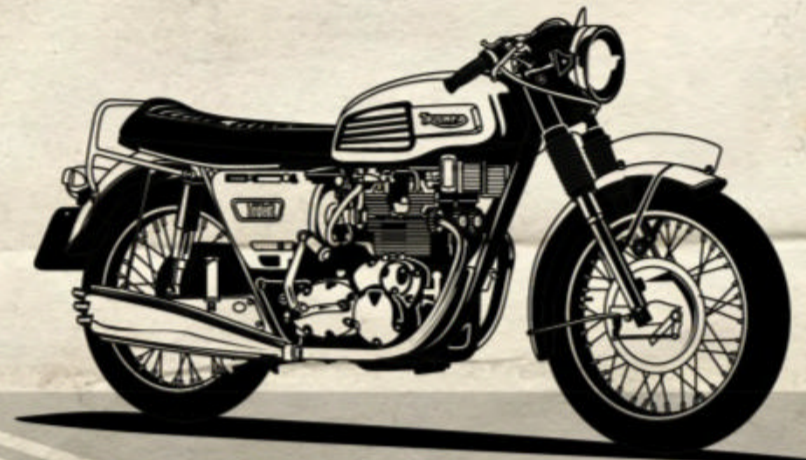
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WELCOME! I HOPE YOUR LOCAL BIKE meets are busy in this cracking weather. There's much to look at after a good ride and this little world of biking sees many niches come together, from one-piece leathers parking 200bhp monsters next to wax jackets riding air-cooled cool; adventure suits clambering down from two-wheel Land Rovers next to hoodies scooting in on 50s and 125s. In today's polarised, dystopian society, the oft-frowned upon world of biking provides a little two-wheeled utopia.

It's also a good time to reflect on how bikes have changed, but also how they haven't. A friend passed her test years ago, had a break and now she wants to return. She's bought a Honda MSX125; a modern take on a Monkey, or a Dax bike. It's fun, it looks great and it brings a smile. I wondered why she didn't want a larger bike, but, at 5ft 4in, she just pointed at the seat heights.

Modern bikes have become too tall, the seats too wide and they are too heavy. They are stretching riders' confidence, especially at slow speed. I recently took a couple of BMW GS owners out for some riding tuition, both proud of their new, expensive, trinket-laden behemoths. To be blunt, neither could ride for toffee as they

petrified of dropping them. If it got worse, they would give up and take up another hobby. We always need new blood in biking, or it will disappear. Can we help?

Look at the seat height of a classic. A Triumph 5TA measures 28.5in, compared to a Kawasaki ER6 at 31in. It makes a big difference, as does the riding position. Classics tend to have you sitting more upright, with legs further forward and often have bars bringing your arms back, compared to a modern bike. It all helps to improve slow speed control and that all-important confidence. Then there's the weight. The 5TA weighs 350lb compared to the Kawasaki's 465lb. That's two bags of spuds. The best modern bike we have found is a Triumph Street Twin, with a seat of 30in and a weight of 436lb – not light but low enough and with a good riding position.

So as bikes have become less about speed and more about looks, should we be tempting new riders with the charm of classic bikes? Popular models can be fitted with better lights, electrics, tyres and brakes and, crucially, they are seen as cool. Kick-starting can be part of a fitness regime, but you need to remember they need more care and maintenance than a modern bike, which leads us to another problem – where do you take your bike if

you don't have the mechanical knowledge, or even somewhere to do it?

A classic bike workshop will always be small, often run by, shall we say, older generations, which means little or no marketing, or time to promote themselves. We may know they're there, but how do new riders? Should CBG start a 'classic friendly' workshop guide?

Our classic world could be the answer to the dwindling number of riders. Talk to those interested about the benefits, the charms and the practicality. Give them an old copy of your magazine! Old bikes are not perfect, but until the modern motorcycle industry wakes up and looks at what real people want and not what journalists want, they could be the best marketing tool in the box. Let's think of ourselves as ambassadors!

Let us know what you think at editor@classicbikeguide.com

Enjoy the mag. It's baking out there – I'm off to the coast! Be good.

Matt Hull
editor@classicbikeguide.com

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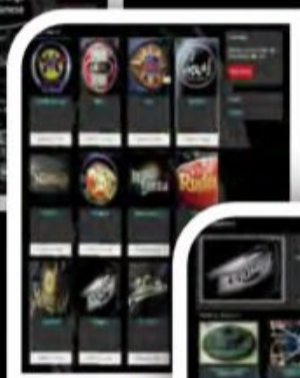
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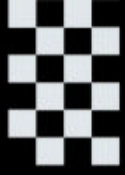
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From our archive

■ THOSE WERE THE DAYS...

South Liverpool club gymkhana - August 30, 1930. One rider is on a Sunbeam Model 90 and the other is on a BSA Sloper, taking part in the egg and spoon race. Oh, how life seemed so simple in those days - did those lads have any idea what was coming in the next decade? And why don't they teach this at your local Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists' meetings? **CBG**





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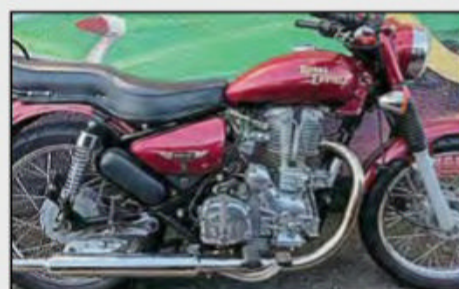
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Lambretta LD 1959, concours **£6,995**

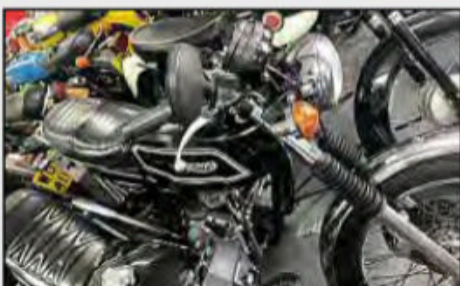


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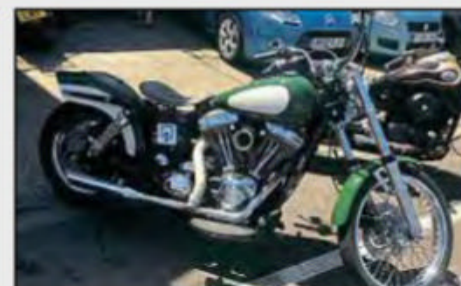
Triumph Bonneville, 1980, rides well, an unmolested beautiful example..... **£6,995**



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Ariel Sloper

Here today, gone tomorrow: Rachael Clegg scratches the surface of a short-lived hero – the Ariel Sloper.

WORDS: RACHAEL CLEGG **PHOTOGRAPHY:** GARY CHAPMAN

FANCY SOME BANGERS AND SMASH POTATO? Or fish and Microchips? Thought not... In 2019, few people eat Smash potatoes or crack open a box of McCain's Microchips; these phenomena are – along with lava lamps, pocket TVs and SodaStreams – part of the 20th-century's ever-growing list of 'here today, gone tomorrow' objects.

But not all ephemera with a temporary shelf life are a gimmick. And this month's *Motorcycles that Matter* is one such example: the Ariel Sloper.





NFF345

ARIEL



VALENTI



The Sloper was a machine that performed remarkably well, withstood numerous endurance tests, was unusually reliable, leaked relatively little oil and was easy to maintain. And it didn't look too bad either. Yet it had a far shorter shelf life than Smash potato; such that the Sloper is barely even a footnote in Ariel's history. But its 'here today, gone tomorrow' status was nothing to do with it being a has-been gimmick; rather, it was simply down to bad timing.

The Sloper was produced in the early-1930s as part of the 'Ariel' range of the Cycle Components Manufacturing Company, at its Selly Oak factory. And while very few reports of the machine still exist, those that do are glowing. One such report is that of *Motor Cycling's* motorcycle tester 'Cyclops' (yes, strange name), whose report was published on June 10, 1931. The article detailed Cyclops' participation in the Scottish International Six Day Trial (ISDT) on a brand-new, straight-out-of-the-box 497cc Ariel Sloper.

It was a bold move: for both machine and rider. The ISDT was the world's most arduous, challenging, gruelling motorcycle test-taking in rough terrain, fast road sections, mountains and trails. It was a test that could have back-fired perilously, yet the four-valve single proved to be a huge success.

Speaking of the ISDT, he wrote: "Whatever the theorists may say concerning the advantages or otherwise of having four valves per cylinder, the fact remains abundantly clear that the Ariel concern has produced an engine so designed which in certain respects excels any other power unit produced from the Selly Oak factory."

He said: "Originally I was to have had a machine which had been used for various jobs by the competition department but, at the last moment, it was found that it had been sold, so that I had to have a brand new one, which had not run at all. Despite it being somewhat unwise to set off to report a six days' trial, a procedure which is bound to entail a good deal of blinding and quantities of collar-work, with a stiff engine, the Ariel responded nobly."

He went on: "Not even were any small adjustments – which are only to be expected during the bedding





down period, but which all take time—necessary during the week....No spanner was put on the machine during the whole week.”

Indeed, Ariel made it its mission to improve the Sloper's reliability, easy maintenance and reduce oil leaks. The twin-pipe exhaust system ran from the transverse silencer box, which made for a striking feature that was also rather handy for easy tinkering—another thoughtful tweak from the manufacturer.

In September 1931 *The Motor Cycle* reviewed the newly launched Slopers for that year and reported that: “Most of the improvements have been made with the object of avoiding certain oil leakages, which have been rather prevalent in earlier models. To this end the cam box has a projecting lip which poses right through into the chain case, thus avoiding leakage. In last year's models there was a plain flanged joint.”

But the new Sloper wasn't just about leakage prevention, it was a smooth runner too, as 'Cyclops' was keen to point out: “The compromise between pulling and revving, too, has been extremely well maintained. The ease with which the 70mph mark was passed, even with stiff engine and on the low gears used, proved that with standard ratios 80mph



“I absolutely love going out on the Sloper. It runs like a dream - even now. It’s an absolute joy to ride and it’s so sad that so few were made.”

should be comfortably within its capabilities. More important still was the smooth and effortless manner in which this copious supply of power was produced.”

This ‘copious’ supply of power was thanks to a power unit set at 30° angle, hence its ‘sloper’ moniker. The inclined engine allowed for better cooling, easy accessibility and a lowered centre of gravity, making for a very well-balanced machine. As *The Motor Cycle* expressed in September, 1931: “...the makers must be congratulated on achieving a marked success on such an unconventional engine at the very outset”.

Unconventional though the Sloper was, however, it was nothing new. Ariel wasn’t the first company to incline engines, they merely improved on an existing concept, as the Vintage Motorcycle Club’s (VMCC) Ariel specialist Jim Lee explains: “The Sloper was designed by Val Page in its various forms, the four-valve, the side-valve and the overhead valve version. But Ariels were a bit late getting on the bandwagon because BSA had already arrived with their Sloper design sometime before. And these had been an instant success as early as the late-1920s. By the time Ariel launched its Slopers, the entire existence of the ‘sloping engine’ was somewhat dated.”

Notwithstanding, Ariel’s Sloper was an immaculate runner. Even today, 87 years after it rolled out of the Ariel factory, the version featured in these pictures is still running. The machine – which is in mint condition – belongs to David Kleider as part of his collection at Davolls classic bike showroom in Essex. He said: “I absolutely love going out on the Sloper. It runs like a dream – even now. It’s an absolute joy to ride and it’s so sad that so few were made.”

Slopers are indeed rare, as David says: “Just as Ariel had perfected the Sloper they started thinking about developing machines for the war effort.”

Indeed, as early as 1935, the War Office ran a series of tests to identify civilian machines suitable for military use. The test took part over half a year ▶



in 1935 and Ariel, along with BSA, Matchless, New Imperial, Norton, Triumph and Royal Enfield, were selected to participate.

And it's understandable that Ariel would have had its head turned by such an offer: the company, like many motorcycle manufacturers at that time, had suffered a massive economic downturn following the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and its inevitable, subsequent Depression. A potential Government contract would have been immensely desirable to a struggling company.

But manufacturing of the Sloper had already ceased by then as its production run lasted only just over a year. Cycle Components Manufacturing Company closed in 1932 – a casualty of a doomed Depression-ravaged economy – but reopened that year after managing director Jack Sangster bought the company back from the receivers with his own personal fortune. Sangster renamed the company Ariel Motors and rationalised its output, limiting machines to the Square Four – Edward Turner's much-hailed creation – and the Red Hunter. The Sloper, in spite of its proven prowess, did not feature in Sangster's streamlined plan. This makes David



Kleider's delightful 350cc Sloper an extremely rare machine indeed.

He said: "I saw the Sloper at the auto jumble at Beaulieu and I just had to buy it. Mine's a 350cc version but the cycle parts are exactly the same as they were on the 497cc version. It is a lovely thing."

So the Sloper may have been 'here today, gone tomorrow' but we can relive its glory through its gleaming reports. And unlike Smash potatoes, pocket televisions and Microchips, the Sloper was not a fad: it simply arrived at the wrong time.

The turmoil of the 20th century put paid to its success. But at least, as we speak, one example is running as sweetly as it was back in 1931 down at Davolls in Essex. **CBG**

■ **The 350cc Ariel Sloper is on display at Davolls motorcycle collection in Billericay, Essex**

SPECIFICATION:

ENGINE: capacity 350cc/497cc/557cc **LUBRICATION:** Twin gear pumps with a dry sump. **PRIMARY CHAIN:** enclosed in oil bath case **GEARING:** Primary drive through four-speed Burman **COMPRESSION:** 6:1



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A glass plate image of Denis Parkinson on the Excelsior he won the 250 Lightweight Manx Grand Prix with, in 1936. He went on to win a further four Grands Prix and founded the Wakefield and District Motor Sports Club.

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Les Williams: Triumph Trident legend

TRIUMPH TRIPLE GENIUS Les Williams has died at the age of 87. He was known throughout the world of British classic motorcycling for his involvement with Triumph's racing triples, his work with the White Helmets display team and for setting up L P Williams, which has been helping keep Triumph twins and triples on the road since 1976.

Les was a member of the White Helmets display team in the mid-1950s, and then worked at Meriden, eventually joining the experimental department which was the name given to Triumph's race shop in the 1960s and 70s.

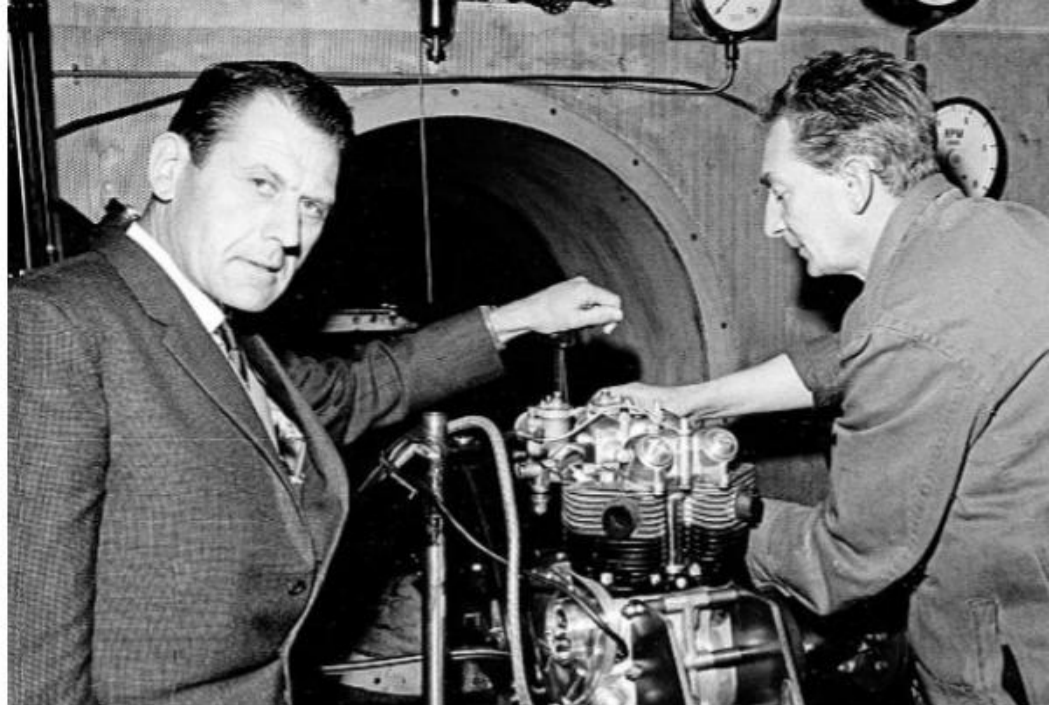
In 1970 he became involved, along with Doug Hele and Rob North, with creating the Triumph Trident based 'Slippery Sam' production race machine. Slippery Sam was so named when a mixture of Duckhams mineral and castor oil was used during the 1970 Bol d'Or and blocked a breather, covering the bike and rider Percy Tait with oil.

The Slippery Sam was

campaigning successfully for several years and was still winning production races up until 1975, when Japanese manufacturers, frustrated at being unable to beat Triumph's creation on the track, successfully managed to have machines over five years old banned from production racing.

By that year, the NVT part of Triumph was about to close and the Triumph Race Shop was shut down, with Les being made redundant. Undaunted, in 1976 Les started his Triumph spares company L P Williams, dealing in spare parts and performance upgrades. He also created replicas of the Slippery Sam race machine and produced a Marshalls TT Replica based on a T160 Trident in the style of the Production TT Racing Tridents.

Twenty-eight bikes were built, some with T150 engines, and some with full fairings bearing the name Slippery Sam Replica. Les also marketed parts for owners to build their own Slippery Sam replicas.



In 1983 he followed the Slippery Sam Replicas with the creation of the first of 60 updated sports touring versions of the T160V, branded as the Legend. The Legend models were completely rebuilt T160V models, some with standard 741cc engines, while others had specially built 964cc versions of the engine.

A similarly styled Triumph T140 Bonneville-based special, of which 20 were made, was known as the Buccaneer. Small scale production of the Legend and Buccaneer continued until 1992.

Although badged as Triumph models, the Legend and Buccaneer machines were officially registered as Williams motorcycles. Les retired from running L P Williams in the early-1990s, selling the company

which continues to bear his name.

In his retirement Les also continued to support the White Helmets display team and was a vice president of the Triumph Owners' MCC.

Jill Townley, director at L P Williams said: "Not long after we took over the business, despite his poor health, Les took the time to phone me and wish me all the best. I think that says a lot about the man he was. Phil Bargh has kept in touch with his family and was aware his health has deteriorated recently.

"A legend in the Triumph world, I am certain he will be missed by his family, friends and all who had the privilege of knowing him."

Phil Bargh said: "Les was a real gentleman and his death is a really sad loss to us all."



Is real better than restored? You decide

AS THIS MAGAZINE arrives on the newsstand, one of the great classic motorcycling mysteries may have been solved. Is a sparkling nut and bolt rebuild better and more valuable than an unrestored bike?

Sometimes the old ones really are the best and you don't want to mess with them. That is the case with this Brough Superior.

Unusually, it has been restored to look unrestored by the leading marque restoration specialist, Simon Miles. It was estimated to sell for £100,000-£150,000 by H&H Classics on July 30 at the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham. The

work to restore this bike to look used cost more than a normal restoration and a lot of original parts were used. It is one of only two bikes restored by Simon Miles to retain the patina of age.

The trend to keep the look of bikes original rather than making them appear to be shiny brand-new looking restorations is increasing. Recent sales have seen unrestored bikes sell for the same or even more than restored models.

"The reason for this development may be that there are fewer unrestored bikes in existence," said Mark Bryan of H&H Classics.



Adding to the interest in this Brough was the fact that it is a correct numbers bike and came complete with five old style logbooks detailing the ownership history. The first owner of this machine was a Mr Ireson who lived just down the road from the Brough factory in Nottingham. He sold the bike back to George Brough in 1934.

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Fun on the border

THE BORDERS CLASSIC Bike Show in the Welsh Marches is one of the longest established classic shows in the calendar.

The show, founded by Jim Reynolds in the mid-1980s, has gone from strength to strength and has the advantage of being in the heart of some of the best biking country in the UK, being both out of the way and easy to get at.

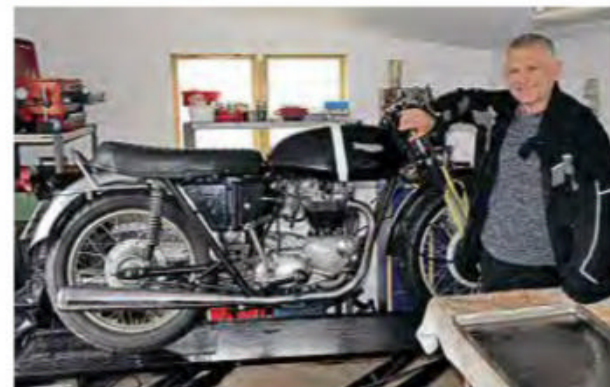
2019's show is on Sunday, September 8 and raises money for the PTA at the show's location, The Lacon Childe School in Cleobury Mortimer. This year the show is also raising money for the Midlands Air Ambulance.

The PTA will be organising the event as Jim Reynolds has retired after more than three decades. He will be guest of honour and present the trophies. The Bike Show will have many vintage bikes on display, bike start up sessions and the show is justly famous for the quality of the catering from local suppliers. The event runs from 10am to 4pm and admission is £5. Camping is available.

Visit www.bordersbikeshow.com for more details and to find out how to enter your own machine.



Phil Betty prepares the T21 frame for his very special engine



Miki Sprosen and his T120 Bonneville challenger

Team Wildcard in two Bonneville record bids

TWO INTREPID CLASSIC racers from the West Country are heading across the Atlantic to the Bonneville Salt Flats to try and break two land speed records.

Team Wildcard is comprised of two shed-based racers, Phil Betty and Miki Sprosen, who will be taking a much-modified early 1960s Triumph T21 350 and a 1971 650cc Triumph Bonneville T120R to the famous speed venue in August.

The venture started four years ago when the duo took a trip to Pendine Sands to check out Straightliners record racing on the beach. Inspired by their trip to the Welsh beach, by 2016 both riders were competing in top speed racing with Straightliners on the beach and used that as a way of finding out what would be needed for them to successfully compete in the Bonneville Speed Trials.

In the two classes the records are currently held by a Morini 350 and another Triumph twin. Phil always intended to use his 350 Triumph as his bike of choice at Bonneville, but true to character, Miki chopped and changed for a while before deciding on the 650 Triumph as his Bonneville bike, which is proudly emblazoned with the Cornish flag.

Testing has been a challenge, with the 650 holing a piston instigating a full engine strip

down and rebuild. The rules at Bonneville have been scrupulously studied and standard pistons and relined barrels have been used on the T120R engine as the bores are so close to 650cc that a rebore would have taken it over capacity for its group. Sorting out the logistics for the trip, getting the bikes to Bonneville, has been as difficult as preparing the bikes.

The Bonneville is racing in the standard production class, using 9:1 pistons after holing one of two 11:1 items. It has standard carbs and exhausts and retains the four-speed gearbox.

The T21 has been much more extensively modified for the Modified Partial Streamlining class with a Bob Newby belt drive, 28mm Amal carbs, Phil Joy Cams, Tiger 90 pistons and valves in a gas flowed head prepared by Pete Willis. Gearing has also been modified and the T21 has been clocked at 105.5mph at Elvington, 1.5mph faster than the Morini that currently holds the class record, though the altitude at Bonneville can reduce performance by 20%.

The T120 was timed at 116mph, 5mph faster than the current record holder in its class. You can follow Team Wildcard, who head for Bonneville in early August, at teamwildcardracing.blogspot.com.

BMW launch anniversary model

BMW HAVE LAUNCHED an exclusive retro model to mark the 50th anniversary of the /5 series and 50 years of BMW Motorrad production in Berlin Spandau.

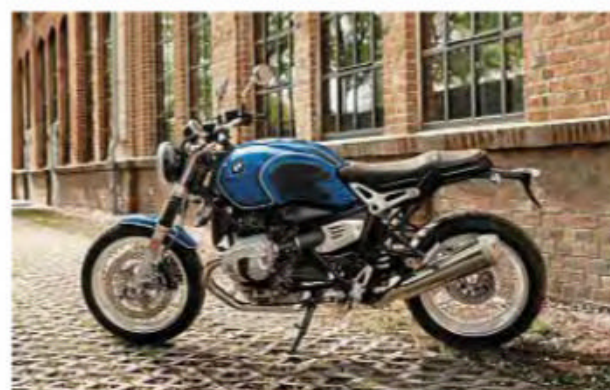
The machine, dubbed the R nineT /5 has classic lines and an air-cooled engine.

When BMW car production increased in the 1960s, production of BMW motorcycles was moved to Berlin. Operations got underway in 1969 with some 400 staff and a new series: the 5-series models which came with a new chassis, engine and an up-to-date modern design.

BMW's /5 series made a lasting impact on the expanding motorcycle market of the time. The /5 models were an instant success and helped cement BMW's future as a motorcycle manufacturer.

The R nineT /5 anniversary model features a 1170cc 110bhp Boxer engine, 17in wheels, ABS and heated grips as standard. There are rubber knee pads, as well as the bodywork finished in smoke effect blue metallic paint and double line marking on the fuel tank, which bears the anniversary emblem. The mirrors are chromed as is the exhaust manifold and rear silencer.

The seat is contoured in the style of the /5 with cross-embossing on the cover, grab straps and white piping as well as gaiters on the telescopic fork. The coating of the engine, gearbox, fork slider tubes, wheel hubs and spokes in aluminium silver also stylishly evokes the legendary /5 models, as do the components finished in black such as the frame and the prop shaft casing.



Jumblers to flock to the marsh

THOUSANDS OF VISITORS from across Europe are expected at The Carole Nash Eurojumble on September 6/7. The EuroJumble is one of the UK's biggest bike autojumbles, making it the ideal destination for visitors and traders to buy and sell.

Held at Netley Marsh near Southampton, this outdoor event gathers enthusiasts from the UK and from far and wide across the continent. The Netley Marsh treasure trove delivers biking goodies and memorabilia which you may not find on the high street or from internet sellers and the presence of stallholders from across the channel makes it a good source for parts rarely found in the UK.

Showgoers can camp at Netley Marsh on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. At £60 for two people, campers can enjoy a break away while rummaging through mountains of motorcycle paraphernalia. Post jumble entertainment includes live music on the Friday evening with food stalls and a bar. Entry to the show is also included in the price and shower facilities are available. Jumblers who want to spend a single day at the event can book a plot for £20 on the Saturday.

For details on how to book a stall or buy advance tickets visit www.netleymarsheurojumble.com.



Living on the edge in Herefordshire

THE NAVIGATIONAL TRIAL Herefordshire on the Edge attracted 92 entries on classic machines, ranging from the 1920s through to the 1990s. This event, organised by the Herefordshire section of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club, provided its usual challenge to riders and machines, with unscheduled heavy rain adding to the difficulties.

There were some wonderful performances, Colin Durnall rode his 1937 350cc hand change Red Panther from Wolverhampton to the start in Leintwardine, visited an amazing 24 of the 32 checkpoints to win a gold medal and then rode it home. Terry Pickering visited every single checkpoint on his 1972 GT550 Suzuki, one of only three riders to do so. Just 43 riders completed the event with 22 winning



Riders taking a well-earned rest at the 12th century Hopton Castle.

gold medals, six winning silvers and 15 taking home bronze. Twelve riders were awarded the coveted Ragged Edge ribbon for including visits to the four special checkpoints, sited on unsurfaced roads.



On his way to a bronze medal, Steve Sumner guides his 1926 BSA over the bridge at Ludlow castle.



Cezeta goes electric

A COLD WAR ERA scooter has been reborn with a new electric powerplant.

The curious-looking Cezeta debuted in 1957 with a long front section terminating in a low headlight. The Cezeta looked like nothing else on earth and was affectionately dubbed "The Pig". It stayed in production for seven years and 120,000 were built. The 175cc scooter was also built under licence in New Zealand.

In early 2012, the rights to the Cezeta name and design were purchased by Prague-based British expatriate, Neil Eamonn Smith. Smith set up Cezeta Motors in 2013 to begin the production of a new generation of scooters under the Cezeta name and the first of this new generation has debuted as the electrically powered hand-built Type 506 after a successful crowdfunding campaign.

Cezeta say it can cruise at 75mph and has an 80-mile range. The engine is in the rear wheel hub and the scooter includes innovations like a reverse gear to help move the 'Pig' around, regenerative braking to give batteries a boost while slowing down, and charging takes around four hours from a domestic plug.

Owning a Cezeta is not cheap, but a popular way of running one in the Czech Republic is to buy the basic scooter for around 4,000 euros and pay a monthly lease fee of 190 euros for the battery and charger, which are the most expensive parts of the machine. The monthly fee also covers repairs, upgrades and insurance. A cheaper mass-produced version dubbed the Type 507 is being prepared in two versions: an economical moped-class version with a range of 100-150 miles for city use, and a more powerful highway cruiser capable of 75mph for suburban area use.

Neil Eamonn Smith said: "The Cezeta 506 is only the first step to our ultimate goal to provide 'total sustainable fossil-free transport'. For cities and suburbs, the perfect clean air transport solution is to build, maintain and run a fossil-free fleet of vehicles forever." Visit cezeta.com.



Prescott Bike Festival and Hill Climb

WORDS AND PICTURES BY OLI



PRESCOTT IS A STUNNING VENUE FOR a festival of motorcycling. No soggy field or echoing agricultural shed this, but rather the home of the Bugatti Trust, set in the wooded acres of a Cotswold estate, sheltered from the very worst weather an English summer can provide. And there's a fabulous switchback of a hill climb track snaking through the trees to challenge anyone who thinks they can ride a bit.

If you are jaded with the serried ranks of beautifully restored but ultra-familiar classics common at bigger bike shows, there was plenty to catch the eye. A sprinkling of traders, including the

ubiquitous cleaners of glasses and a few sellers of budget tools shared the outdoor spaces with the likes of Steve Parrish selling books, and dealers in modern Triumphs and Indians. There were more unusual attendees including makers of bespoke jewellery and of stylish and practical clothing for women riders.

The occasional brief rainstorms saw the Kickback custom show tent become a place of refuge, among some excellent examples of machinery. These were laid out in a manner that allowed visitors to check the often intricate workmanship up close from all sides. It wasn't like your average show either. There wasn't a stock bike on

display, and the number of classics being chopped about seemed to be falling, on the evidence of this event at least. Builders still muck about with Harley V-twins and with BMW air-heads but many younger builders are going for cheaper and more imaginative options.

A handful of once-unloved Yamaha and Kawasaki 400 twins and some delightful 125cc specials dotted the tent, and most significant was the increasing number of 350 and 500 Indian Enfield Bullets being turned into 'bobbers'. The Bullet is a good choice for a bobber. They are cheap to buy, with an easily modified frame and are a great blank canvas to work your magic on.





It certainly gave pause for thought when considering the next project.

The real action was outside though, as the roar, whine and howl of hundreds of different – and they were all different – motorcycles chugging and hurtling up the hill added life to proceedings, and it was all so delightfully ad hoc. Once the track dried out members of the NCC took part in a parade. There were experienced hill climbers, but a good number of on-the-day entrants were there to 'Run The Hill' on machines that were unlikely to ever see competition.

Meanwhile others were whisked up the track in a Triking three-wheeler or a racing

outfit. A BMW K75 was followed by a 150cc mini-moto, the mini-moto by a Harley Lowrider and the Harley by a jet powered drag bike. The fastest, obviously, being the mini-moto, though to be fair the jet bike was only ticking over, which was just as well as any more throttle would have seen it doing a low-level pass over Cheltenham.

A 1970s vintage Moto Guzzi V7 was thrown around like it was a 125cc racer, and Allen Millyard's Honda GP replica managed a single full-throated run before being banned for blowing the sound meters. Warm cheers were reserved for those whose ancient or unsuitable machinery struggled with the tightest

corners, or which made the unexpected trip into the gravel traps. Just two bikes failed to make it to the top, and the marshalls were exemplary, controlling things with nothing more than whistles and flags.

Sitting on a bench, a radical thing to find at either a bike show or a race meeting and much appreciated, munching on a reasonably priced Bugatti Burger that was big enough for two, saw three hours pass in what felt like minutes, the anticipation of wondering what on earth was going to appear next being part of the excitement, and only the trip home preventing the option of enjoying too much of Prescott's own real ales.

At the end of the day several of the Kickback entrants took their machines to the track, the biggest applause being reserved for Paul Keeton's spectacular steampunk Kawasaki, which was a hit in the paddock too, as were Mr Millyard's creations, a good number of lightly breathed on Nortons, and the ragged glory that is the famous Pink Triumph drag bike.

Prescott has raised more than £200,000 for charity and at £15 a ticket is well worth supporting.

Next year's event is already on the calendar for July, 2020. As are vague ideas of launching a bike up the hill myself... **CIBC**



Steve's start-up with style

A business start-up with a difference... that's the story of Steve McFarlane, and his engineering skill in producing electric starters for BSAs is now helping riders of a certain vintage.

Having already run and then sold his previous company (SRM Engineering) during the 1980s and early 90s (he designed the needle roller timing side main bearing conversion for the BSA A10, along with many other improved products for these bikes), it was in 2008 when Steve took another engineering leap.

At the Isle of Man BSA International Rally that year, Dave Brady and several others were talking about the need for an electric start. With dodgy knees, hips and other bodily parts starting to give way, the strain of kick starting was proving too much.

In the spring of 2009 Steve began working out how to make it using his BSA A10 Super Rocket (with 9:1 compression pistons) as the project bike. Options were considered, then after many hours of looking at chain cases, gear box and engine plates, he devised a method which would not put any strain on the chain case.

After 250 starts, the whole mechanism was stripped down and examined. The prototype gears were deliberately not hardened for the test (all production gears are hardened), as he wanted to see any early signs of wear in order to assess the life of the gears. They showed little sign of wear.

He exceeded design objectives, because after 200 start-ups, the battery was down only half a volt. If your battery is fully charged, you should achieve 250-300 starts. So, if your charging system fails you can still be confident you can start your bike. A Patent has been granted and design rights apply: 2014 GB2471022.

The only modifications needed are to drill a hole in the primary chain case, bend the right and left tabs on the battery compartment, and send Steve the engine sprocket and cush drive for him to modify.

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Products

Merlin Buxton wax jacket

LADIES, I AM pleased to announce that we have indeed found a beautiful wax jacket that doesn't presume we don't have a chest or hips!

Curvy, straight or pear-shaped, this jacket is tailored to fit us all, with adjustable waist and cuff drawstrings hidden in the lining. This mid-length waxed cotton jacket is a stylish way to bring back a classic look with the comfort we crave. While I think this look is pretty, it is also surprisingly practical.

If the Halley Stevenson's waxed cotton outer layer doesn't keep you dry, the Reissa breathable waterproof membrane is there to back it up without being hot and sweaty. So far I have been a mostly fair weather rider but I have to admit I was completely dry when it rained unexpectedly! The only thing with a wax is I'll need to reproof the outer in a year or so.

With a mixture of Safetech CE approved shoulder and elbow armour, removable back pad, which you can replace with a back protector, and a quilted and removable shoulder overlay with diamond stitching in keeping with a classic look and the styling, this is a surprisingly pleasant find.

Mine is red, which I like, but is no longer available. But you can have olive and black, which look great, too. I can't recommend this jacket enough.

Kirsty

■ Merlinbikegear.com
■ £229.99



TCX SP-Master ladies motorcycle boots



AS A VERTICALLY challenged individual, I have struggled with bike height and a range of other things, including trouser length, suspension settings and seat customisation. However, having got some new TCX SP-Master WP ladies motorcycle boots, this is one of the few times when that each inch makes a big difference.

These boots are built up with three layers. An anatomic footbed, a reinforced PP and a mono compound ultralight rubber sole; all techy

munbo jumbo for a heel of a decent size, giving me a lot more confidence! Having recently started riding these has made such a difference. After the usual walk around the house to get some flexibility, they are very comfortable and secure, with Velcro and zip fasteners and additional reinforcements, including an ankle retention system, heel guard and shin plate. They feel good quality, even if I did melt one a touch on my exhaust (my fault and not the boots).

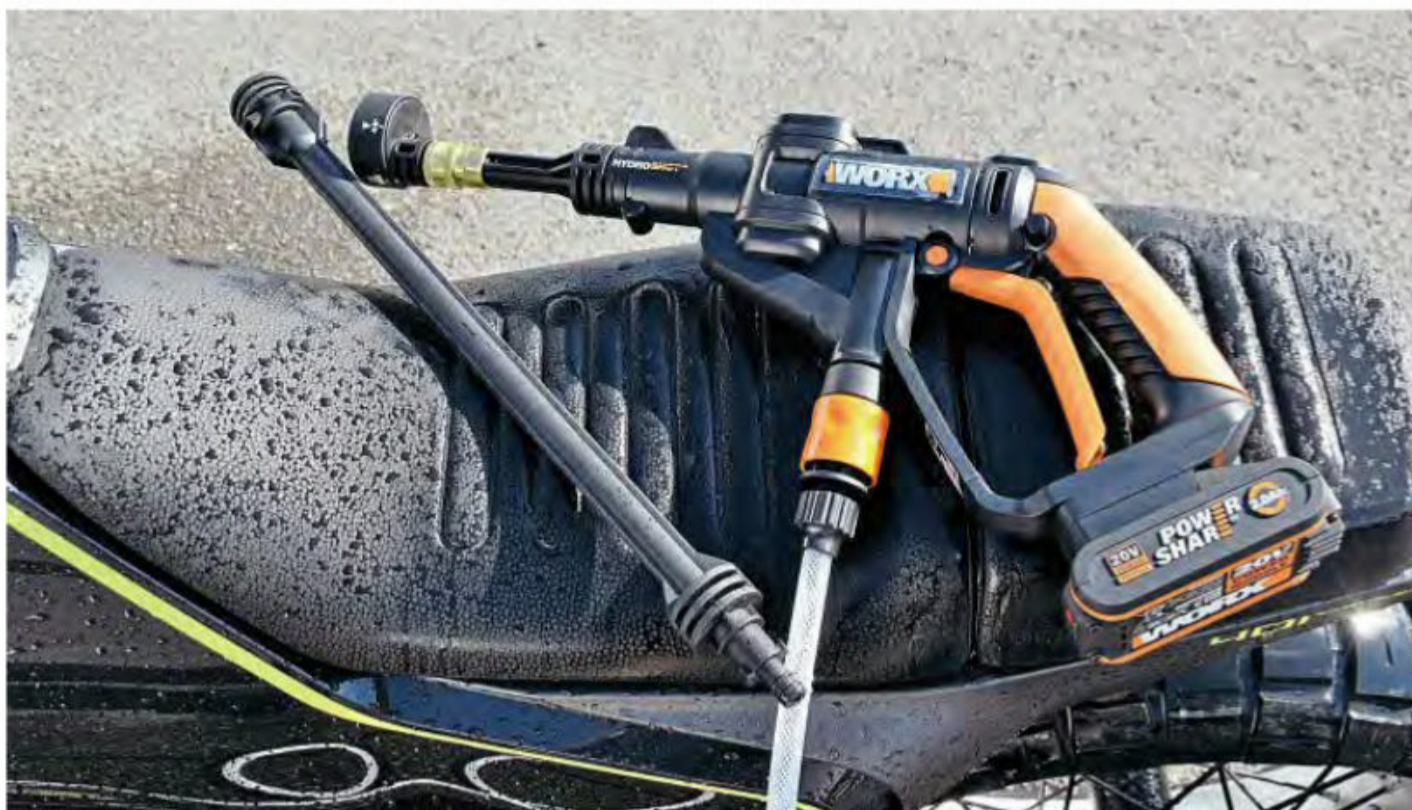
I've not been out in torrential weather, but they kept me dry in the rain the other day, yet in the

heat they don't feel too sweaty.

Size-wise, the TCX are spot on, very comfy and the design is slick and subtly girly. The only thing to consider is that they are a touch snug on the calves and gap a touch on the ankle. For me this is perfect, they provide a tight fit with movement in the ankle when walking, however, if you have slightly bigger calves, I'd recommend trying them on before you buy. If they fit you, then they come highly recommended.

Kirsty

■ Nevis.uk.com
■ £189.99



Cleaning up with a cordless

LIKE MOST MOTORCYCLISTS

I like to give my steeds an occasional wash, but I have a problem or two with that.

I have no garden or attached garage and no parking outside, so there's no way to hook up a hosepipe. I keep my bikes in a lock-up that has no water supply or mains electricity, so using a pressure washer is out. In any case, you probably shouldn't use a full-power pressure washer on a bike, or you might blow seals apart and flush the grease out of bearings.

So that means I have lots of laborious work with buckets and sponges or have to use cleaning sprays, most of which come with the instruction "rinse off with a strong jet of water".

And then I came across this. It's a Worx Hydroshot cordless pressure washer. It's not as powerful as a mains-powered jet washer, something the manufacturers make a point of mentioning, saying it's suitable for bicycles, motorbikes, cars,

camping equipment, muddy boots, watering gardens and even washing down muddy dogs.

It's mostly made of high impact plastic and powered by a Worx 20v 2ah battery, which can also be used on other Worx power tools. This version came with a battery, charger, six-metre hose, five-nozzle spray head, a lance, a brush and a soap tank. You can buy three versions, and they are also available as 'body only' without batteries at a much lower price, which is a big saving if you already own Worx tools, as you can swap the power sources around.

You can use almost any water source – buckets, barrels, water butts, even streams and lakes, as there's a filter on the end of the feed pipe, or you can attach two-litre plastic bottles to the hand grip. Nicely compact, you can tuck it away in a corner until you need it. It has two power settings, with the high power more than capable of clearing road muck without damaging

seals and bearings, and the low setting is good for giving general cover. The battery lasts for about 20min at high power in constant use, more than long enough to clean a bike. It's not especially cheap and you can buy a budget mains-powered jet washer for half the price, but for my purposes it's just what I was looking for, if I can just stop my wife from stealing it to water the allotment. It has joined the many other battery-powered tools I've found invaluable in my unpowered garage, which include a drill, which when mounted in a vice also makes a handy polisher, LED lights, a jump-start pack and a cordless angle grinder, with a solar charger to keep bike batteries topped up. Now, if someone would invent a battery-powered compressor, lathe and blast cabinet, then all will be well.

■ **Worx Hydroshot cordless pressure washer**

■ **£130**

■ **worx-europe.com**



One Shot is all you need with Silkolene

SILKOLENE HAS TAKEN the wraps off its new 'One Shot' range of products.

The 100ml One Shots are designed to be easily added into the fuel tank or to the engine oil prior to a scheduled oil change. The products available in 100ml size are PRO FST, Engine Flush and Octane Booster.

PRO FST is highly effective in protecting against cold start wear, corrosion, carburettor icing, deposit build-up problems, stalling and rough running at low engine revs.

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Octane Booster can be used to improve combustion in a petrol engine, enhancing power and performance. It is effective for both racing and day-to-day riding.

It's nothing you can't already buy, but being able to buy it in small, one-shot sizes means you don't have bottles you won't use again until next year, plus it saves a little money!

■ **silkolene.com**



SUBSCRIBE TODAY PAGE 20

Big discounts on Sealey products

TOOL SPECIALIST SEALEY is offering a series of summer discounts in its latest seasonal catalogue. Sealey launched the new 56-page summer promotion on June 1, with price cuts of up to 55% on many lines. For motorcyclists there are price cuts on lifts, ramps, locks and stands. The catalogue includes hand, power and air tools, tool chest combos, machine shop equipment,

flooring, vacs, valeting and pressure washer sections. There are also compressors and vehicle service tools, gear for welding, lubrication, shot blasting, fans and lots more. The offers are valid to the end of September 2019 and there are free detergents, oils and blasting grits with selected products.

■ **Visit www.sealey.co.uk/promotions**



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VMCC Festival of 1000 BIKES

For one weekend in July, Mallory Park circuit is the scene of classic bikes from all decades being ridden hard!

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT

NOW KNOW WHY SO MANY HAVE WAXED lyrical about the smell of Castrol R. This early castor oil-based lubricant not only led to many advances for the internal combustion engine, but also creates a wonderful aura from the smell it leaves behind any machine using it.

And at the Vintage Motor Cycle Club's Festival of 1000 bikes, that aura, held, it seems by the banking surrounding the 'friendly circuit' and its picturesque lake within, perfectly matched the bikes going around.

For those who have never been, the Festival of 1000 bikes is a celebration of classic bikes like no other. There are club stands with a hugely varied array of bikes and club members are only too pleased to chat about their favoured marque. Even the bike park has some interesting machines to see. Trade and food stands are spread around and there were some great displays from museums and collectors. Oh, and keep your head up when walking around: not only are there gorgeous and interesting bikes everywhere, but you could bump into the likes of Ian Hutchinson, Alex George, the Birchall brothers and even Mr Mallory himself, John Cooper.

But the real draw is the circuit sessions.



Saturday is road bikes, with Sunday for race bikes, thanks to the sound level allowed being higher. Different groups make for safe riding but this is no trackday or even race; it is for riders to take their machines around the famous circuit.

The sight of 1920s singles riding round with '70s two-strokes and '90s sportsbikes

is unique as far as I know, with an equally unique soundtrack – and of course that smell. While everyone wants to stay safe, rider's clothing requirements are lax, with many sporting open-face helmets and period leathers, adding to the spectacle. Every session had something to look at, whatever your penchant.





Most of those going on track camp, so the evenings are a time for banter, fixing and fettling and maybe the odd alcoholic beverage. But it also gives you a time to get close and personal with those bikes you saw during the day, and make new acquaintances.

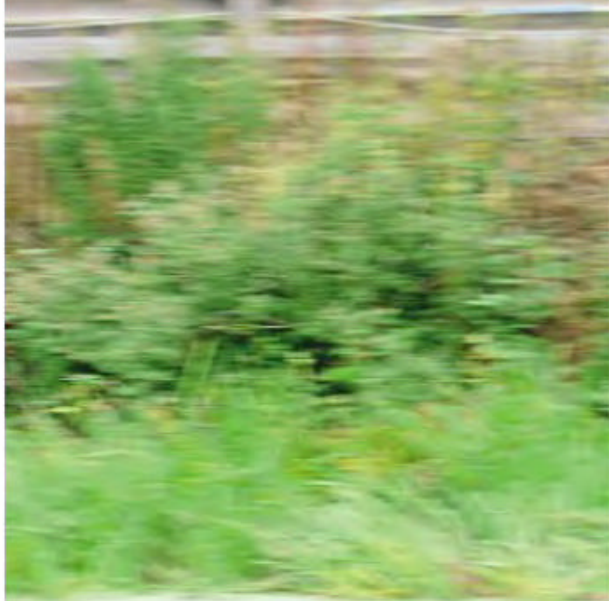
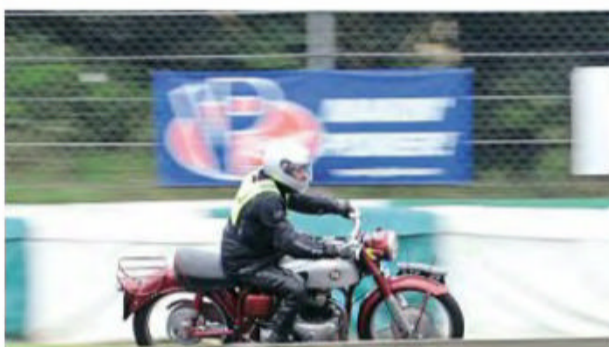
Mallory Park circuit has had its ups and downs over the years, but the new owners must be applauded as the circuit looked incredible. Money has been spent in the right places, and it is a wonderful place to be – the place looked fantastic.

The festival itself has also seen good times and bad, so the VMCC and its loyal, hard-working team of volunteers should also be proud for the organisation as well as looking after, keeping safe and at times herding so many bikes and riders to be at the right place at the right time.

Being honest, this was my first Festival of 1000 bikes, but it will definitely not be my last. It's brilliant seeing bikes from so many eras being ridden.

Next year I'll leave my cameras at home and take my helmet and leathers instead. **MB**





Fancy a day out?

AUGUST 2019

2 SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF *THE CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE*

- **2 Bike Night:** Jacks Hill Cafe, A5 Watling Street, Towcester, Northants NN12 8ET. www.jackshill.co.uk.
- **2-4 Drunken Monkey Rock Festival:** festival site, Welland Road, Upton-upon-Severn, Worcestershire, WR8 0SW. www.drunkenmonkeyrockfest.co.uk.
- **2-4 Withernsea Music & Bike Fest:** The Promenade, Withernsea, E Yorks HU19 2DS. www.withernseafestivals.co.uk.
- **2-4 The Yorkshire Pudding Rally:** Escrick Estate, Escrick, Selby, N Yorks YO19 6EA. www.mapevents.co.uk.
- **2-4 The 45th Annual Gloucestershire Vintage & Country Extravaganza:** South Cerney Airfield, Cirencester.
- **3 YOUR OLD BIKE MART WITH YOU TODAY**
- **3-4 Donington Classic Motorcycle Festival:** Donington Park, Castle Donington, Derbyshire DE74 2RP. www.donington-park.co.uk
- **3-4 LlanBikeFest:** Starring TT legend Ian Hutchinson, LlanBikeFest is a family-friendly Festival, with hundreds of bikes on display, tons of trials and bike action, children's entertainment and music. Now in its fifth year, LlanBikeFest will be open on Saturday from 9am to 6pm, with a Beer and Bands evening party for campers from 6-10pm. Sunday opening is 9am to 5pm. Tickets are available on the gate both days, with adults £12 and accompanied children 15 and under free. There are classic and custom shows, food and fairground rides and many other attractions. Bike Fest is at Royal International Pavilion, Llangollen, LL20 8SW. www.llanbikefest.co.uk.
- **3-4 NSA (National Sprint Association) MidSummer Sprint:** Westonzoyland Sprint Strip, Westonzoyland Airfield, Somerset TA7 0LZ www.nationalsprintassociation.org
- **4 Suzuki Sunday:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **4 Lothian & Borders Classic & VMCC's Club Dam Bike Run:** start/finish Barony Castle Hotel, Old Manse Road, Eddleston EH45 8QW.
- **4 12th Lytham Hall Classic Car & Motorcycle Show:** Lytham Hall, Ballam Road, Lytham St Annes, Lancs, FY8 4JX. www.markwoodwardclassicevents.com
- **4 Sammy Miller Museum, Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists:** Improve your riding skills by meeting IAM RoadSmart. www.sammymiller.co.uk
- **5 AUGUST ISSUE OF REAL CLASSIC**
- **7 VMCC (Dorset section) Lunch Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane,

Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk

- **8 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Preston Dock Marina.
- **8-10 Yorkshire Rock 'n' Bike Show:** Squires Cafe Bar, Newthorpe Lane, Newthorpe, South Milford, Leeds, W Yorks LS25 5LX. www.yorkshirerocknbikeshow.co.uk.
- **9-10 Dirtquake:** DirtQuake is an alternative motoring festival that encourages a diverse blend of bike fans, dirt racers, millennials, grease monkeys, celebrities, custom shop designers, speed freaks and weekend warriors to celebrate their shared love of motorbikes. Irreverent racing action takes place on loose-surface oval circuits without the hassle, rules and costs usually associated with motorsport. DirtQuake is inclusive – giving riders, enthusiasts and even pro racers a unique chance to take on all comers. Dirtquake is at Arlington Stadium, nr Eastbourne, Sussex.
- **9-11 23rd Fairly Well Endowed Rally:** Crow Edge Community Centre, A616 Sheffield Road, Crow Edge, Holmfirth, W Yorks HD9 7TS. Tel Kev Lamb (rally secretary) 07940 925870. Email klamb@talktalk.net.
- **9-11 Retrofestival:** Newbury Showground, Priors Court, Hermitage, Thatcham RG18 9QZ. www.retrofestival.co.uk
- **10 Scottish National Rally for Classic and Vintage Motorcycles:** Guildtown Sportsground, Guildtown, Perthshire, PH2 6BY. Tel. 01241 853946.
- **10-11 NSA (National Sprint Association) George Brown Memorial Sprint:** Lancaster Raceway, East Kirkby Airfield, Spilsby, Lincolnshire PE23 4BP www.nationalsprintassociation.org
- **11 Harley Day:** The Anchor, 84 Cambridge Road, Hitchin, SG4 0JH.
- **11 VMCC & Classic Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **11 Kenley Autojumble:** The Portcullis Club, Kenley Airfield, Victor Beamish Avenue, Caterham, CR3 5FX (just off jct 6, M25) for sat nav use CR3 5LT www.KenleyAutojumble.co.uk
- **11 Taunton Classic Motorcycle Club Exmoor Run:** Sheppy's Cider, Three Bridges, Bradford-on-Tone, Taunton, TA4 1ER. www.tauntonclassicmc.weebly.com
- **11 Stonyhurst Classic Car & Motorcycle Show:** Stonyhurst College, Clitheroe, Lancs, BB7 9PZ. Tel. 01484 667776. www.classicshows.org
- **11 The British Two Stroke Club (Leicester**

Section) The Belvoir Run: The Plough Inn, Hickling, LE14 3AH. Tel. Eric Hathaway 01162 750532.

- **11 VMCC (Dorset section) Border Run:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/
- **11 Sunbeam MCC 57th Graham Walker Memorial Run:** Beaulieu, Hants. Tel. Ian McGill 01293 771446. Email pioneerorganiser@gmail.com
- **15 CLASSIC DIRT BIKE ISSUE 52**
- **15 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER ISSUE OF CLASSIC RACER**
- **15 Greetham Gathering:** Great Lane, Greetham, Rutland LE15 7NG. Classic bike and car meet. www.greethamgathering.co.uk
- **16-18 Vosa Rejects Rally:** Walton Sports and Social Club, Shay Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks WF2 6LA. www.yorkshiretrikers.co.uk.
- **16-18 Worcester Rally & Custom Show:** Coney Green Farm, Ribbersford Road, Stourport, Worcs DY13 0TE. Tel. 07743 135858.
- **16-18 BMF Dambuster 4 Rally:** Thorpe Camp Visitor Centre, nr Coningsby, Lincs LN4 4PL. www.bmf.co.uk.
- **16-18 Numbskullz RC 1st Let's Get Numb Rally:** Miners Standard, Winter, Derbys DE4 3NW. Tel. 07702 573131 or 07972 418874. Email stanbrook.marie@yahoo.co.uk.
- **16-18 Another Pigg'in' Rally:** Stoke RUFC, Hartwell Lane, Barlaston ST15 8TL. www.greedypigsmcc.co.uk
- **16-18 MGCGB GuzziFest 2019:** Riverside Camping and Caravan Park, Marsh Lane, North Molton Road, South Molton, North Devon, EX36 3HQ. www.motoguzziclub.co.uk
- **17 Scorton Auto & Bike Jumble:** Scorton, North Yorkshire Events Centre, DL10 6EJ. Tel. Bert 07909 904705.
- **17 Yamaha TR1 Rally:** Sammy Miller Museum, www.sammymiller.co.uk
- **17-19 Renegade MC present the 12th Redskin Rally:** Frog Farm, Susans Lane, Upchurch, Kent ME9 7HA. www.renegademc.com
- **18 TAG Speed Motorcycle Show:** Lepton Highlanders Sports & Social Club, Wakefield Road, Lepton, Huddersfield HD8 0LX. www.tagspeedmotorcycleshow.co.uk.
- **18 Ledbury Leader Grasstrack:** Sparrington Farm, Pencombe, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4SL. Email sallyannpalmer226@gmail.com Tel. 07968 649327.
- **18 Breakfast Meet:** Battlesbridge Motorcycle Museum, Essex SS11 7RF. All classic vehicles welcome. Tel. 01268 769000. www.battlesbridge.com/events

■ 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.

- **18 Ladies Day – Bring What Ya Run:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **18 Bowood Summer Classic Car & Motorcycle Show:** Bowood House, Derry Hill, Calne, SN11 0LZ. www.classicshows.org. Tel. 01484 667776. Email info@classicshows.org.
- **18 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Horton in Ribblesdale, (meet car park). Tel. 01772 782516.
- **18 Tewkesbury Classic Vehicle Festival:** Tewkesbury School Playing Fields, Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Glos GL20 8DF. www.tewkesburycvf.org. Tel. 01452 260063.
- **18 VMCC (Essex Section) Ride Out:** Costa Coffee, Stanway, Colchester. Tel. Brian Irwin 01376 342885.
- **21 SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS**
- **21 VMCC (Dorset section) Mid-Week Run:** Old Ox Inn, Shillingstone, Somerset, DT11 0SF. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/
- **22-26 Great Dorset Steam Fair:** The biggest event of its kind in the world, the Great Dorset Steam Fair is a celebration of Britain's industrial, agricultural and leisure history. 200,000 people or even more are expected to turn up for this event. As well as more than 500 steam engines, hundreds of classic cars and more than 150 classic motorcycles, the fair features four days of live music, autojumbling, fairground rides and more attractions than you can see in a day, with many visitors opting to stay over in the Dorset countryside. Tarrant Hinton, Dorset. www.gdsf.co.uk.
- **23-26 GNAA Motor Show – Cars & Bikes:** Dormans Club, Oxford Road, Middlesborough, TS5 8AE. www.dormansclub.co.uk.
- **24 Sunbeam MCC 2nd Bolney Vintage Run:** Bolney, Sussex. Tel. Rob Pond 01306 628297; 07907 694751. Email robpond123@yahoo.co.uk
- **25 P&D Custom Bikes 4th Annual Bike & Hot Rod Show:** Slinfold Cricket Club, Lyons Road, Slinfold, W Sussex RH13 0RY. Tel. 01403 791038. Email pdcustombikes@yahoo.com
- **25 Harley Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com

- **25 21st Ripon Classic Car & Bike Show & Autojumble:** Ripon Racecourse, Boroughbridge Road, Ripon, HG4 1UG. www.markwoodwardclassicevents.com.
- **25 Sunbeam MCC 3rd Summer Pioneer Run:** Handcross, Sussex. Tel. Rob Pond 01306 628297; 07907 694751. Email robpond123@yahoo.co.uk
- **25 Cheshire Classic Car & Motorcycle Show:** Capesthorpe Hall, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 9JY. Tel. 01484 667776. www.classicshows.org
- **26 Kent Chrome and Cruisers Vehicle Show & Autojumble:** Faversham Showground, Staple Street, Kent ME13 9HY. Tel. 07903 339466. Email maggsian@hotmail.com.
- **26 Notts Classic Car, Bike & Mini Show:** Thoresby Park, Ollerton, Notts NG22 9EP. www.classicshows.org. Tel. 01484 667776. Email info@classicshows.org
- **27 British Two-Stroke Club Lincolnshire Branch club night:** Sausthorpe Village Hall, 7pm. Details from Andy Jones 07940 447570; Jay Smedley 07502 222754.
- **28 SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF CLASSIC BIKE GUIDE**
- **29 LE Velo Lancs & S Lakes:** Fleetwood Model Boating Lake. Tel. 01772 782516.
- **30-01 Stormin' The Castle:** Witton Castle Country Park, Witton-Le-Wear, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 0DE. www.storminthecastle.co.uk
- **30-01 Wakinyan Rally:** Birch Coppice Social Welfare Club, Watling Street, Dordon, Tamworth, Staffs B78 1SY. www.salutationmcc.com.
- **31 VMCC (Dorset section) Breakfast Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/
- **31 Sunbeam MCC Gingerbeards Trial:** Jackson Woods, Horsmonden. Tel. Neil Sinclair 07885 660939. Email sinclairndlp@hotmail.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 2019

- **1 2nd Annual Hot Rods:** Oldham Rugby Union, Manor Park, Byrth Road, Oldham OL8 2TJ. Tel. 07984 044142. Email benowenpritchard@hotmail.co.uk.
- **1 North West Classic Motorcycle Show:**

Cholmondeley Castle, nr Malpas, Cheshire SY14 8AH. www.classicshows.org. Tel. 01484 667776.

- **1 Motorcycle Fest:** White Lion Pub, 46 High St, Baldock SG7 6BJ. Tel. 07963 609143.
- **1 VJMC Bike Day:** Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com
- **1 Sunbeam MCC Greybeards Trial:** Jackson Woods, Horsmonden. Tel. Neil Sinclair 07885 660939. Email sinclairndlp@hotmail.co.uk
- **1 BMPS Magnificent Motorcycles:** Llandudno Promenade, Whistle Stop Cafe, Goldwing, Wirral Wobblers and others. Access prom opposite St Georges Hotel, LL30 2LG. For more info tel. John Dean 07816 066465. johnatsilvergate@aol.com www.bmpswnwales.org.uk
- **2 SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF REAL CLASSIC**
- **4 VMCC (Dorset section) Lunch Meet:** Henstridge Golf and Leisure, Marsh Lane, Henstridge, Somerset, BA8 0TG. Tel. 01258 860864. dorsetvmcc.co.uk/events/
- **6 Bike Night:** Jacks Hill Cafe, A5 Watling Street, Towcester, Northants NN12 8ET. www.jackshill.co.uk. Tel. 01327 351350.
- **6 OCTOBER ISSUE OF THE CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE**
- **6 Ace Cafe Reunion Weekend – Continental Run Ride-In & Party:** Ace Cafe, Ace Corner, N Circular Rd, Stonebridge, London, NW10 7UD. london.acecafe.com.
- **6-7 The 26th Carole Nash Eurojumble:** Netley Marsh, Meadow Mead Farm, Ringwood Rd, Woodlands, Southampton SO40 7GY. www.netleymarsheurojumble.com



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CBG Buying guide



Yamaha RD400

If you can find a good one, you may have found a little piece of heaven

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.



Laverda SF and SFC

A beautiful heavyweight Italian 1970s twin that stirs the soul



Triumph TRW

Triumph's war horse could have been a brilliant civilian bike

Our aim is to bring you as much detail as we can on a specific model so you can work out if it's the sort of bike you would like. Brought to you by specialists, all the information we bring you has been checked as much as we can – however if you spot anything amiss let us know so we can tell others – the best information often comes from owners! You can always reach us at editor@classicbikeguide.com



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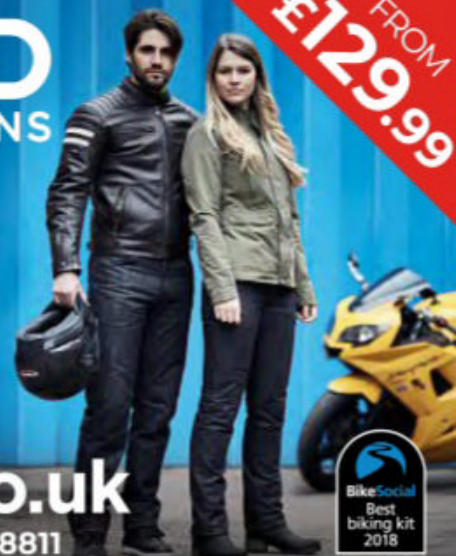
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Yamaha RD400

WORDS BY OLI HULME PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY CHAPMAN



CLASSIC MOTORCYCLING HAS AT ITS HEART A whiff of nostalgia. For those lucky enough to be running a Yamaha RD400 twin, that whiff is one of two-stroke oil, Brut 33, bags of chips at the market square heroes Grand Prix on a Friday night, and 10 John Player Special.

The RD400 was the king of the hill in the middleweight performance stakes in the late 1970s. Among its rivals, the Kawasaki KH400 was for the unhinged, Suzuki's GT380 was a bit of a softy and Honda's CB400 four was for those who were sensible.

The RD400 was indisputably 'race developed' and owners in Wrangler flares, Paddy Hopkirk Agordo lids and nylon Yamaha race jackets would run rings around

the bigger, flexi-framed fours on offer at the time. For many, the RD400 was a last gasp of youthful rebellion before the real world caught up and deposited them in a Barratt home with a Ford Escort, so it's no wonder that they've become the weapon of choice for those revisiting their youth. And they've gained a price tag to match their market.

Yamaha's RD400 traces its roots back to the very late 1960s when the company was looking to upgrade its by now outperformed YR3. Yamaha's TZ racers were wiping the floor with pretty much everything on the track in the days when a weekly trip to your local circuit was an act of religious devotion. Yamaha took their racer and really did race develop a roadster out of it. At first they launched the 350cc YR5 which had the



WHAT IS IT?

A 400cc race developed modern classic



WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT IT?

The performance, ride and handling were second to none in its day, and the RD remains peerless



WHAT'S BAD ABOUT IT?

They were often neglected and getting it back to top spec will be expensive and time consuming

HOW MUCH?

Basketcase:

£1500-£2500

Unrestored/non-

standard runner

£3000-£4500

Concours quality

£6,000-£10,000

“Among its rivals the Kawasaki KH400 was for the unhinged, Suzuki’s GT380 was a bit of a softy and Honda’s CB400 four was for those who were sensible”

frame and crankcases from the TZ, with high bars and a drum front brake. The YR5 was thirsty, and the riding position hardly suited to street racing, though that could be quickly sorted with a cheap set of ace bars.

In 1973 the first bikes with the RD prefix appeared. The RD350 had a look similar to the YR5, but it had a revised riding position, a front disc brake and reed valves. For reasons best known to themselves, Yamaha blanked off the sixth gear on UK versions, which resulted in many dark discussions about the danger of reinstating the extra gear as claims abounded that doing so would cause the bike to go from first to sixth and vice versa with devastating consequences. There were claims you would need new selector drums to complete the task, all of which turned out to be nonsense. It was just a matter of taking the clutch off and removing a circular blanking plug.

The 350 ran for three model years before it received a substantial cosmetic makeover with an angular tank and side panels, while the engine capacity was boosted by using an increased stroke to become the RD400. The frame was modified to use a bigger airbox, and the engine moved forward by 20mm so it would fit. This had the added benefit of changing the steering geometry slightly and improving stability as a result.

This new style RD was welcomed with open arms and wallets, or at least financially crushing HP deals, with buyers loving the striking looks and speedblock paint job of the new 400. The torquey new engine powered a bike that quickly became the one to beat and the RD spawned many a successful production racing career. Equipment like clocks and switchgear was excellent. The RD might have been a sports bike,

but back in the 1970s most motorcycles were still needed to take you to work during the week as well as making you king of the hill at the weekend. The RD was equipped to do both jobs. It could even be loaded with camping gear to become a useful tourer. It was a smartly groomed gentleman with a flick knife in its back pocket.

In the US, *Cycle World* magazine declared in the March 1976 issue: “The Yamaha RD400 is the closest thing to a perfect motorcycle that we’ve ever run up against.” Their only criticism was that the horn was a bit quiet. While *Cycle*, not to be outdone in the hyperbole stakes, said the RD400 was: “The world’s best, and only, midi-superbike.”

Street racers would ditch the high bars for a set of flats, rather than ace bars, as they made it easier to cope with the power. Replacement headlamps came from Cibie for late night post-pub races and Koni or Girling shocks replaced the bouncy originals. Dunlop TT100 tyres and later Avon Roadrunners replaced the Japanese Dunlop and Bridgestone rubber. Exhausts were junked for expansion chambers from a wave of metal bashers, some of whom knew what they were doing, while others were back street builders whose products made the bikes noisier but no faster. One of the problems with these mods today is that nobody saved anything at the





time and exhaust pipes now worth hundreds will have been long ago left out for the bin men.

The first RD400 could top 105mph, the same top speed as the 350, but the extra capacity gave the 400 impressive mid-range torque. Meanwhile home tuners would hack away at inlet ports with files, skim heads and muck about with ignition timing with variable results. A stock RD400 would walk all over a CB400 Four from the lights.

In a move considered radical and possibly dangerous at the time, the 400cc engine was rubber mounted. The critics and naysayers suggested that without solid mountings the engine would not provide any bracing for the frame. It was another bar-room theory that wasn't born out by experience. The only real issue that the rubber mountings did create was that the flexible silicone rubber exhaust sleeves between the down pipes and the firmly mounted exhaust boxes would fracture regularly and dealers made a pretty penny selling them to owners every few months at £10 each.

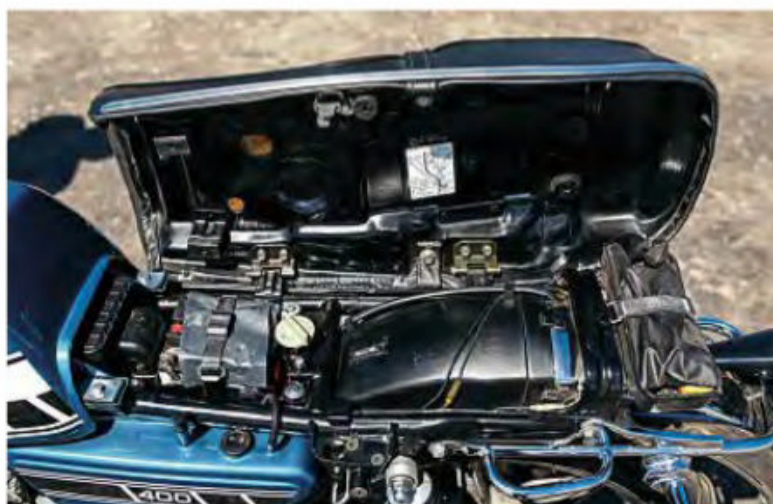
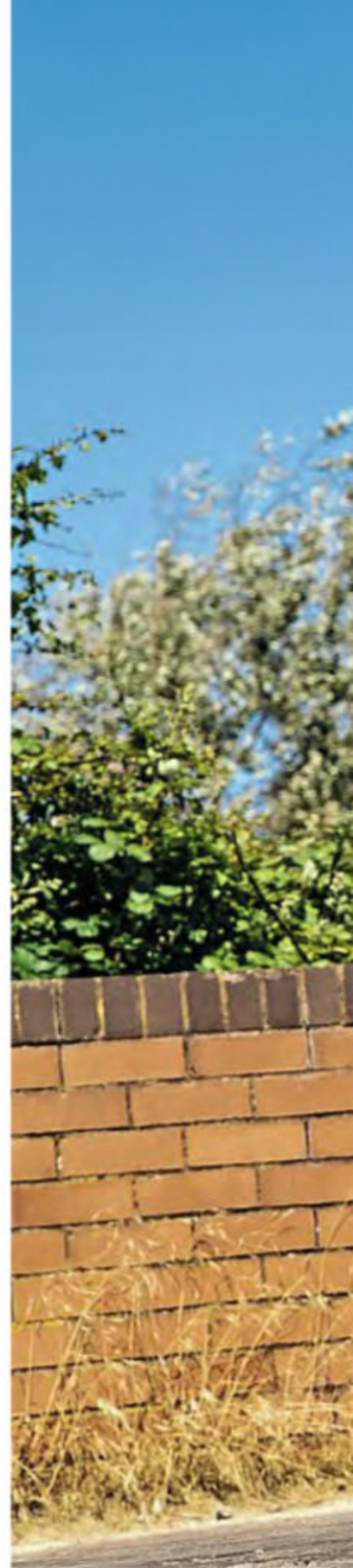


There were disc brakes front and rear. The calipers were prone to corrosion if left to their own devices, but if kept in good condition the front brake alone would bring the plot to a halt in short order, sometimes lifting the back wheel in the air. Yamaha had invented the stoppie. The caliper was the same as that fitted to the XS650.

Two years after launch, Yamaha gave the RD electronic ignition and modified the engine so it now recorded a top speed of 113mph, which was impressive for a 400 whichever way you sliced it. The electronic ignition system ended problems that had bedevilled two-strokes like fouled plugs. You would still get a blue haze of two-stroke smoke if you gave the throttle a handful, but that was part of the charm. Forks too were beefed up while the alloy wheels were lighter. While it could be a purposeful and sensible commuter at lower revs, once past 5,500rpm all sorts of things started to happen as the pace began to pick up, until you got to 8,500 when it was time to change up again until you ran out of gears, road, or bottle. The brake calipers were changed to Yamaha's own single piston floating design, which wasn't quite as good as the earlier device. This was partly so Yamaha could save money as they previously had to pay Girling a licence fee for the original design.

There were a few other minor niggles. Most problems came from the gearbox which could be a little fragile. Fork stanchions rusted if left out in the weather, regulator/rectifiers could fail and the points ignition would not work if the battery was flat. Exhausts on the earlier C and D models were strong but later the E and F models could crack, stress fracture and spit out the baffles. Tanks could rot out and they were also prone to stress cracking above the cross brace on the rear mount.

Problems like these are likely to be the case with any old Japanese motorcycle. The RD400 though is a little bit more special than most. Fast and light and





easy to start, a delight to ride, refined at low revs and a rip-snorting fun machine at the top end, the RD is the last of the great air-cooled two-strokes. Try one while you still can...

The RD400C pictured belongs to Nathan Jones. It's the latest in a long line of Yamaha twins he has owned, which as well as RDs includes YR5 and YDS7s. But the 400 is his top pick, thanks to the way it's so usable in all conditions. This RD has had eight owners from new, two of whom covered just 14 miles on it. It was a surprise find, which he came across fully restored at a Kawasaki dealership, the previous owner having part exchanged it for a new Z900RS. "The dealers said they wouldn't normally have taken it in, but it was so pretty they just had to."

The alloy wheels were an optional extra when new as the very first RD400C was fitted with spoked wheels. The switchgear too is unusual. The RD was the first bike with self-cancelling indicators, a feature that was sadly dropped on later models. This bike has matching frame and engine numbers, which was Yamaha practice. In the restoration the frame and all ancillary components were powder coated, the engine was stripped and rebuilt, along with the shock absorbers. Bars, rear mudguard and most of the fasteners were rechromed and a veritable Aladdin's cave of new old stock parts used

in the rebuild including forks, switches, clocks, switchgear and brake components.

The ergonomics are very refined, the seat is low and very soft, the bike being built in the 1970s when riders were smaller. Your feet aren't too far forward, and the bars are about right for most day-to-day riding. The engine is hardly a heavyweight, but the centre of gravity is remarkably low. Despite the low height everything is neatly tucked away.

While you can ground pegs and exhausts on a tight corner, nothing sticks out appreciably. In a Jekyll and Hyde fashion usable power comes from low down in the rev range until you get to around 5,500rpm when things really start to happen. Vibration is virtually non-existent, with just a faint high frequency buzz letting you know things are going on below. Not that you can miss the delicious crackle from the exhausts and the blue haze behind that follows a fistful of throttle. Those 1970s verdicts that the RD400 was the perfect motorcycle are still hard to argue with.

Would you like it? Although he's in no hurry to sell, Nathan says: "Everything is for sale, at the right price." Listed at £7,000 on eBay, Nathan will consider an interesting part-exchange. Nathan is a keen off-roader and is looking for a classic trials bike. If you have a twin-shock Yamaha TY250 to offer, you might find it easier to get a deal...



Yamaha parts specialists Yambits are the first stop for those keeping these delightful twins rolling. Karl Bramley from Yambits says: "The RD twins are still unbelievably popular and spares for them make up an awful lot of our inventory, along with bits for the LC twins. We get a lot of parts remanufactured and list 564 different parts for them, selling them in the UK and worldwide. Rubber dampers for the engine mountings are a regular buy as are metal parts like brake hoses. We have headlamp rims made in the UK and have a lot of tools made too, like pullers and special tools to help people who want to do the work themselves at home, and for the trade. We get brake components remade and try to keep as much of that work in the UK as we can.

"Some parts, such as brake components are interchangeable with other Yamaha models. C and D model brakes are the same as those used on TX and XS twins, while the E and F model equipment are identical to those used on Yamaha's triples. While the first C and D models are closely matched they differ between the UK and US models. US models are a year behind – 76 UK models are 77 US models, and so on. Electronic ignition kits for those who want to convert these early models use a different design for the US bikes. We offer a parts identifier service, where if you supply the frame and engine number, we can make sure you get the right parts for your bike wherever it



OWNERS' CLUB

Yamaha air-cooled RD Club
www.aircooledrdclub.com

SPECIALISTS:

Yambits
yambits.co.uk
 Fowlers
www.fowlers.co.uk

came from. Parts availability is good enough to bring RDs back to life from rusty oblivion. Even given the age they are now, barn finds which were once only good for spares can be restored. There aren't a lot of problems with RDs, though some people have issues with fork bushes as these were never serviceable when Yamaha made them. Swing arm repair and upgrade kits are particularly popular."

Those bringing RDs back to the road are split evenly between those who want to restore to original specification and those who still want to improve the breed, says Karl.

"It's down to personal preference. A lot of the younger generation of riders buy them as daily and weekend riders and like to fit upgrades. LC front ends are a common mod. Some of the parts that did wear out are things like mudguards. Front mudguards on the C models are different to the later bikes and had different drillings. Rear guards also sell well, we've sold 350 of them in the last couple of years. We also make seats with composite bases to replace the old steel ones that rust. We can't keep them on the shelves, and they sell out quickly. We must have sold well over 600 of them.

"We sell a replica rear shock which looks the part for around £50. Frame stickers and engine casing badges are popular too, but we don't stock tank transfers as they deteriorate. For a while you couldn't get ignition switches that would fit, so we had them made up with the correct connector plugs. For us it's all about making sure we are making the investments that help keep these bikes fresh and available to ride."

To check out the Yambits' range of parts, visit yambits.co.uk

SPECIFICATION:

ENGINE: 398cc air-cooled two-stroke twin, piston/reed ported **BORE X STROKE:** 64 x 62mm **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 6.2:1 **POWER:** 44hp @ 8000rpm **MAX TORQUE:** 27.5lb-ft @ 7500rpm **WHEELBASE:** 1315mm/51.8in **WEIGHT:** (Dry) 161kg/355lb **BRAKES:** Disc (F&R) **TYRES:** (F) 3.25 x 18 (R) 3.50 x 18



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Triumph TRW

WORDS BY OLI HULME PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY CHAPMAN





WHAT IS IT?

A Cold War military motorcycle



WHAT'S GOOD?

It's reliable, smart and turns heads



BAD POINTS?

Trying to find one

HOW MUCH?

Basket case/project

£1,800-£2,500

Oily rag runner

£4,500-£5,500

Concours

£7,000+

TRIUMPH'S TRW MILITARY TWIN IS A MOTORCYCLE that is adored by owners and respected by most experts. It's a motorcycle you couldn't buy when it was new, with its origins in an ill-tempered spat between two rivals and stayed in production largely unchanged for 17 years.

Triumph had tried to get a side-valve 350 twin accepted by the Military in 1940 but the Coventry blitz that destroyed the factory put the project back a few years. They then came up with a 500 twin, coded the 5TW, but this was designed as much as anything as a spoiler, to take the wind from the sails of BSA.

Triumph boss Jack Sangster found out in early 1942 that BSA were to develop a new side-valve twin for the Army and the machine would come from the drawing board of former Triumph designer, Edward Turner. The new BSA was due to be unveiled in three months but Sangster was already unhappy because Turner had jumped ship and moved to BSA.

Sangster told his young designer Bert Hopwood



to come up with a similar design, on condition that it would be ready in two months. Hopwood later declared it was a “timewaster” with which he was “disgusted” but still came up with a prototype in seven weeks and Triumph released it to the press before BSA revealed their machine. Sangster had no intention of putting the twin into production, his only motivations being to steal BSA’s thunder and claim that the twin had been a Triumph idea all along. Neither bike went into production as they were both rejected. BSA were furious. Turner buried the hatchet with Sangster and returned to Triumph in 1943.

With the armed forces awash with assorted motorcycles there was little immediate demand for a new bike after the Second World War, yet in 1946 the Ministry of Supply (MoS) issued a specification for a new military mount and Turner dusted off Hopwood’s hurried design, Hopwood having left to work for BSA.

After Turner had changed the valve timing operation from chain to gear, Triumph submitted a design with military specific modifications such as a fully enclosed final drive chain. The Government initially decided against a new design, but by 1948 things had changed and the MoS was again looking for a new machine. Late that year, they issued another specification and this time Triumph used the 500cc twin engine fitted into modified existing Triumph Trophy cycle parts.

The bike was a side-valve, in which the valves operate upside down, with a flat cylinder head. Side-valves are mechanically simple and incredibly hard wearing, which made them popular with military buyers. If you are a pedant, the engine wasn’t technically a side-valve. Most side-valves are singles, inline V-twins or flat twins. With cylinders sitting next to each other, the Triumph was technically a “front-valve” with the valves set transversely across the front of the cylinder block.

The pre-unit engine dimensions of 63mm x 80mm gave the bike a capacity of 499cc. Excluding prototypes, the bike that would become known as the TRW was the only twin cylinder side-valve that Triumph ever produced. The Trophy frame was modified with the wheelbase shortened and the ground clearance increased, resulting in a frame that could cope well

Hopwood later declared it was a “timewaster” with which he was “disgusted” but still came up with a prototype in seven weeks





with most types of terrain. The telescopic front forks, however, were intended primarily for the roads rather than on the rough and they had TR5 springs and road-model stanchions.

As the cycle parts were already available this would not only save time getting it into production, but also drastically cut development costs and as it was a mixture of parts this model was known internally as the Hybrid. In accordance with the MoS requirements, it weighed under 300lb (136kg), was capable of 80mpg at 30mph, could ford 15in of water and could stop and restart on a gradient of 1-in-2.24. Originally, the Hybrid was supplied with an SU carburettor, but the production model was offered with a Solex Type 26 WH-Z carb to improve fuel consumption.

Triumph needed to find ways to save some weight where it could and fitted a low-slung siamesed exhaust



pipe on the TRW, with the exhaust gases exiting through a regular Triumph silencer on the timing side. A crank-mounted Lucas alternator on the drive side handled the lighting and was the first alternator fitted to any production motorcycle. A BTH magneto provided the sparks to the plugs and the power was transmitted to the four-spring clutch via a single-row primary chain. The four-speed gearbox looked externally much like that fitted to civilian Triumphs, but used higher ratios to help it plod along as a convoy escort.

The Hybrid was given the model code TRW when it was accepted by the MoS, but the Army decided they didn't want them after all. Although you'll see a few TRWs in British Army trim, the army mostly stuck with war veteran BSA side-valve singles and Matchless G3s. The Army stuck with BSA, eventually replacing the side-valves with the B40 single which



Buying guide

were used until the 1980s. The RAF were a much bigger buyer of the TRW, using these more sophisticated and stylish twins for escort duties. The Royal Navy also bought some, and several hundred were bought by the Forestry Commission.

In 1949, as a test of the abilities of the machines submitted by the manufacturers, the MoS entered five contenders for their orders into the Scottish Six Days Trial. The team consisted of a Norton, two BSA side-valve twins derived from the A7 and two TRWs. One Triumph ridden by Sgt Bill Randall took a second-class award and then won Gold in the 1950 mid-Wales ISDT.

Significantly for Triumph's profits, the TRW was then approved as a NATO standard machine, which meant that foreign sales were good, as armed forces around the world bought them for their troops. Commonwealth countries without their own motorcycle industries snapped them up. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa all selected them, as did the new nation of Pakistan which was feverishly building its own army. The Dutch and Irish also bought them, as did the Germans. The British used them until the end of the 1960s, but by then the ageing side-valve wasn't quick enough to keep up with the lorry convoys they were supposed to escort.

Around 16,000 TRWs were built, none of them available to civilian buyers. This is curious as Triumph did not have the kind of "cooking" motorcycle in its range for duties like sidecar hauling that other manufacturers did, and *The Motor Cycle* suggested in 1952 that such a machine would have been a solid seller. Surplus TRWs trickled onto the civilian market from the late 1950s onwards, and these bikes required little effort to make them civilian friendly. Even into the early 1980s adverts appeared in the pages of *Exchange and Mart* offering TRW machines stashed away in military depots for





around £100, though they were always more expensive than the surplus BSA M20 and M21 singles adopted in greater numbers by the Army. The cheapness of these rigid-framed twins saw plenty of TRWs being turned into choppers by custom builders and would-be motorcycle outlaws. Others were fitted with OHV engines to make TR5 replicas and still more were cannibalised for their frames and forks as these parts were, on the face of it at least, common to other Triumph twins.

The TRW MkI was produced until the end of 1952 and was followed by the MkII, which changed the alloy head and barrels for iron ones but retained the BTH magneto. The MkIIB, which arrived in 1956 was fitted with the cheaper but potentially less reliable coil ignition, featuring a Lucas DKX2 distributor in the former magneto position and a single coil. Production of the final MkIII version started in 1963, for which Triumph replaced the distributor with twin points and coils.

The hardness of the TRW became apparent when the Royal Signals Motorcycle Display Team fielded 18 TRWs with beefed up frames and mildly tweaked engines with higher compression, Amal carbs and alterations to the inlet ports. These long-suffering TRWs could carry 27 men on a single machine in the display team's signature 'taxi-ride' stunt to entertain the public at the

“TRWs are becoming harder to find in the UK. Owners have such affection for them that they simply don't change hands”

Royal Tournament at Olympia. The TRW's reputation for toughness saw these display machines remaining in service until 1969, four years after TRW production had ended.

Today TRWs are increasingly appreciated by classic riders for their gentle nature and decent handling. The other big selling point for the TRW is its lines. Most military machines have a look only a mother could love, but the TRW is just as smart as Triumph's civilian models, even boasting gold pinstriping on the petrol tank in military service.

TRWs are becoming harder to find in the UK. Owners have such affection for them that they simply don't change hands, or if they do it is within a community of military vehicle fanatics. A TRW register can be found at classicbikeshistory.com/triumph-trw and Burton Bike Bits still hold stock for TRWs, including complete engines and NOS alternators. Visit burtonbikebits.net/triumphtrw

SPECIALISTS:

Burton Bike Bits
burtonbikebits.net

OWNERS' CLUB

Military Vehicle Trust
www.mvt.org.uk

Triumph Owners' Motor
Cycle Club
www.tomcc.org

RIDE WITH PRIDE (AND CLARKE)

JOHN BIGGS' TRW was one of the first released into the civilian market, being a 1952 MkII model with the cast iron head and barrel, though records are vague.

Sold as Government surplus by Pride and Clarke in 1959, what it did between 1952 and 1959 is a mystery however.

Sympathetically modified over the years to keep it on the road and usable, the most obvious change is the use of a square slide Dell Orto carburettor, more commonly seen on Ducati and Moto Morini motorcycles, fitted by a previous owner to replace the somewhat tired Solex original.

Another modification, less immediately obvious, is the use of a Triumph sprung hub to soften out the bumps at the rear. John says, a little ruefully, that the sprung hub has one inch of travel on a TRW.

Some of the model specific features are unusual. On the gearbox, there is, as on other Triumphs, a gear position indicator, but for reasons best known to themselves Triumph located it at the front of the gearbox casing, rather than on the top or side, so you can't see it unless you get off the bike and peer into the darkness between the crankcase and gearbox shell.

Triumph OHV twins would be fitted with an Oil Pressure Release Valve, with an indicator button that

pops out when the engine is functioning with enough oil pressure. The TRW has it too, but again it is hidden behind the crankcase and you can't see it when riding along.

The bike has a decompressor, not to aid starting, as compression is low in any case, but to stop the low revving engine from stalling if coasting down a hill.

The valve clearances are stamped on the valve covers, which can be removed by unscrewing a wing nut. The large headlight switch, designed for use by clumsy, cold squaddies wearing heavy hide gauntlets, has four settings. One only illuminates the rear light, this is so that when riding in convoy machines would not use their headlights.

Like many a machine of the period the bike is fitted with easy to operate front and rear wheel stands. John's bike has military surplus panniers and a smart little leather tool case, originally designed to hold the clinometer for a Vickers machine gun, a device to lay the gun for elevation shooting.

Tied to the handlebars is an Irish 10p piece with a chunk sliced off. This is to undo the cover on the toolbox on the right-hand side. The rear silencer is basic Triumph and looks very similar to that fitted to the Tiger Cub.

The headlamp nacelle is as fitted to civilian machines, but with a flat area blanked off where the ammeter would have been. The

colour too is typically military. It is army green, but the toolbox, oil tank and petrol tanks are all slightly different shades, presumably sashed on by a bored squaddie with a 'brush, 4 inches, motorcycles for the repainting of', though the smart gold pinstripes are intact. John's original military workshop manual is marked "restricted" and was presumably a military secret, secured lest the vital information within was captured by the Soviet army.

Unsophisticated and solid it's a curious machine to ride and my brief excursion in the heavily sprung saddle revealed it to be a good, reliable plodder, on which it doesn't really matter which gear you are in. Rather than accelerating, it simply gathered momentum.

It starts fairly easily when cold but is a bit more of a job when hot, or more particularly when cooling down, as guessing whether it's going to need more fuel in the combustion chamber is something of an art form.

The riding position is of the armchair type and comfy enough, though one would imagine a slender and less well-upholstered RAF Aircraftsman on National Service might have suffered a little while escorting bits of Lightning jets on lorries across northern Germany. But it has to be acknowledged that getting out on riding duties would have been better than spending your days painting coal white or square bashing. **CBG**



SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: 499cc 63x80mm side-valve vertical twin. **LUBRICATION:** Dry-sump **POWER:** 16bhp **CARBURETTOR:** Solex **IGNITION:** BT-H magneto **ELECTRICS:** BT-H alternator **TRANSMISSION:** four-speed gearbox, four plate wet clutch **FUEL CAPACITY:** 3½ gallons 14 litres **TYRES:** Front 3.25x19in Rear 4.00x19in **BRAKES:** 7in diameter SLS front and rear. **SUSPENSION:** Triumph telescopic fork with hydraulic damping. Rigid rear **WHEELBASE:** 53in/1346mm **GROUND CLEARANCE:** 6¼in/158mm unladen. **HEIGHT:** 31in/787mm **WEIGHT:** 366lb/166kg fully equipped **MAXIMUM SPEED:** 72 mph

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Laverda 750SF/SFC

WORDS BY OLI HULME PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT AND MORTONS ARCHIVE



WHAT IS IT?
A great 1970s parallel twin



WHAT'S GOOD?
Solid, reliable and of impressive build quality.



WHAT'S BAD?
It's heavy work at low speeds, physically big and the suspension is very firm

HOW MUCH?

Basket case
£3500-5000

Oily rag runner:
£5500-7500

Concours: £10,000-12,000 (SF) £30,000-50,000 (SFC)



THE NAMING OF MOTORCYCLES usually follows a series of conventions. There's the racing links – Bonneville, Le Mans and Montjuic. There are names that are supposed to represent the machine and rider's vision – Dominator, Thunderbolt or Fireblade. And there's those with seemingly random collections of letters – CB, XS, SS and Z.

As far as we can tell there's only one motorcycle that is named after its ability to stop. The SF in Laverda 750SF stands for Super Freni, or in English, Super Brakes.

The 750SF's brakes were a bit special, it has to be said. Not many manufacturers would have considered that the Grimeca or Ceriani drums used on most of their top end rivals were not good enough and built their own, better, stopper. And then they stuck a marginally smaller in-house TLS brake on the back too, but then that was Laverda all over.

Laverda were, and are, a maker of agricultural machinery, and the separate motorcycle company was set up in 1947 by Francesco Laverda, the grandson of Pietro Laverda, the parent company's founder.

The early Laverdas were small capacity bikes built to fill the need for personal transport in postwar Italy, but unlike many of their rivals, the Laverdas were built up to a standard, rather than down to a price. The resulting machines took part in many endurance events.

Although Francesco was firmly of the opinion that small bikes were the way to go, his son Massimo had bigger ambitions. The big Laverda twin was the brainchild of Massimo and was designed by him with the

help of Luciano Zen, who had helped create a range of high-quality lightweights. After some heated arguments between them, in 1965 Francesco allowed his son, then still in his early 20s, to go ahead with the concept.

The twin first appeared as a 650 at the Earls Court Show in 1966 and quickly became a 750 once ready for production. The engine was, on the face of it, a beefed-up version of the sophisticated OHC Honda 305 twin and legend has it that Zen simply increased the dimensions of everything on the Honda's engines and precision engineered the resulting design.

Laverda dubbed the bike the 750S and it was released in 1968. The engine was a unit-construction air-cooled mill, mounted in a tubular spine frame that uses the engine as a stressed member. Two robust tubes run from the top of the steering head to the rear of the seat, two more tubes run up from the swing arm pivot, loop up alongside the two upper tubes and then curve down to the bottom of the steering head.

The first S models had 230mm Grimeca drum brakes, a tough five-speed gearbox, Bosch electrics and, radically for the time, Laverda staked a claim to the reliability of their equipment by not fitting a kick-start.

There were horizontally split crankcases in the Honda mould and a central duplex cam-chain turning the four-bearing single camshaft which was fitted. The chain had a split link to aid chain replacement. The crankshaft was originally a 180-degree item but that was changed to 360-degrees to improve torque. It ran in four large roller bearings with one outboard needle roller bearing. The oil pump could

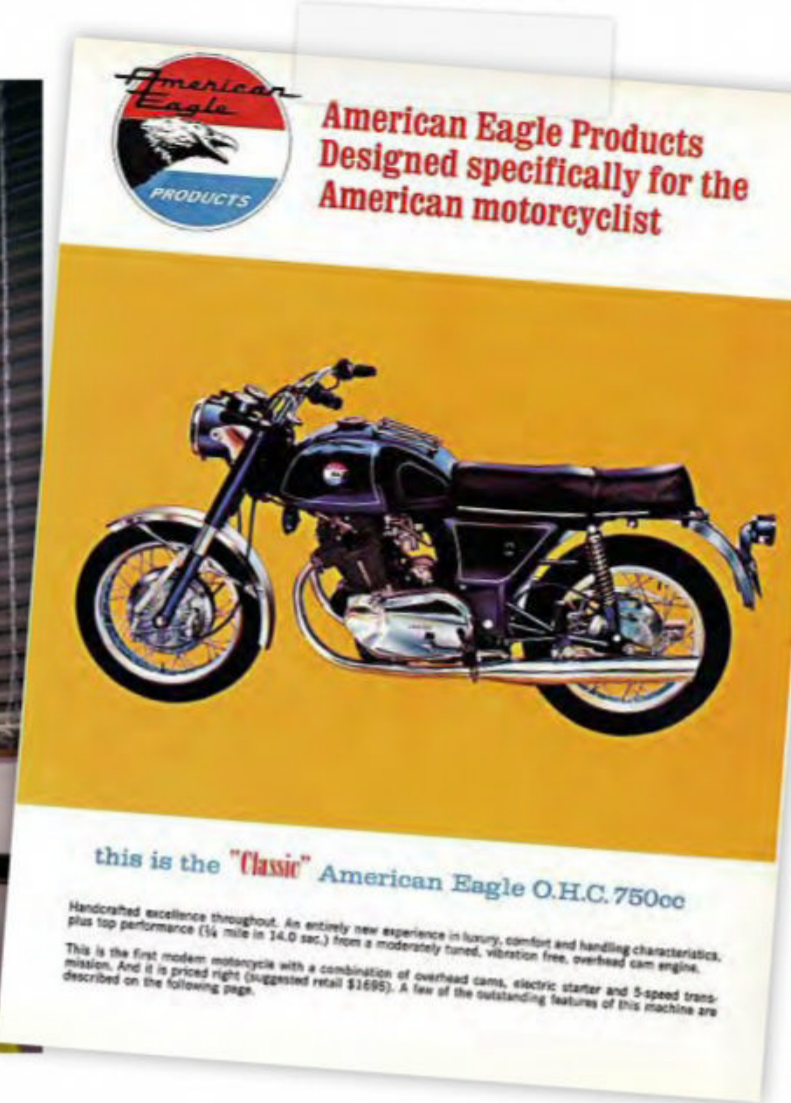
LAVERDA 750 SF



LIMITED EDITION

The SFC Production Racer for those who ride very hard. Laverda builds exceptional motorcycles.





ABOVE: Many thanks to Oli Gook, owner of Rooster's bike barn, Norfolk, and this magnificent Laverda SFC replica, which he has owned for more than 20 years.



pump three litres of oil a minute. Targeted at the US market, the twins were sold across the Atlantic by a company set up as American Eagle motorcycles, by a former Honda and Suzuki boss John McCormack, the man who came up with the phrase "you meet the nicest people on a Honda". American Eagle floundered in 1970, and Laverdas became Laverdas all over the world.

The use of components from countries other than Italy was a daring one for a small company that might have been expected to support local manufacturers, but Laverda were all about building things of high quality, and if that meant going abroad, that's what they would do. As a result, a belt driven Bosch dynamo, a chain driven Bosch electric start and a Bosch 24ah battery were fitted, bringing German quality to Italian flair. Meanwhile the headlamp was originally Laverda's own design.

During the production run other equipment came from a variety of suppliers including Italian, Japanese and British manufacturers. Some models were fitted with switchgear from Lucas, as fitted to Triumphs of the period. Carbs were 30mm pumpers from Dell'Orto and the twin horns were from Fiamm. The seven-plate





clutch and the right-foot gearshift are best described as positive, or to the layman, heavy, as was the whole machine – it was nearly 100lb heavier than a Ducati 750SS.

The 750SF with Francesco's brakes arrived in 1970 and was not cheap. In the UK an SF cost £995 in 1973, £250 more than a Suzuki GT750, and £400 more than a T120 Bonneville. Only exotica like the BMW R75/5 demanded more money from the buyer. British owners got two seats, a dual seat for touring, and a single racing seat with a neat storage compartment in the hump.

Roger Slater, the British importer, dubbed the 750SF the "Lamborghini of Motorcycles" in his advertising, which some might say flatters Lamborghini.

The engine produced useable, flexible power from 3500 revs and built it from there. The Laverda was easily prepared for endurance racing, where tuned up engines would run at more than 8000 revs for 24 hours. Laverda didn't specify a redline on the SF, which had a top speed that nudged 120mph. Maximum power was 60bhp at 6800rpm. The engine was so finely engineered that vibration was negligible, but even so Laverda rubber mounted the lights. The frame was a new version of the

original, using experience gained from Endurance racing, the 750 having won 24 hour races at Barcelona, Zandvoort and Le Mans.

Handling was a little unsteady at low speeds but excellent at high velocities, becoming better the harder you rode it but this came at the expense of rider comfort. The Ceriani forks and oil-damped shocks were hard, and you had to endure a rough ride to get the fine handling.

Francesco's brakes were formidable when new, and Laverda claimed you could bring things to a halt from 30mph in just 26 feet. This is four feet shorter than the T120 Bonneville – and that was 80lb lighter. Instruments on the SF came from Smiths at first, with the later models getting Japanese Nippon Denso items that look similar to those fitted to Honda fours, but were not the same internally.

The first SF had an exhaust balance pipe in front of the engine. This was repositioned under the engine on the second SF, confusingly called the SF1, which also got the new cylinder head from the production racing SFC, and bigger carbs.

Time was marching on and by 1974 even Francesco had to admit that disc brake

technology had caught up with his drum. The SF2 was fitted with at first one, then two cast-iron discs and Brembo calipers. The gear shift was moved to the left for the US market, but you could still ask for it to be on the right in the UK. Needle roller bearings replaced bushes in the swingarm.

The final model in the series was the SF3 which arrived in 1976. This had the Bosch electronic ignition from the SFC, cast alloy wheels, a rear disc brake and a new seat. It lacked the cobby lines of the earlier models and aped the 3C and Jota triples. The SF3 was still listed in the Laverda catalogue in 1979 for £1,995, having doubled in price in seven years.

If you are considering buying one, you'll need to be strong enough to be able to shift them about at low speeds as they are hardly lightweights, but they have Italian flair, touches of Japanese ingenuity and bits of British character without leaving oily deposits all over the floor. They are big and beefy yet can be looked after at home and disc braked models are still reasonably priced compared to other Italian and British twins of the period. These last 750SFs are well worth considering if you are in the market for a big twin. ▶

THE SFC: WINNING RACES STRAIGHT OUT OF THE SHOP

FOR THOSE WITH deeper pockets and serious track ambitions there was the SFC, or Super Freni Competizione, the racer for the road produced by the Laverda competition department. This was an instant success on the endurance racing circuits, winning race after race from its first journey out, and had an all-conquering first season. Massimo Laverda produced the first SFC in 1971 after he had himself retired from racing to build the road bike business.

The first 20 750SFC machines were built by the factory race shop and given the bright orange paint scheme that became the signature colour for Laverda's high performance racers and incidentally made them easier to spot from the pits and from the grandstands. Crankcases were heat-treated for extra strength and the crankshaft lightened, balanced and polished, while the usual race shop practices of checking the new higher compression pistons so they were exactly the same weight were employed.

The gearbox was modified for racing with close ratio gears and bearings, chains and cams were improved. There were bigger valves and bigger carbs, this time from Amal's Spanish factory. These mods increased the power of the SFC to 70bhp.

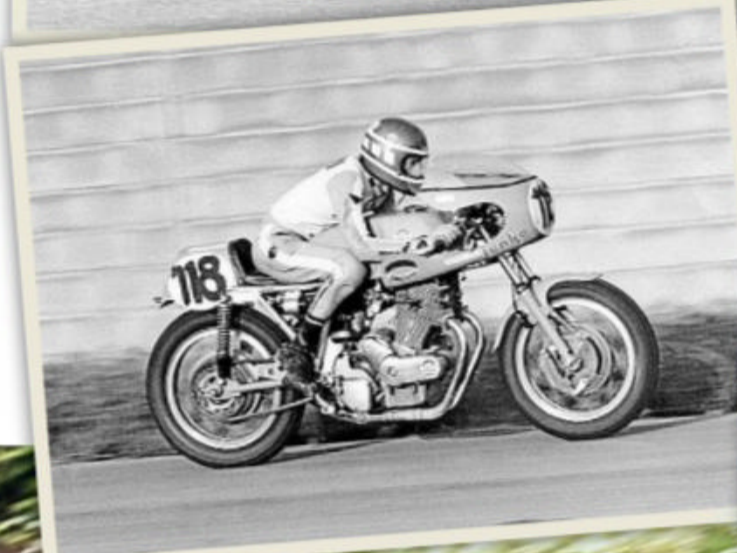
The frame remained the same on the

surface but was zinc plated and fitted with new lugs to mount footrests and the distinctive new nose fairing with its 'ears' sticking up at the rear.

A 23-litre glass fibre fuel tank replaced the SFCs aluminium original which had been prone to cracking during races. Suspension was beefed up and while Francesco's 230mm front drum brake was retained on the SFC models offered for sale, the works racers got a four-leading-shoe Ceriani racing drum. A pair of megaphone exhausts linked under the sump were used to aid breathing and improve ground clearance, a change that made it to the SF models. Only 164 SFC models were made with drum brakes.

In 1974 the SFC got three Brembo discs, a revised petrol tank and fatter forks. The crank was lightened further, there was yet another new camshaft and Laverda went back to Dell'Orto carbs, adding a further 5bhp. Bosch electronic ignition followed in 1975 and the model was dubbed the Electronica and alloy wheels were fitted in 1976.

The SFC was harder to ride than the SF, which is inevitable given that it was designed for racing. Lightening the engine components made it vibrate more, and it's not a bike for nipping down to the shops on. Every ride will be an event. ▶



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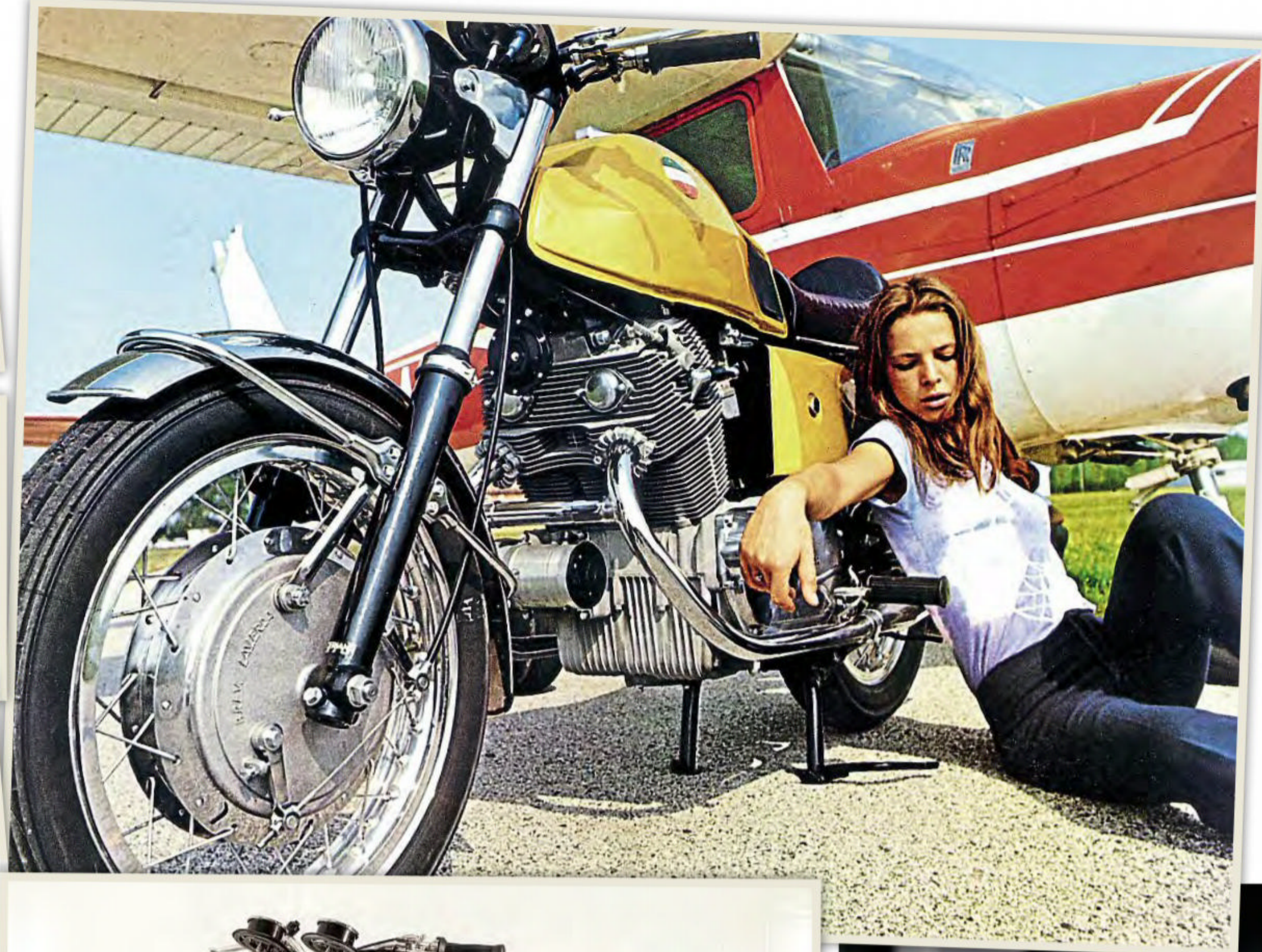
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1972 LAVERDA 750SF

ENGINE: SOHC parallel twin **BORE AND STROKE:** 80 x 74mm **POWER:** 60bhp **CAPACITY:** 744cc **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 9.7:1 **CARBURETTORS:** 2 x Dell'Orto 30mm **ELECTRICS:** 150W 12V Bosch belt driven dynamo **SUSPENSION:** 35mm Ceriani telescopic forks, twin Ceriani oil damped shocks **BRAKES:** 9-inch (230mm) TLS drum front, 8-inch (200mm) TLS drum rear **TYRES:** 3.50 x 18in front, 4.00 x 18in rear **WHEELBASE:** 1500mm (58.5in) **WEIGHT:** 231kg (501lb)

LAVERDA'S 750SF – THE BEST 1970S PARALLEL TWIN?

WE ASKED NEIL Ridgewell of Italian bike specialists Made in Italy Motorcycles about his experience of Laverda's biggest twin.

He said: "They are a very robust machine and very reliable. We've never had one in that needed us to do much more than change the battery and clean the carbs. They are very over engineered and the cranks and journals are massive.

"An SF is a pretty practical classic, a lot less fussy than, say, a Ducati 750ss. You can do pretty much everything on an SF at home, even the tappets are simple lock nut and screw arrangements. They do incredible mileages as long as you look after them.

"Italian electrics of the period have a poor reputation but on a Laverda they aren't too bad. Even the switchgear works. The Bosch ignition on the Electronica is very much of its period and didn't work terribly well on the SFC as they just didn't have the technology to make it better back then. We have fitted modern Elektronik-Sachse digital systems that work well but these were quite hard to fit to the early models. Once fitted and modded it works perfectly.

"The standard, later SF is an affordable

bike, with decent clocks and switchgear. Some buyers find the disc brake models don't appeal so much as the earlier ones which fetch a bit more money. The disc brakes are often better than the drums but that's partly because we tend to find people don't give the drums a fair chance. Most people don't know how to look after the drums properly and do things like fitting racing linings, thinking they'll get great brakes, but not realising that while they are great when you are racing, they don't really work until they get hot, which they don't do on the road. Or they'll put new linings into a slightly warped drum. Get the drum skimmed, fit the right linings and adjust them properly and they are excellent. It's just that the discs are more efficient than the drums, more effective and don't wear the same way.

"Gear shifting isn't bad, if a bit clunky, and the clutch can be heavy if not set up properly. You can get extended clutch arms to make life easier and you need to use good quality cables and route them properly. We find all kinds of cables with tortuous bends and ratchet-tied to frame tubes. Proper routing can make all the difference.

"The only real weak spot is in the starter mechanism where the one-way sprag clutch operates. When it engages on the crank there are tumblers and springs that lock the starter onto the crank. The tumblers can fall out if they are heavily worn and lock the mechanism up. But on the whole the engines are tough. We've never had to restore an engine and we've never had one come back in with engine problems.

"Because they are fairly cheap, they tend not to be restored, and instead are bought by people who like to look after them at home, doing their own maintenance. They are relatively simple to work on, and a reasonably competent home mechanic should have no problems.

"A good SF is a great parallel twin which is as good or better than a Bonneville or a Commando for the same money. They have a good electric start so you don't sweat your socks off trying to start them, and they don't leak oil and are solid and very reliable as well as being pretty affordable.

"You'll get a good late SF for between £6-7000. SFCs are a different matter. A real SFC will cost anything from £30,000-50,000 and a good replica £14,000-15,000." **CBG**





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Letters

Constellation gearbox mods

I found reading about the Royal Enfield (Constellation) on page 36 of the June issue of *Classic Bike Guide* very interesting. It reminded me of when my two boys and I rode Enfield bullets in trials and wrestled with the awful gear change of the Albion gearbox where in the end, in frustration, I tore the thing apart to try to ascertain what could be done to improve the situation.

It is many years ago that I delved into this problem, but was somewhat amazed that the remedy was fairly simple and could have, should have, been put right by Albion.

I refer to the two selector plates in the box that needed a small amount of attention, but was probably thought to be too expensive to retool, but the problem was simple really.

I added a blob of weld on the said plates

and filed it back until it worked better, I did this 12 times, which of course meant that I had to rebuild the box the same amount of times until I got it perfect, whereby the gearchange became slick, quick and positive, but above all reliable and a pleasure to use.

So anyone with a worrying gearchange problem, do as I did and you will be happy. I would have liked to have included a picture of the problem, but didn't take any at the time and the bike now lives somewhere in France! But we loved that Bullet, with its beautiful soft engine, an all-round super bike to own and ride.

Maurice Arden

(I used to make Big John Boots and sponsored the ISDT team for 14 years from about 1964 onwards.)



Money doesn't buy happiness – good advice

Like you say in *Classic Bike Guide's* July editorial, not everyone has £10,000 for a bike – I never have.

I would guess my collection of sometimes running semi-wrecks (although I don't include my Honda VT500 Ascot in that definition, it being my one shiny-ish bike) might bring £3000 at a push, with the right buyers etc. Average value is £500 each and there are six.

I feel equally as valid though being out on the road on my almost 40-year-old CB250RS as anyone on a Vincent, Brough, or more modern bikes, whatever their value.

I'm currently not out much, granted, my health keeping me to short runs only, but only until the NHS gets me sorted again, fingers crossed.

Michael Durrant

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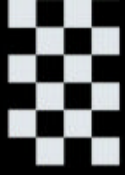
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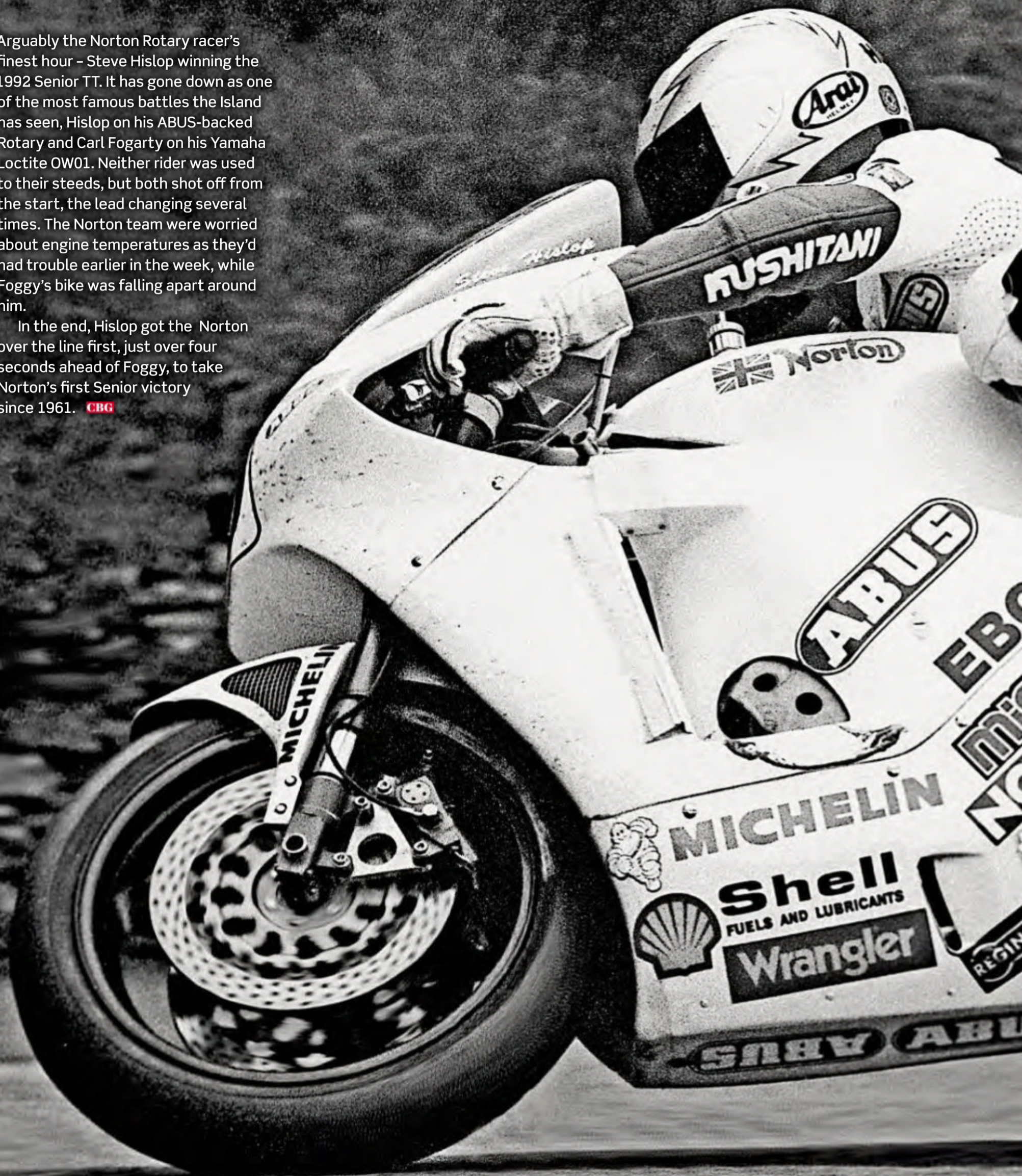




■ Finest hour

Arguably the Norton Rotary racer's finest hour – Steve Hislop winning the 1992 Senior TT. It has gone down as one of the most famous battles the Island has seen, Hislop on his ABUS-backed Rotary and Carl Fogarty on his Yamaha Loctite OW01. Neither rider was used to their steeds, but both shot off from the start, the lead changing several times. The Norton team were worried about engine temperatures as they'd had trouble earlier in the week, while Foggy's bike was falling apart around him.

In the end, Hislop got the Norton over the line first, just over four seconds ahead of Foggy, to take Norton's first Senior victory since 1961. **CBG**







STEVE COOPER

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

The cost of classics then and now, Steve weighs it all up.

“Also under the same heading, in Yamaha world at least, is the ‘matching numbers’ scenario.”

ALTHOUGH MOST OF US NEVER GOT INTO classic motorcycles because of the money it is almost inevitable that, nowadays, that sordid subject will raise its ugly head. Before you start firing off angry-grams about the subject know this – nothing ever was cheap back in the day and little has changed.

In fact, if you look at the appropriate data, in general, new motorcycles actually cost less now than they did then. Don't believe me? Then check for yourself.

I own a modern 700cc Yamaha and its purchase price was almost the same (given inflation, RPI, wages etc), as the RD350B I bought new back in 1975. So, depending on how you look at the model, that's either no appreciable change or I got twice the engine capacity for no extra genuine outlay. Confused? We've not even got started yet...

What has changed, and probably for the foreseeable, is the cost of any half decent classic. As a callow youth my first proper motorcycle was a Yamaha RD200 which cost £320 from Clarkes of St Albans. A restored example of that self-same machine will now set you back £5000 or more.

A lot of money for a tiddler I hear you shout – well yes but is that £5000 its real worth or value? In today's terms that machine has an equivalent purchase cost of around £2700 so, quite reasonably, you might ask...why is its market value almost double its relative theoretical value? The reasons are as numerous as they are annoyingly nebulous and often nonsensical.

First up we have supply and demand – we live in a free market economy and as such the desire to obtain/own/purchase something that's not currently made will often drive up costs. Then there's authenticity whereby a bike predominantly restored from NOS (New Old Stock) will often increase its allure. Also under the same heading, in Yamaha world at least, is the 'matching numbers' scenario. The tuning fork brand chassis and engine carry the same set of digits which subsequently decades after adds a certain level of kudos. An odd concept to some perhaps but by the same logic who would pay top dollar for a 1972 Kawasaki Z1 fitted with a later Z900 A4 motor? Exactly! Validity and legitimacy always come at a price.

If the bike is a full restoration then the quality

of the refinishing will also have an impact on price. Rubbish zinc plating, shoddy chrome, overly thick powder coating or a crap paint job will always detract from the final sale fee but if you get that little lot correct then once again you'll be looking at top money. All these facets of restorations and a hell of a lot more will affect the sale value.

And that's only part of the equation because what follows next is variously a pit full of vipers, a nest of angry hornets or the most ghastly can of worms you've ever opened... insurance values. How much is your classic bike worth? Possibly it's as much as someone will give you. Perhaps it's the asking price you see on eBay for buy-it-now sales? Or even possibly the figures you see bandied about on classic bike dealer's adverts – which one is it?

In all honesty it can be all of the above, some or even none. Almost without exception insurers will only pay out the market rate in the event of a total loss but there's a caveat here. If your classic bike is tacked onto the tail of a modern bike policy and your particular insurer doesn't specifically cover 'classic bikes' per se you may be getting back a lot less than you were hoping for.

Sensible classic fans choose the appropriate insurance and often opt for agreed value which is a much better plan. Well it would be if they kept up to date with modern classic motorcycle valuations. If you have never revised your agreed value insurance then perhaps it's time you did.

Give serious thought to what's in your garage or workshop, make no assumptions and ask about every single thing you're not sure about because the only stupid question is the one you didn't ask!

If you don't revise the values of your classics you are very likely to only get back their last declared value. Should you be fortunate enough to own a Yamaha RD400 that was last valued 15 years ago you might very well be shocked to find they are exchanging hands at close to or above £10,000. A little bit different to the £2500 figure you have on your policy perhaps?

Understanding that old bikes are only going to get more expensive in the medium term will ease your way through the current scene but let's not lose sight of one key facet – they are meant to be ridden and enjoyed you know! **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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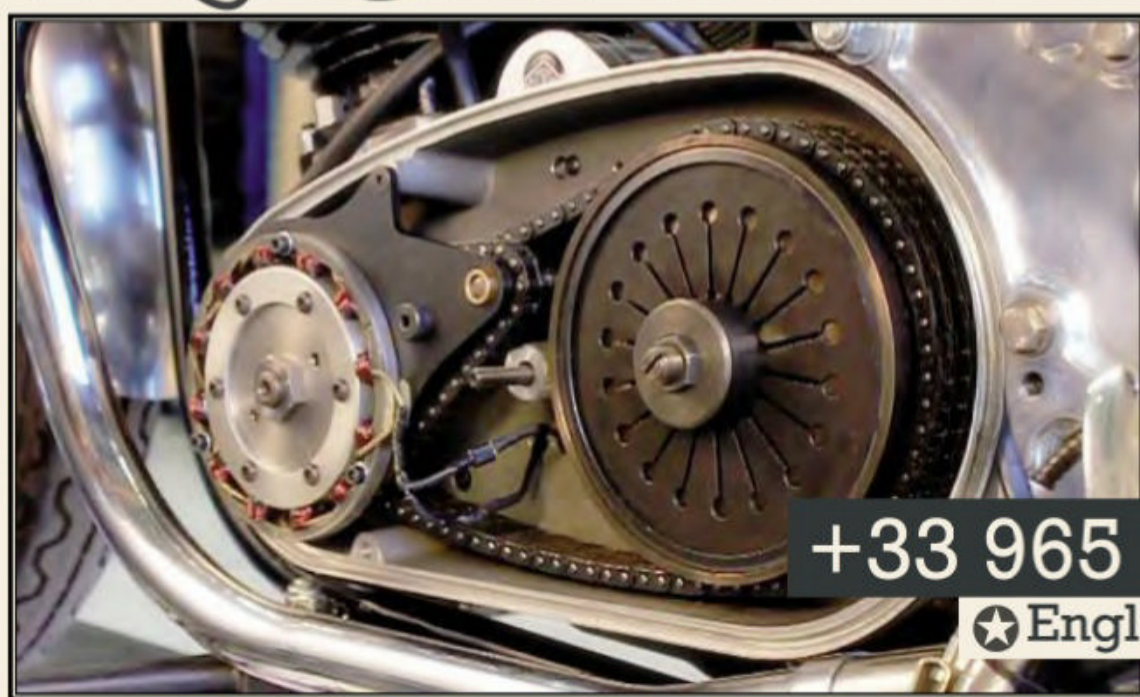
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PAUL MILES

THE BIKE SHOW

Paul looks at that oft-ignored, unnamed champion of classics – the show organiser.

“The punters, of course, largely ignored these two-wheeled works of art, preferring instead to discuss the relative merits of the Kawasaki Z200, Honda CB400/4 and Triumph twins.”

IT'S THE BIKE SHOW SEASON! UP AND DOWN THE country, village hall caretakers are desperately trying to render their wooden floors oil-proof, before dozens of clunky, incontinent old motorcycles descend upon them for the annual local show.

Bits of cardboard boxes are cut up and distributed to the exhibitors, most of whom have chosen to completely ignore the regulations stating that tanks have to be drained and batteries removed before being displayed.

No village hall? No problem, we'll use that patch of grass, ta. I wonder why those local chaps wearing funny white clothes are waving bats at us? Mind you, this is a nice flat bit, perfect for the centrestand to dig into.

Pity then, the poor chap lumbered with being the show organiser. Having requested that everybody arrive no later than 8.30 for a 10.00am doors open, at half past nine he'll be staring at a lot of empty space and wondering if his 2012 Nissan Micra would pass muster as an honorary bike, at a pinch. Just before the appointed hour, a flurry of activity signals the arrival of the exhibitors, all riding in together after grabbing 'a quick breakfast'. Their bikes are hastily wedged into some sort of lines and the organiser prays that the early visitors aren't bringing children with inquisitive hands reaching out to touch the smoking hot engines.

The dedicated showman will have printed and laminated dozens of cards to fix to the bikes, with interesting facts or anecdotes—'a local machine found in a barn near Dripper's farm and restored by Bob in 1991'. The exhibitors, of course, have little appreciation for his labour of love and a quarter of them brought different bikes to the show because they just fancied riding the BSA for a change, or the Honda wouldn't start, sorry. It's entirely possible to attend such an event and be staring at a 'fully restored 1975 T160 Trident' that bears an uncanny resemblance to a ratty old Honda CD175, such is the power of the classic show.

Others, of course, are veterans of classic events and arrive with their bike on the trailer, a machine that last turned a wheel under its own power when the old king was still on the throne. They bring with them a folding display with information about the bike and reprints of test reports in the blue'un, all beautifully laid out,

if somewhat dog-eared after three decades of display. And a folding chair, quickly set up next to the bike before sitting down with a newspaper and a flask of tea, ignoring the visitors' questions for the entire day.

But, wherever you go, even at the teeniest bike show in the remotest of locations, there's always a real gem or two on display. I recently ventured overseas to one such event, braving the elements and travelling to the distant land of Wight (Isle of). In amongst the ranks of worthy, if slightly ordinary bikes, were a couple of real diamonds. A mid 1920s AJS GR7, the racing variant of the legendary big Port, sat in all its puissant glory. Further along, I spotted a miniscule 50cc Kreidler racer, a testament to the art of weight minimisation. Perfect in every way, it radiated beauty and technical skill like a Faberge egg.

The punters, of course, largely ignored these two-wheeled works of art, preferring instead to discuss the relative merits of the Kawasaki Z200, Honda CB400/4 and Triumph twins; all abundantly represented and in various states of decay. Standing in the corner and observing for a while, the patterns became clear. Whilst there was some interest in the flat tankers and racers, it was mostly passing; these machines operate in a sphere far outside the regular rider's orbit. Machines from the 1960s and 70s were by far the most photographed and studied, with endless 'I had one of those' or 'my dad rode these' comments.

The helpless organiser is now stuck behind the table at the entrance, as nobody else is around to sell the tickets; they've all gone for tea and yet another fried breakfast. Parched and exhausted, he wonders why it's always him and this is definitely the last year he's getting roped into it.

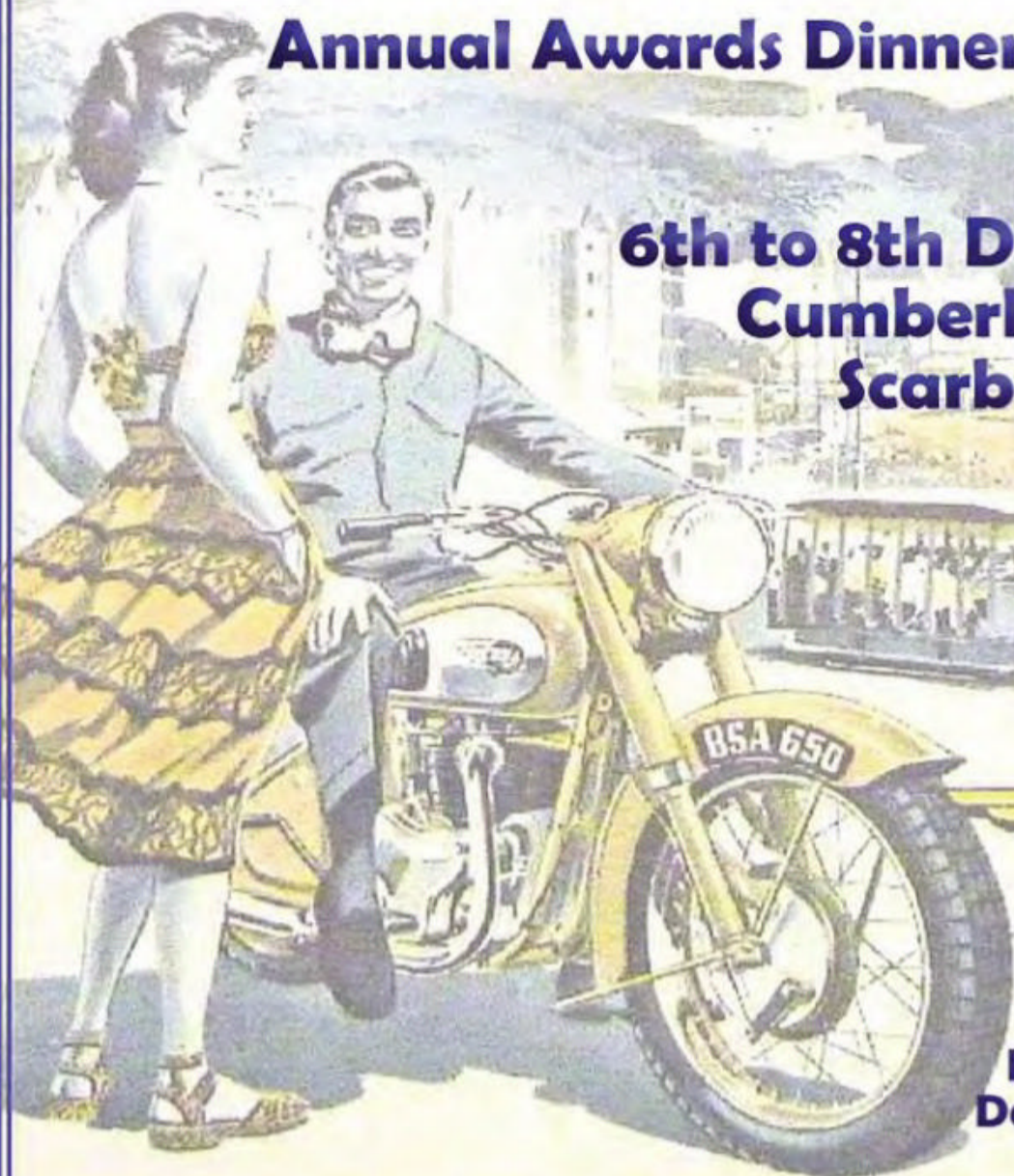
The show ends and the exhibitors grab their machines and roar off, leaving oily bits of cardboard behind. Surveying the empty hall, the caretaker complains about the smell and starts clearing up because "it's over sixties Jazzercise tomorrow at nine". Three weeks later at the club, the chairperson stands and thanks the organiser for his hard work, comments (a little disappointedly?) that takings were down on last year, but it was still quite a good show and would he mind doing it again next time? "Of course", is the quiet response... **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

RIDE SKILLS IN THE CATSKILLS

Riding unknown roads, museums and art – all in a day's work for Paul

"I even rode a 2019 H-D Fat Bob around Laguna Seca last May, grinding its horrible footboards to nubbins around that track's famous bends. Ever see a man hanging off an 800lb cruiser with 14in wide rear tyres? That was me."

AN INVITATION TO RIDE IN THE REMOTE, rural wilds of New York's Catskill mountains was too tempting to pass, regardless it involved renting a car on the 4th of July weekend in New York City: impossible.

Livingston Manor, our destination and starting point for a weekend ride, can only be reached by car, as no rail service comes near. That's unusual for the East Coast, which has an excellent rail system, unlike my home state of California, which is pathetically served.

Queries to friends revealed New Jersey was the only solution for a car, so a \$60 Lyft ride to a rental agency across the Hudson river set the tone for our modestly exorbitant adventure.

Our host was filmmaker Ultan Guilfoyle, who curated the Art of the Motorcycle exhibition in 1998 at the Guggenheim Museum, still that venue's most popular exhibit ever, which moved to three other museums around the world. Regardless a museum show on motorcycles was controversial (its sponsorship by BMW was the issue), over the course of two years it netted its original host many millions in dollars and visitors.

Ultan was not a motorcycle curator, but a film curator for the museum, who happened to be an enthusiastic vintagent. No matter to executive director Thomas Krens, Ultan was tapped, and made history. If you don't have a copy of the exhibition catalogue, buy one now: the writing and photography are excellent, and co-curator Charles Falco's bibliography at the back is worth the price of admission alone.

But we hadn't come to discuss museums. We did, of course, as Ultan is a mentor to me, and I'm deep in the mix at the Petersen Museum in LA, having curated two exhibits there, and will likely make a formal move to join the museum soon in some capacity. As well, Ultan has signed on with a Brisbane (Australia) modern art venue to reboot the AotM concept, in a new fashion: you read it here first, and look to December 2020 for an opening down under.

You see how work gets in the way of a good ride? I can't even tell you about the fantastic roads in the Catskills without sidebars about projects: we carry our life's work like a backpack, even on two wheels.

Ultan knows every backroad in a 50-mile radius of his second home, not because he's ridden them all, but then again he has – on a mountain bike.

He's in bantamweight trim because he and wife Diane pedal furiously around the hills of their summer retreat, pulling half – and whole 'centuries' under human power. Lazy, I prefer motor power: luckily Ultan has a stash of heavy bicycles with internal-combustion motors – BSA, Norton, and Ducati.

Of his vintage gear, only a 1949 hybrid ZB34 in an M21 chassis was running, so we swapped between that and a Monster. An odd couple for sure, but I'm as Catholic as the Pope when it comes to bikes – put me on a motorcycle, and I'm happy. I even rode a 2019 H-D Fat Bob around Laguna Seca last May, grinding its horrible footboards to nubbins around that track's famous bends. Ever see a man hanging off an 800lb cruiser with 14in wide rear tyres? That was me.

New York is humid in July, and crunching over a rocky forest 'seasonal road' over the hills feels jungly. It's a chlorophyllic kaleidoscope, vines and trees and flowers pushing shoots so fast you can almost hear and certainly smell them, green and delicious, their warm moist breath coating your skin as you pass. We alternated paved road/off road for 100 miles, which took four hours, with photo stops and modest going through the woods.

The BSA hybrid took some miles for me to realise it won't be fought or wrestled through corners, and only responds, like a very stubborn horse, to input from the knees, and a shift of weight, when it will glide beautifully around bends. Panic coming too hot into a corner and it will fight back, threatening bodily ejection, so it's best to plan ahead, and sail through on the easy.

The Monster, with its gumball tyres, proved amazingly supple over loose surfaces, which is why I suppose Ducati gets away with its Scrambler version: while no real dirt bike, casual unpaved riding will not upset the beast whatsoever.

It was the BSA that found trouble, when its Eisenhower-era back tyre exhaled, misdirecting Ultan over a sharp boulder, where he barely corrected a moment's lurid, completely sideways aviation. Luckily, we were only two miles from his home, so he nursed the drunken Beeza with feet as outriggers, and very slowly made a safe return. The dent in his front rim is epic: like all good scars, it will tell a tale, and as a good Irishman, that's all the excuse Ultan needs.

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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PAGES 20 & 21



BEST OF BRITISH

Never shaken, always stirred

Alan Cathcart was the first journalist to ride the new Norton V4 – so, Alan, what’s it like?

WORDS: ALAN CATHCART PHOTO CREDIT: KEL EDGE

“**SAY, THAT’S A VERY BRIGHT-LOOKING BIKE!**” exclaimed the husband of the fifty-something couple as they walked past the Fleur-de-Lys pub, on the Stratford Canal. “What is it?” Before I could answer, his smartly-dressed wife did it for me. “It’s the new Norton V4 that I saw a programme about on the BBC, after they did rather well in the Isle of Man TT Races last summer. I was hoping to see one of them one day – how does it go? It looks very fast.

After reminding myself not to judge a book by its cover, I had to admit to Mrs Diana Williams that, yes, the new Norton V4-SS is indeed very fast, and to husband Ray that its trademark chrome paint scheme is indeed very bright, as well as unmistakably Norton – it makes the V4-SS such a visual stand-out

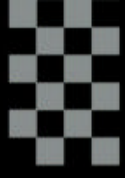
that any of the fortunate few owners can’t help but make an impression at any bike gathering by its sheer presence, even before he lights up the engine.

For here I was, in the heart of Shakespeare Country, 50 miles south of Norton’s Donington Hall factory, becoming more impressed by the minute at a) their new 1200 V4’s ability to attract favourable comment as well as, if you stop it anywhere in public, a crowd, and b) how incredibly rewarding it had been to ride it here, to the middle of the Warwickshire countryside where I grew up.

These country lanes, interspersed with fast stretches of highway, full of daunting turns and demanding hills, once were the preferred test ground for riders from the Norton factory (then just 20 miles away in Birmingham), where they’d rev it up with their fellow testers from the neighbouring BSA and Triumph firms. Even today these roads come close to being motorcycling nirvana, as well as a fine venue for assessing the merits of Britain’s latest and greatest on two wheels – as well as its biggest, and quite possibly, best.







Norton 1200 V4-SS road test



For the Norton 1200 V4, the first all-British hypersports model ever to reach the marketplace, was unveiled at the Birmingham NEC Show in November 2016, with the debut of not one, but two versions of the hand-built, UK-designed 1200cc Superbike – one of which immediately sold out. But since then the world has waited with increasing frustration to see just what this amazing-looking motorcycle is really all about, as the planned start of production got progressively delayed in best Italian bike manufacturing mode.

But last October, without any fanfare, Norton finally began delivering examples of the limited-edition 1200 V4-SS at £44,000, all 200 versions of which were already sold before its launch to customers eager to acquire the ultimate performance motorcycle bearing the name of Britain's most historic sporting brand.

Since then, production has gradually ramped up, and when Norton Motorcycles owner/CEO, Stuart Garner, summoned me to Norton's Donington Hall HQ, to become the first person outside the company to ride the V4-SS on British roads, I saw for myself that production of the fastest, most powerful and most technically advanced British motorcycle yet conceived, really is under way.

So why was Norton so late in starting deliveries of the V4 models, I asked Stuart as he handed me the keys of V4-SS no. 001/200, the first in the line of such bikes being built, which Garner is keeping for himself – well, wouldn't you?

"It was all about the engine," said Stuart resignedly. "I can't over-emphasise how big a job it is designing and developing an all-new motor, especially a 1200cc V4 giving 200 bhp-plus. But for me, the only way of bringing Norton back right was to develop our own engine – we couldn't have had anybody else's in it. Okay, we've been racing the Aprilia RSV4 motor in our TT bikes, but that was only to get Norton back in racing where it belongs, and to learn about designing a chassis to harness that sort of performance. But after we had some delays in getting the motors built owing to supplier issues, then the engine calibration proved another headache. I wouldn't say it was more difficult than we'd expected, but we didn't want to get it wrong. We still have the bruises of 2011-2012 when some of those early Commandos went out too soon; it bit us really badly. So now we're probably over-sensitive in making sure the bike's right."





After the 200 examples of the V4-SS have all been built Norton will then start work on the 300 units of the less costly Norton V4-RR priced at £28,000, which Garner aims to build in 2019, fitted with a cast aluminium frame and swingarm rather than the SS variant's hand-fabricated chassis, but otherwise identical.

Both versions are powered by the same all-new Euro 4 compliant liquid-cooled 16-valve 72° V4 engine with chain-driven dohc developed by Norton at Donington Hall, after an initial collaboration with leading design consultants Ricardo Motorcycle ended in 2016, and Norton's Head of Design Simon Skinner took the entire project in-house. The fruits of his R&D team's labours have now entered production, after calibration of the EFI developed by Norton was finalised in Switzerland by three-time Moto2 World champion manufacturer Eskil Suter's Suter Racing Technology/SRT.

Measuring 82x56.8mm for an exact capacity of 1200cc, the V4 engine is built in-house in the Norton factory, and is claimed to produce in excess of 200bhp at 12,500rpm, with maximum torque of 96lb.ft delivered at 10,000 revs – even more than the pretty meaty 90lb.ft Aprilia RSV4 1100 I'd been riding round

Above left: As hand-built as a modern bike can be

Middle left: Norton are proud of their roots

Above: Alan reckons it really is spectacular to ride!

the Mugello GP circuit just four days before my Norton ride. It features titanium valves, a six-speed cassette gearbox and slipper clutch with two-way autoblipper and powershifter, plus dual injectors per cylinder and a constantly variable-length intake system. There's a full ride-by-wire throttle controlling the front and rear cylinder banks independently via Norton's own ECU, which offers a choice of three riding modes – Road, Race and Rain.

"The V4 is entirely our own engine, and owes nothing to Aprilia," says Simon Skinner. "We designed the complete motorcycle including the chassis at the same time as the engine, to allow us to put everything where we want it, and it's allowed us to create an incredibly compact package. For a 1200cc 72° V4 it's incredibly tiny, yet the riding position means taller riders are comfortable, too."

I'll say. Throwing a leg over the Norton immediately revealed the good-looking 817mm high seat adorned with the Union Jack on its tail, and with the filler cap for the fuel tank at its front, to be both comfortable and spacious even with the relatively high footrests needed for ground clearance at full lean thanks to the mega-grip from the 200/55-17 tyres mounted on the



6.00 in. OZ forged aluminium rear wheel – unpainted carbon bikes are fitted as standard with matching BST carbon wheels. The spacious riding position despite the Norton’s relatively compact build meant I could tuck away behind the pretty vestigial screen down long, fast stretches of road, and kid myself I was helping the Norton go faster – though not with that ultra-flat plateau of mega-torque from 4000-13,000 rpm, I wasn’t. More to the point, at 1.80m in height I could easily put both feet flat on the ground at traffic lights. This means that despite its unmistakably sporting tail-up stance, the 1200 V4 is accessible for any size of rider, thanks mainly to the way that the exquisitely-crafted extruded aluminium spaceframe is waisted in the middle. This doesn’t mean that your legs get roasted because they’re tucked in tight behind the engine – far from it: I never had any heat issues on my day’s ride.

But this attention to detail by Skinner has made the Norton a woman’s bike, too – though when I tell you that this is very much a motorcycle with hair on its chest, as it certainly is with its relentless build of power and torque from the V4 motor, please don’t consider the 1200 Norton to be remotely transgender. Far from it...!

UNSILENCED

Because thumbing the starter button on the V4-SS is the entry ticket to a wall of sound that’s unbelievably butch, and comes straight from the MotoGP grid, thanks to the completely unsilenced titanium race exhaust fitted as standard to the V4-SS models, but a paid-for option on the V4-RR. The exhaust note is unmistakably unique – nobody else makes a 72° V4. Everywhere you go and at almost any revs higher than its fast 1700cc idle speed, this sounds like the bike it undoubtedly is, a deep-throated, ultra-muscular, no-prisoners uber-Uberbike that’s committed to the cause, and deadly effective in achieving it. For rugby fans, think Sonny Bill Williams, and if you’re not one, go on, look him up. That’s the Norton, in both looks and performance – well, apart from the fact that Kiwis only have the Union Jack in one quarter of their flag....

For sweet-shifting as the Norton undoubtedly is, with a perfectly dialled-in two-way powershifter which means your left hand stays clamped to the clipon even



in traffic, it has so much torque almost anywhere in the powerband that shifting gear becomes practically optional. It'll pull off idle with hardly any clutch slip, then once under way you can gas it wide open in top gear from just 2500rpm upwards without a hint of transmission snatch – although below that the fuelling is a bit hit 'n' miss. With the 13,500rpm limiter, this means the Norton is practically an automatic – and don't imagine that it struggles to get going from such low revs, either. This is a musclebike that delivers on promises, and then some. I spent most of the day short-shifting the Norton around 8500-9000rpm, and that delivered more than enough performance for real world riding. Ride it right out to the rev limiter in third or fourth gear, and you better hold on tight, because at higher revs the Norton delivers truly awesome acceleration by road bike standards, especially in Race mode.

Each variant has a different chassis design, but with the V4 engine acting in each case as a fully-stressed component, with the limited-edition V4-SS featuring a hand-polished (taking 26 hours!) hand-built aluminium twin-tube frame based on the SG5 TT-racer's chassis, and a single-sided aluminium swingarm weighing just 3.1kg after being machined down from a single 70kg billet, whereas the series-production V4-RR features a cast aluminium chassis and swingarm. The two bikes share a common fully-adjustable chassis geometry format developed on Norton's Isle of Man TT racebikes, with both head angle and swingarm pivot capable of adjustment. Claimed dry weight is 179kg.

I guess Skinner's identification of Norton's neighbours, Aston Martin down the road at Gaydon, as the four-wheeled equivalent is a valid one – but in that case they better get ready to build a bike for Daniel Craig to ride in the next Bond movie, for if ever 007 were to ride a motorcycle, it would have to be this one. The V4-SS is a torquey, powerful, but totally rideable

“Nothing in life comes free, and that includes the huge performance this bike delivers.”

gentleman's express – and it has the Union Jack on the seat tail, too. Just tell M to load up his debit card, because the Norton V4 is unbelievably thirsty – the fuel light starts flickering practically as soon as you ride out of the service station after topping up the carbon fuel tank! Nothing in life comes free, and that includes the huge performance this bike delivers.

In fact, the 1200 V4-SS would be too much motorcycle for certain kinds of roads without the electronic assistance provided by the six-axis Bosch IMU/Inertial Measurement Unit to give the rider better control of this 200bhp+ racer with lights, using one of the most advanced systems available which features traction control, engine braking strategies, launch control and cruise control, plus a data logging system for use on the track, as well as an anti-wheelie programme – switchable, of course.

It's a Norton, as Simon Skinner kept reminding me! A full-colour 7-inch high-definition TFT touch-screen dash monitors proceedings as well as giving access to the electronics, with a rear-view camera displaying the view behind on a portion of the screen, though the graceful-looking carbon fibre mirrors are there as backup to satisfy EU regs. It's worth mentioning that the overall build quality of 001/200 was literally superlative, and despite having clocked up heaps of miles in the hands of Stuart Garner and others, it's still achingly desirable – it wears the miles well.

It also handles superlatively, too, with the fully adjustable Öhlins fork especially well set up, delivering great feedback from the front that allows you to take full advantage of the Norton's slightly improbable appetite for turn speed – improbable, because with such a meaty motor, you practically don't expect



that it would steer as sweetly as it does. It especially holds a relatively tight line very well if you're taking a fast sweeping turn at speed, while the 72° V4 format has allowed Skinner to compact the mass of the motorcycle as a whole and positioned it centrally in the wheelbase. This in turn makes it steer well too, which was particularly noticeable in a series of very tight S-bends just outside Warwick, where despite being a 1200cc megabike, the Norton just flicked from side to side like a Supersport 600.

Even with that mega-grunty engine with its eagerness to rev, and the meaty spread of torque, this is not a point and squirt device, but a fine-handling package which belies initial expectations. Because of all that torque and the just-right steering geometry, I could take most corners which I already knew well from riding other bikes there, in a gear higher than them aboard the Norton. It's super-forgiving, too – regular readers will know that I don't usually boast about riding exploits, but I twice got greedy about cranking the V4-SS over to max out turn speed, only to feel a front end slide coming almost before it had happened, so that I was able to save it both times with my knee on the floor, before resuming normal service.

There's outstanding feedback from the chassis, which seems tuned to have just the right degree of flex to let it talk to you. Simon Skinner deserves huge credit for having designed this exquisite-handling bike. Riding it will always be An Event for the lucky owner, because not only does it look the business, it also sounds wonderful, and handles beautifully. Cheap at the price,

Above: Glamorous surroundings maybe, but the Norton V4 looks outstanding naked

if you're fortunate enough to be able to afford one.

And that as much as anything else is the thing I came away most impressed with after my day aboard the fastest and most powerful all-British motorcycle yet built with a licence plate and a horn. It seems incredible that a company, which, until now, had never built anything more exotic than an air-cooled 961cc 80bhp pushrod twin, could have created this phenomenal motorcycle, which bears comparison with anything else in the marketplace today, no matter how potent and beautifully styled. It would already have been remarkable if Stuart Garner had commissioned the 1200 V4-SS from an outside supplier like Ricardo – as many famous European manufacturers already do. But to have entirely conceived, engineered, developed, styled and manufactured this fabulous motorcycle in-house at Norton, which by its very existence has elbowed aside brands like Ducati, BMW and Aprilia to clear a place for Norton at motorcycling's top table, is incredible – but they did.

Oh – and please don't think this assessment represents a furious wave of that flag on the side of my helmet. Okay, I was the lucky one to have the first full test of the Norton V4-SS on British roads – but I know that when others after me get the chance to ride this British 1200 V4, their opinion will be the same. I freely admit I never saw this coming – but neither did the rest of the motorcycle world. Compliments to all concerned at Norton for creating this wonderful motorcycle, which is truly worthy of that glorious name on its flanks. **CBG**



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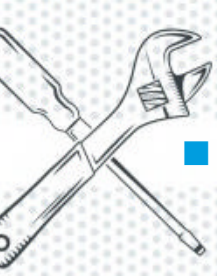


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CBG Workshop



Bought the wrong cable?

Damn. I recently bought a new front brake cable from Draganfly Motorcycles for the B31, as retardation was getting worse. Though true to form, I didn't get around to fitting it until the old one snapped – twit. “Never mind, I have one at home,” I thought. But my bike has the 8in front hub, so it didn't fit. It was long enough though, so the outer sheath just needed shortening. The rubber was removed with a knife, then a hacksaw blade was used to cut the metal spiral; being extremely careful not to catch the cable. And by careful, I mean it. I had the cable pressed right in, so once cut I could inspect the cable to make sure I hadn't caught it – success. A firm brake, nice feel to the lever and no money wasted!



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The carburettor feeds the engine. It mixes fuel with air to the correct amount for the engine at that moment supplying exactly what it needs, and when. It works by the engine sucking the mixture as the piston heads down the stroke of the bore, acting as a pump.

INLET

The main bore of a carburettor is shaped to create a venturi effect, by narrowing in the middle to speed the flow of air up. At this point, the petrol is drawn in from the float chamber via a jet, by the pressure created from the narrowing of the venturi. The diameter of the inlet bore is dependent on the size and requirements of the engine, with smaller diameters more suited to smaller engines, or lesser power needs.

SLIDE

We need to control and vary the amount of fuel going into the engine, to increase or decrease the revs. Older carbs use a slide that moves up and down in the narrowest section of the venturi, effectively changing the diameter of the bore, allowing less air, therefore drawing in less fuel through the main jet into the cylinder. It's raised by the throttle via a cable, and is sprung to automatically close if you release the throttle. Later carbs use a butterfly valve or both butterfly and slide.

The slide also controls the amount of fuel allowed into the airflow, by holding a tapered needle in the main fuel jet, so as the slide raises to allow more fuel, the needle raises in the jet, allowing a corresponding amount of fuel. But more of that later.

FLOAT CHAMBER

There needs to be a reservoir of fuel ready immediately you ask for it by opening the throttle. So the carb has a float chamber, so called because it has float, just like your toilet, that allows enough fuel in to be ready. As the fuel level drops, the float drops, opening a jet, which allows fuel



from the petrol tank to refill. As it gets to the level you've set it, it then closes the jet so the chamber doesn't flood.

DIFFERENT NEEDS

The carb has to supply the correct mixture and amount of fuel, depending on the engine's needs. What works at high revs and full throttle won't work on lighter throttle openings and slower engine speeds. So an early carb has several different ways of sorting this: pilot, slide, slide cutaway, needle and main jet.

COLD STARTING

When an engine is cold, the fuel mixture has to be richer than when warm. The choke, so called because it 'chokes' the carb, used to be called the air valve. It simply acts as a door, restricting the air coming in so the fuel is richer.

AT IDLE

Idle speed can't use the main jet circuit as the speed of air flow isn't enough to suck through the large main jet. So a pilot circuit feeds a smaller, more accurate flow of fuel into the air flow, and the throttle stop adjusting, or slow running, screw, adjusts where the slide rests on idle, helping tune the idle speed. The pilot jet looks after fuelling from idle to the throttle being 1/8th open – light throttle.

LOW SPEED

Open the throttle a little more, up to 1/4, and the fishmouth-cutaway at the bottom of the slide comes into play, regulating airflow. This simply gives more or less air for any given opening. For Amal carbs, you can buy four or five slides with different cutaways, to help tune that initial pull on the throttle and how the engine responds. Or, you can file them yourself, but this obviously is a one-way path!

ACCELERATING

As the throttle is between 1/4 and 3/4 opened, the slide has raised and the tapered needle it holds is pulled out of the main jet. Being tapered, as it raises it allows more fuel to be drawn into the airflow in the venturi bore. The needle is adjustable, so can be held at different heights to richen or weaken the mixture. And the size, shape of the needle tip and taper alter the characteristics, so there are many options.

FULL POWER!

When you hold the throttle fully open, the engine is drawing as much air in as possible with the slide open, so that is holding the needle almost out of the main jet and as much fuel as possible can mix. Different main jet sizes are available to tailor it.

ADJUSTMENTS

Fitting an air filter, a different exhaust, cams, or even living at a different altitude can affect the many settings a carburettor has. Next month, we'll have a look. [CBG](#)

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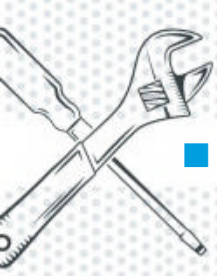
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Insurgent

One man's triple fascination has led to the bike he always wanted to build. Totally unique, clever engineering means it could be put back to standard if so desired.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: STUART URQUHART



WHILE ADMIRING THIS STUNNING 750cc Trident Special, I could have sworn I saw 'Insurgent' ripple fleetingly across its luscious blue petrol tank. A rich blend of Ducati, Yamaha and Triumph DNA has transformed this sedate classic triple into a feral and muscular motorcycle that screams attitude from every fibre of its alien form.

A year in the making, John Syme's superlative triple is the result of one man's ideas being forged into existence, with the help of his clued-up friends. Not that John is in any way 'handless' when it comes to undertaking serious fabrication work, or solving mind-bending engineering problems – as we will learn as the story unfolds.

'Insurgent' started life as a standard 1975 Triumph T160 when John was earning his crust in London. He used his Trident for the daily commute and for pleasure rides at weekends. But following a lucrative job offer, John decided to move back to his home town in Scotland. Of course the bike went north too, and since his time in The Big Smoke, John has remained a devoted Trident fan, attending countless Beezumpp Rallies.

The Trident continued to give reliable service and after joining Perthshire's Scottish Classic Motorcycle Club, John decided to turn his standard Trident into something more special. John takes up the story:

"I've owned several long-term Tridents and I bought my first triple in 1984. I have always been impressed with Slippery Sam's record of winning five consecutive IoM Production TTs from 1971-75. But much as I loved the factory models, I always dreamt of building a special that could offer a richer experience of these iconic triples. In the late Nineties I secured a custom rolling chassis complete with a lattice-style frame, swinging arm, petrol tank, seat unit, Ducati UD forks, front mudguard, tri-spoke wheels and Brembo brakes – all intended for a future build.

"I wanted to create a classic street machine but with a modern edge. I knew from the outset that a key requirement would be coupling the Ducati front end with the lattice frame. Crucial too, was the alignment of the Trident engine and rear wheel sprockets; but when I realised that the Trident engine and lattice frame were not going to work, I decided to revert back to the original Triumph frame. I also wanted the capability of returning the bike back to standard, therefore any original components not intended for the build would be stored for this purpose."

THE BUILD

John began his project by working on a solution to attach the Ducati front end to the Triumph frame. A bespoke steering column spindle was turned up on a friend's lathe to do the job. Equally important at the outset was the alignment of the front and back wheels, swinging arm, drive chain and sprockets. The solution was to build a robust box-section jig to allow accurate measuring and testing of these components when assembled



'I wanted to create a classic street machine but with a modern edge.'







'At the same time I extended the original seat base using the same suck-it-and-see technology'

in the frame. By the use of an empty set of engine crankcases, the correct alignment of drive sprockets with the swinging arm, wheels and brake assembly could also be tested on John's jig.

At an autojumble John had managed to pick up an 18in Yamaha rear wheel complete with its sprocket, cush drive, disc brake and carrier that proved to be a near match to the Ducati front tri-spoke wheel. This created extra work when John decided to fabricate a bespoke swinging arm to perfectly match the Yamaha wheel. Undaunted, John began a dry build in order to work out the important relationships between all the road rolling components. As well as relying on his temporary jig, John was able to test out ideas with cardboard templates before he finalised and fabricated new parts.

Several mock-builds and the meticulous measuring of the rear wheel assembly was an important exercise in fabricating the bespoke swinging arm. A spare Trident swinging arm had its arms chopped and extended before a braced box section was added for strength. Adjustable mounting blocks were later added to the new swinging arm to hold the shocks. A brake anchor arm and caliper mount were also made up in alloy. John then tack-welded all his parts together and the final welding was entrusted to his friend, Marek Koprowski.

Alloy engine plates were traced from patterns and then cut and finished by hand. John also turned his hand to reworking an old Bonneville OIF petrol tank that he fancied would work well with the Trident's frame. John explains:

"I wanted to keep the original Trident petrol tank and would therefore need to find a suitable replacement. But fitting the Bonneville petrol tank to the Trident frame wasn't a simple task - I had to infill panels at the front and back of the petrol tank's tunnel to achieve a snug fit with the frame's top tube; my objective was to achieve a similar match and fit as the original Trident tank. It was a trial-and-error job involving cardboard templates and careful cutting of steel sections to bulk out the tunnel. I also welded a bracket to



the front frame to support the modified Bonnie tank.

"At the same time I extended the original seat base using the same suck-it-and-see technology," laughed John. "First I made a rough mock-up in timber and cardboard, then, as the template evolved, I carefully tested it against the frame and petrol tank. Once I'd achieved the desired shape it was a fairly simple task to bend and fabricate an exact copy in sheet steel. I then set all the parts aside for later finishing by my skilled painter/welder friend, Pete Crawford.

"At one strategic point during the dry build my friend Ian Ross helped me to set up a laser so that we could accurately check the symmetry and alignment of the petrol tank, handlebars, seat, and wheels when they were all loosely assembled to the frame. By projecting the laser along the swinging arm and drive chain, we were also able to test the alignment of the rear drive sprocket with an offset engine sprocket that I had fitted earlier."

The laser also revealed that excess material needed to be removed from the rear sprocket's mounting boss before John could achieve accurate alignment of both drive sprockets - he also had to cut access slots and modify the inner clutch housing to correctly align the drive chain. John then added a set of 955 Daytona rearset foot pegs and modified them into fully-folding items to allow the use of a kick-start. Another friend, John Lamb, made up specially-tapered spacers for the rearsets, rear spindle and gear linkage.

When all the fabrication work was finished, John had the frame powder coated in Perth. He then took the seat and petrol tank to another friend - *Pete Crawford of Celtic Customs Paint & Body Shop - who finally welded up the petrol tank and seat unit. A neat detail of the finished seat is the 'frenching-in' of the rear tail-light - specifically designed to complement the seat's multi-faceted LED light. John next took on the job of sculpting and upholstering his custom seat using closed cell foam, and despite the base pad ending up at a trim 10mm thick, "it has turned out





to be quite a comfy seat," according to John.

Under Pete's expert guidance John then sanded and prepared the cycle parts before his friend could add the trick blue paintwork. "Blue," John teased, was the only colour option, because as any enthusiast should know – "BSAs are red and Triumphs are blue!" Pete added silver key lines before applying a deep lacquer coat to the petrol tank, seat and front mudguard. The wheels were also painted in metallic grey before being lacquered.

While his paintwork was drying, John delivered a pile of custom alloy parts to specialist welder Ewan Kettles for welding and finishing. As well as a set of rear light brackets, parts included a complex front end T-bracket for the headlight and running light LEDs.

Yet another DIY job was the alloy dashboard that John designed to house the speedometer, tachometer and oil pressure gauge. Once perfected, John took his design to Spectraglass of Perth, who accurately (water-jet) cut his dashboard design and its triple instrument holes in alloy.

'Triple' references are used throughout the bike – triple instruments, triple head and rear lights, three-spoke alloys – and the bold No.3 clutch adjuster cover supplied by Triumph specialists, Norman Hyde. The Trident's original 3/2 exhaust pipes were joined to custom silencers using bespoke sleeve inserts.

FINISHING TOUCHES

As the build proper began to take shape, Ian and John spent countless hours fitting the bespoke parts to the emerging machine. The brief was absolute perfection – and the build had to reflect factory production standards – nothing was bodged or left to chance. Early in the build John had decided to do away with the Trident's original indicators, overweight battery and electric starter. He also chose to rewire the Trident himself – thus the LED front running lights and tail-lights are wired into the ignition circuit and designed to remain on as running lights.

John then fitted the bespoke dashboard, instruments and nose fairing. The frame, battery box and oil cooler brackets were powder coated in satin black before being fitted. And following his long association with Tridents, John decided to swap the original and unappealing T160 airbox with the more attractive and better breathing T150 Datebox. John also made up an alloy splash plate to double as a rear mudguard.

The stripped (740cc) engine was treated to new shells and new ball and roller main bearings. The top end was rebored, so new pistons naturally followed. The gearbox was thoroughly checked and proved to be in perfect condition. John was ably-assisted by his friend Ian Ross in rebuilding the Trident's engine. Ian's help and experience throughout the build proved invaluable, as Ian is a highly respected VMCC concours judge.

The lads had fired up the engine by September 2016 and it was an easy job bolting together the rolling chassis for the final time. John's simplified electrical harness was professionally tidied and fussed over by Ian – resulting with hardly a wire on show. Other final tidying work was completed by the concours judge and after a year of hard graft, the Trident Special was completed in February 2017. Both pals agreed that the Bonneville's reworked petrol tank, bespoke single seat, Ducati front end, and triplicate LED lighting were all inspired touches.



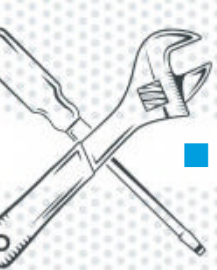
'After the year-long build, I was thrilled to be out on my Trident again.'



FIRST RIDE

One fine afternoon in March, the Trident was given the once-over and made ready for its shakedown ride. John kicked the Trident into action, and after a few test runs up and down his street, the warmed and burbling triple was pointed towards the open road. Fortunately, John is minutes from open countryside, quiet roads and mountain scenery – just the sort of roads his other ride, a 955 Daytona, thrives upon. John's debut ride went without a hitch – apart from the fact that the Trident turned out to be a culture shock in terms of 'shake, rattle and roll' when compared to his modern Daytona. However, just miles into the countryside, everything began to gel, and the shakedown ride proved to be a sensational experience for John...

"After the year-long build, I was thrilled to be out on my Trident again. If a little noisy, the engine



responded well to the throttle and the handling was confidence-inspiring from the minute I left suburbia.

“The original rear shocks felt a bit on the stiff side, and bouncing over potholes at speed certainly tested my back. I put the hard ride down to the lighter chassis; however, a set of better-damped shocks are on my shopping list. Conversely, the Ducati front end proved excellent at absorbing bumps, and the bike handles bends with ease. Just as well, because the rider has to live with the factory settings as the UD Ducati forks are non-adjustable. The Brembo twin discs provided plenty of stopping power and rapidly dumped speed – all with barely a pull of my finger. The rear Lockheed brake also proved to be a competent stopper. It was a thrilling first ride!

“I also felt the Trident was a tad under-geared with the 18T/46T drive sprockets that I’d fitted. So I had a 44T sprocket made up, but now I wish for a 43T rear sprocket – as the engine still feels ‘revy’ on the road. To compensate, my early thoughts are to fit a fatter and higher-profile rear tyre.

“After running-in, the engine feels smooth and pulls well up to 7500rpm. The redline is supposedly 7250rpm, but it’s a truly addictive and sensational experience when the rider is enveloped by the Trident’s howling exhaust note in the upper rev band – so I can’t resist lighting her up on the odd occasion! Top end has proved to be around 110mph, and is an easy reach. But despite all the modern upgrades, I realise this Trident

Special is still a classic machine. Therefore I do treat the old girl with reverence and respect—for most of the time. (John sniggered).

“She starts first or second kick, and the triple engine is a doddle to kick over, so I’m not too concerned about missing an electric boot during my advancing years. Last year I drove from Perth to the TR3OC Rally in The Lakes and she never missed a beat. Touring around the Lake District was a breeze, and the ride position is fine for my average height. Rider fatigue is unheard of, so the ergonomics must be fairly good. I have absolutely no intention of selling her, or slowing down – ever!” laughed John.

From the impressive bespoke lighting to the beautifully-crafted Bonneville petrol tank, John enjoyed the support of friends in realising his personal concept of a unique motorcycle. His dream machine is also a credit to John’s creativity and mechanical ability. In his summing-up, John would like to encourage any like-minded enthusiast to have a go at building their own special:

“With support and encouragement from friends, just about anything is possible when undertaking a custom motorcycle build. Building this ‘Special’ was an exciting and stimulating experience. A build project will keep you away from the telly, out of the pub and shorten the winter months. By the time spring comes around, you have a brand-new toy to play on, and inviting roads to explore. I’ve never had so much fun!” **CBG**

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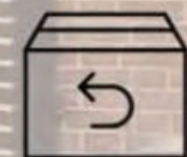


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Wheel rebuild

It looks straight forward, but there's so much involved in building a good, safe wheel. We look at the basics and watch Hutch at HTE build our AMC wheel





FIRSTLY, THIS IS NOT A 'how to' guide on building a wheel. While you could, in theory, do it yourself; you'll need a building jig, a truing jig, various tools and spanners; not to mention years of experience, built up through years of lacing up many different wheels from many different bikes. If you don't do it regularly, you lose it all and most importantly, a badly made wheel could be fatal.

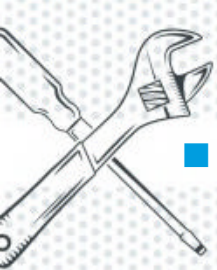
There will also be many approaches to lacing a wheel; so we're not saying this is the only way. But I found it a methodical way and even if you never give it a go, hopefully by knowing a little more you'll appreciate what's involved to build a good, straight, safe wheel.

OUR WHEEL

The wheel we're using is our Matchless G3L rear wheel that looks in great order. But Hutch had noticed it was laced incorrectly on one side which could cause premature failure, so apart it had to come. The inner spokes, which should run inside, were woven over the outer spokes, making them bend. So we are just relacing this wheel, not fitting a new rim. If you are, it is essential to make sure the rim is drilled for the hub and angle you need. But beware, they may have been drilled to a different pattern but still fit sometimes. Again, this is another reason experience counts.

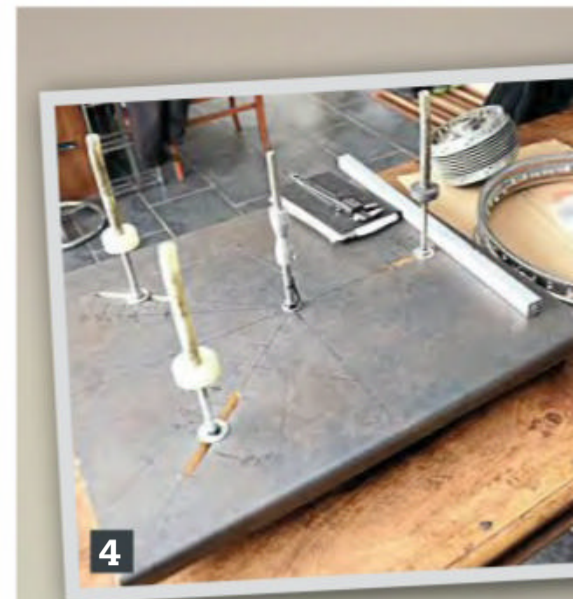
After stripping the tyre, tube, rim tape and a good clean it's time to get your measurements. Using a straight edge on the hub, find your offset between that and the rim using a Vernier. Write it down, then the other side, making a note of which is which. Should you do this again, you start to build up a book of details about different wheels.

Then take a photo, or sketch the pattern of the spokes, making a note of whether they are in or out. Some wheels are easier than others. This AMC wheel is one of the easiest as the hub holes are clearly inner or outer, making the fact it was laced incorrectly more bizarre. ▶



1: Now you have a better feel for the wheel, check your spokes and rim. You're looking to make sure the holes have been drilled in the right place and angle, and that the spokes are the right length. Most wheels are 36 or 40 spokes. Also, check there are enough nipples, too. There should normally be a couple of spare spokes and nipples in a pack.

2, 3: Now the fun part – cutting the old spokes! The best tool is a pair of bolt croppers, as a grinder could damage the rim. Pop them all, then take out all the parts of old spokes and bin them. Next clean the hub and rim as you need; rarely can you get as thorough a clean or polish as when there are no spokes.





5

4, 5: Now it's build time. Hutch has built his own, fully adjustable fixture, which allows you to hold everything in place and keep the rim to the correct offset to the hub. This means there should be less work to do once the wheel is complete and on the truing jig. However some people rebuild them on the floor using bits of cardboard, but I've no idea how. The idea is to get the hub mounted securely, and then mount the rim with the correct offset, using threaded legs with supports on them.

6, 7: Some wheels have different spokes for inner, outer, left and right runs. Some are visually different, while others may only have a fractionally different angle on the bend, so take your time and separate them. Pop a few nipples into the rim and see where they are aimed. On our hub, the inner and outer spoke holes are clearly seen, but on hubs with the spoke holes in a lateral ridge, this is more tricky. Once you're happy you have the spokes lining up with the right holes, put an inner run in all the way round, noting that the amount of holes apart are the same and you're not having to force the spokes, just screwing the nipple in by a few turns.



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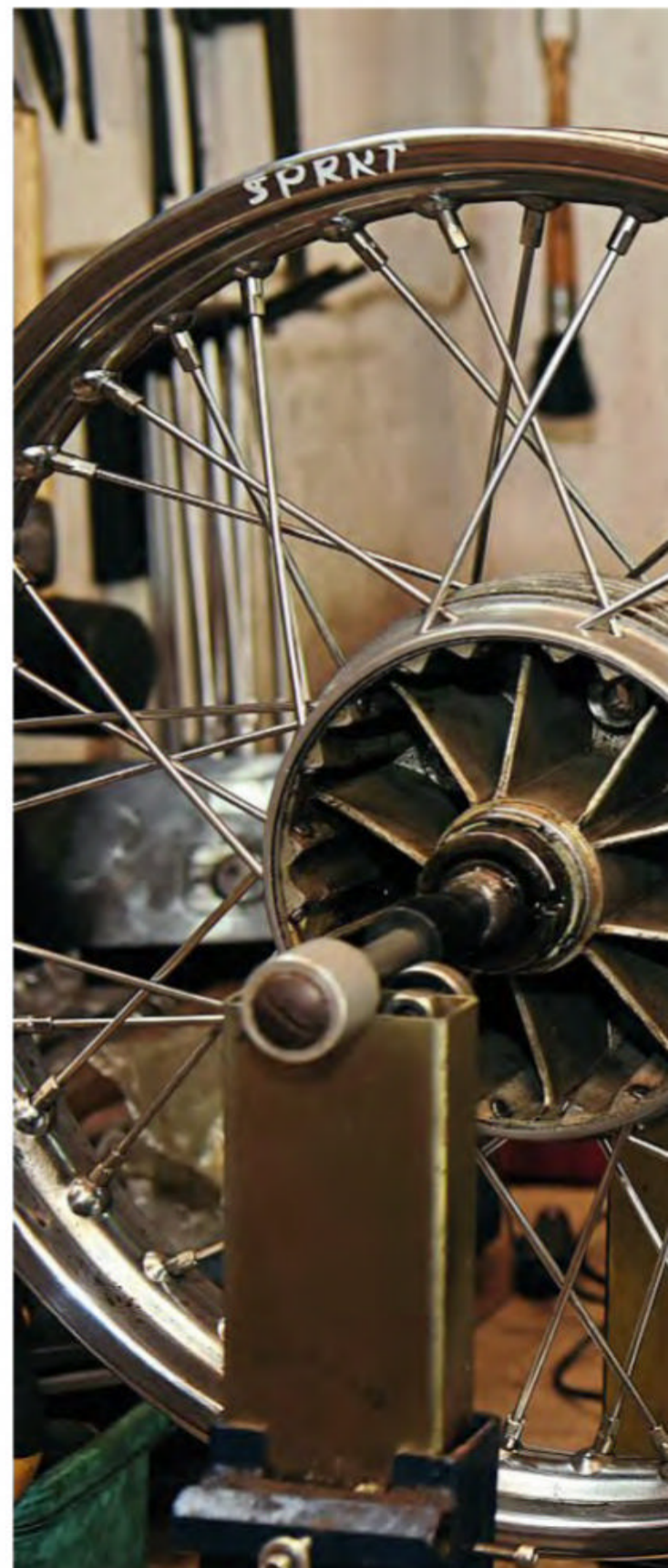
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8: If that's gone well, now put the other inner run in - hopefully to pull the rim the opposite direction. Again, count the holes apart, and make sure the nipples are sitting squarely in their hole in the rim, while the spokes are seated nicely in the hub.

9: With two inner runs finished, albeit loosely, you can start on the outer side. Our wheel was fine, but some with longer spokes may give you trouble poking them through; so in that case we mount the wheel higher on the jig. Same rules apply, count the spacings, make sure everything is seated correctly and just tighten the nipples until the rounded face can be seen above the rim face. Complete one run, then when happy, go around with the last run. You can now move the wheel if you need.

10: We now had all the spokes fitted and the correct pattern. Now, starting from the valve hole, as it's a good reference, use your fingers, or if they are tight, a screwdriver, and do up the nipples one at a time until they just cover the thread of the spokes. Then go round again and 'snug' the nipples in place - do a run at a time: inner, inner, outer, outer.





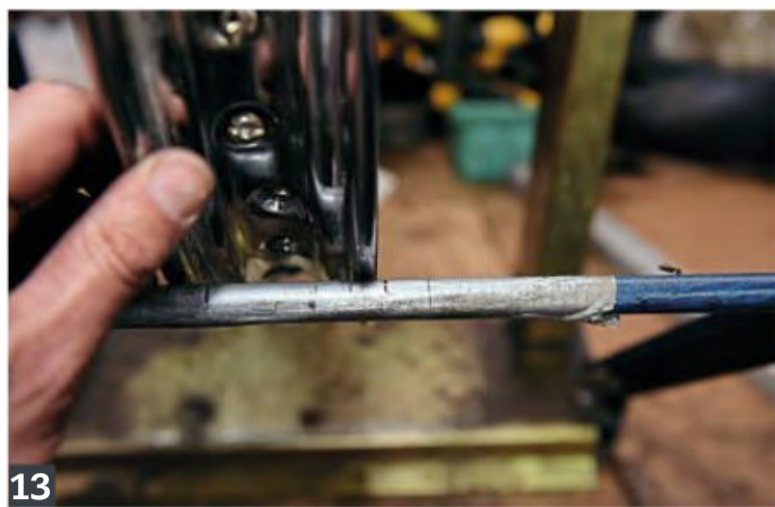
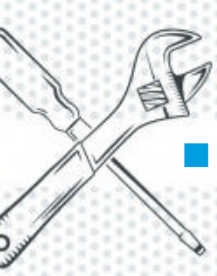
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11: Moving to the truing jig, Hutch now turns the wheel, getting a picture of how concentric it is. As it's turned, you can see the rim getting closer, or further away from the leg. As it is getting closer, so it's getting further away from the hub, so those spokes need shortening, by screwing them into the nipple. Mark the area where the rim gets closer to the leg, then tweak those spokes a turn or so. Spin it again, and see what that has done. Hopefully, it is more true, if not try again a little more. It doesn't have to be perfect, but makes life easier on the truing jig.

12: With the wheel upright now, the balancer jig has a bar that rises to the rim to help measure the concentricity of axial runout. Remember, you need to get the wheel so it is round to the hub, but also not twisted side to side. Work on the most dramatic movement, tightening the spokes a bit at a time to draw the rim in, and you may need to loosen some spokes occasionally. ▶

12





13: Making sure the rim is straight side to side, you need to remember your offset. This will determine whether you pull the rim to the left when it is too far to the right, or vice versa. To pull the rim one side or another, only tighten the spokes on the opposing side.

14: For some time we are chasing the true running of the rim. There's also a kick on the rim where it is welded, which can throw you out, too. But gradually the wheel stops dancing around in front of you, and you're looking for a tolerance of less than 2mm on a 19in wheel.

15: We still haven't finished, yet. Next we go round all the spokes, again starting from the valve hole as reference, tightening the nipples with the spanner. You have to feel that all are to the same tightness, and irritatingly, once this is done the wheel may have pulled itself out of true again! But the spokes must be uniformly tight. **CBG**



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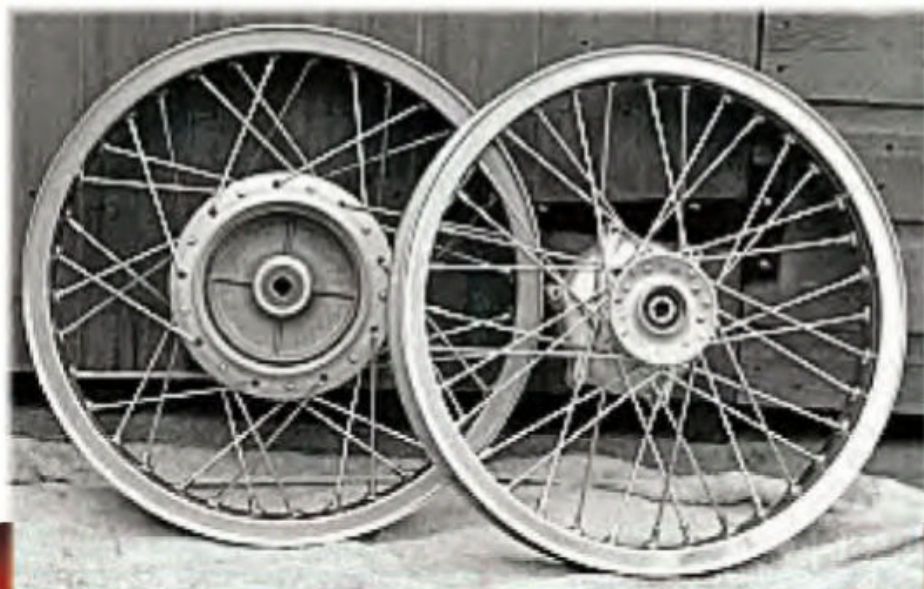
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PART
EIGHT

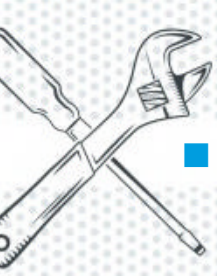
Project Norton ES2

With the engine being sorted, the rest of the bike gets a dry build to see what's there and what's not. Again I remind myself - don't buy a bike in bits...

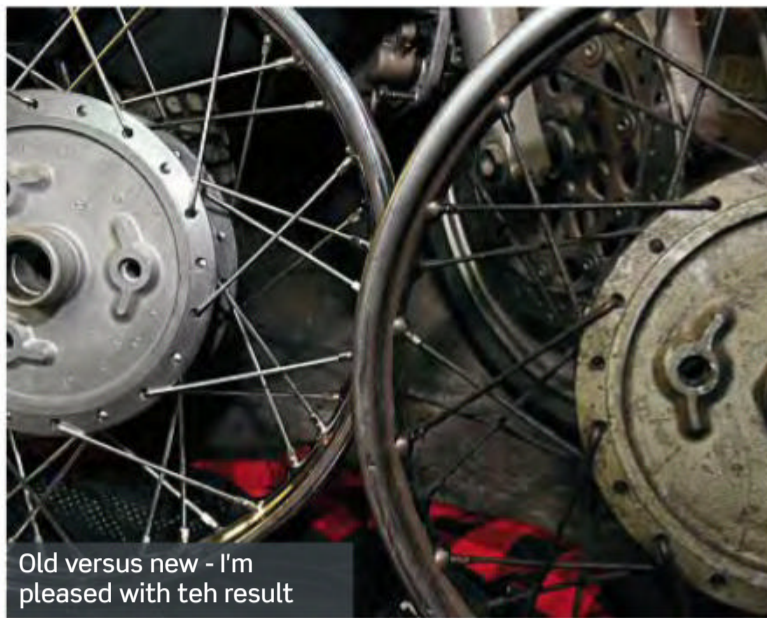
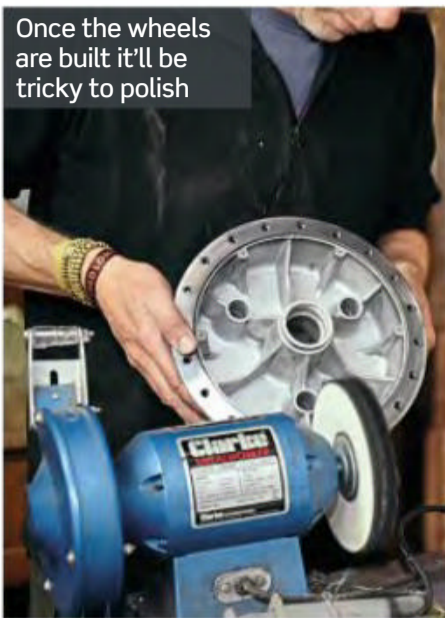
WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT







Once the wheels are built it'll be tricky to polish



Old versus new - I'm pleased with teh result



Force needed to undo the carb, but only the smallest amount...

THE ES2 IS COMING ALONG; BUT IT doesn't feel like it. With every up, there comes one, if not two, downs. Much of this is due to buying a bike in boxes, where you don't know what you've got. But as I've said before, it was the only way I could afford Norton ownership.

So my next stage had to bolster momentum and keep the project moving, so a dry-build of the chassis was needed. This would help in several ways. I could see what I'd got and therefore what I needed to look out for, I could then find

what needed prep for painting, and feel like it was coming together while the engine was awaiting the specialist jobs required.

THE ENGINE

With the crank rebuilt and the crankcases cleaned up, I'm waiting for the cam followers to be rejuvenated. Speaking to experts, there's different thoughts for repairing the worn surface that the cam pushes on.

One is to Stelite weld and then grind flat, while the other is to grind the surface

flat and have it re-hard chromed with 0.030in.

I've decided to cheat though; BDK engineering, a local racebike engineers have agreed to Stelite weld the followers and rockers, and if that doesn't work, I can still have them hard-chromed by AM Philpot in Luton. Newman cams are going to resurface the cams, so then the bottom end should be ready to go back together.

The head is also being finished so I can then fit the new valve guides, valves and rebuilt rockers so that just leaves the barrel and piston. They look in good order,



The wheel wizard



Axle bolt won't go - I'd used too many washers on damper

so I'm hoping a hone and new rings will be all that's needed.

THE CARBURETTOR

This looks to be the original Amal Monobloc 376 carb, and is complete, though the spiders in it weren't too happy about being evicted. Everything came apart without problems, and I've left it all to soak for a couple of days in petrol before cleaning with a toothbrush. Burlen fuel systems do a service kit with all gaskets, jets and needles for £30, so I'll order one of those.

THE WHEELS

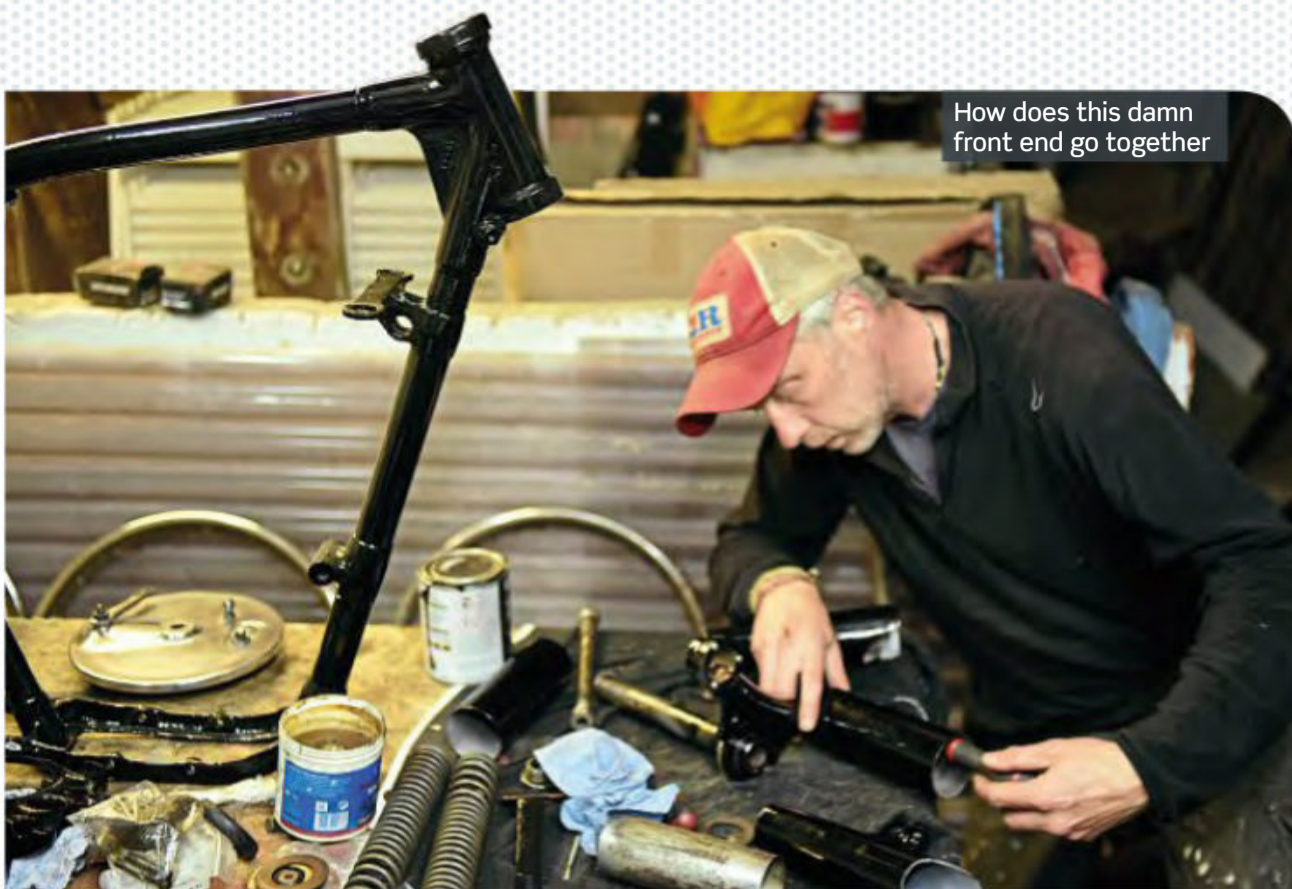
The wheels were fine but the original Dunlop Trade rims were rusty. Once the old spokes were cut off (a satisfying job involving criminal-style bolt croppers), I had the rear hub sand-blasted and cleaned the front by hand. The drum face was poor, so the drum was set in the lathe and then rubbed down; should be a good stopper now.

Wheels make a massive difference, so I've bought chrome rims and stainless spokes from Hagon; they look fantastic, but are laced differently. Not a massive problem, but it would have been so much easier if the original pattern could be copied.

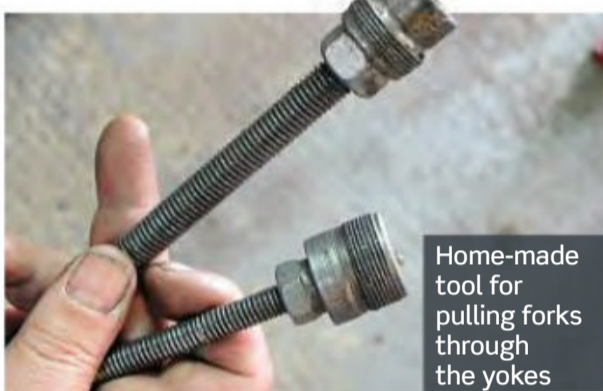
The ES2 was in production for such a long time, I guess some would be laced differently to others. My learned friend, Hutch, built the rear as he could see possible issues, and then watched over me build the front wheel; which was just as well as I mixed up the inner and outer spokes, which have a different angle bend.

It was only my second wheel build, but I find it a really interesting and therapeutic job, but one you would have to do regularly to get good at. I take my hat off to good wheel builders, but can you imagine what it'll feel like riding a bike you've built the wheels on?

The Hagon rims are really nice with none of the usual 'kick' some have where they are welded together, and Hutch



How does this damn front end go together



Home-made tool for pulling forks through the yokes



Trimming the screws for the fork shrouds



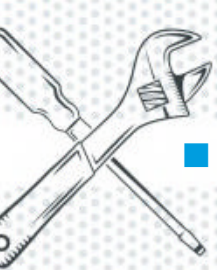
Where the hell are these all meant to go

helped me to get the tolerance absolutely spot on. I've bought new brake linings, and the rear drum/sprocket was looking tired so I had to fork out for that too; but at least I know it'll all be good to go.

THE DRY BUILD

Excited yet apprehensive was how I approached this. While I could see the bike coming together, what else would I find missing? This project is starting to mount

up money-wise! It's like making an Airfix model without instructions. First stumbling block was fitting the forks. With the spring and shrouds fitted (by finding screws with the correct thread but too long, so have to be cut down – using a nut to cut against and then removing the nut re-straightens the thread), it's really difficult to get them right through the bottom yoke and into the tapered top yoke. What you should have in your toolbox is a T bar, which screws into



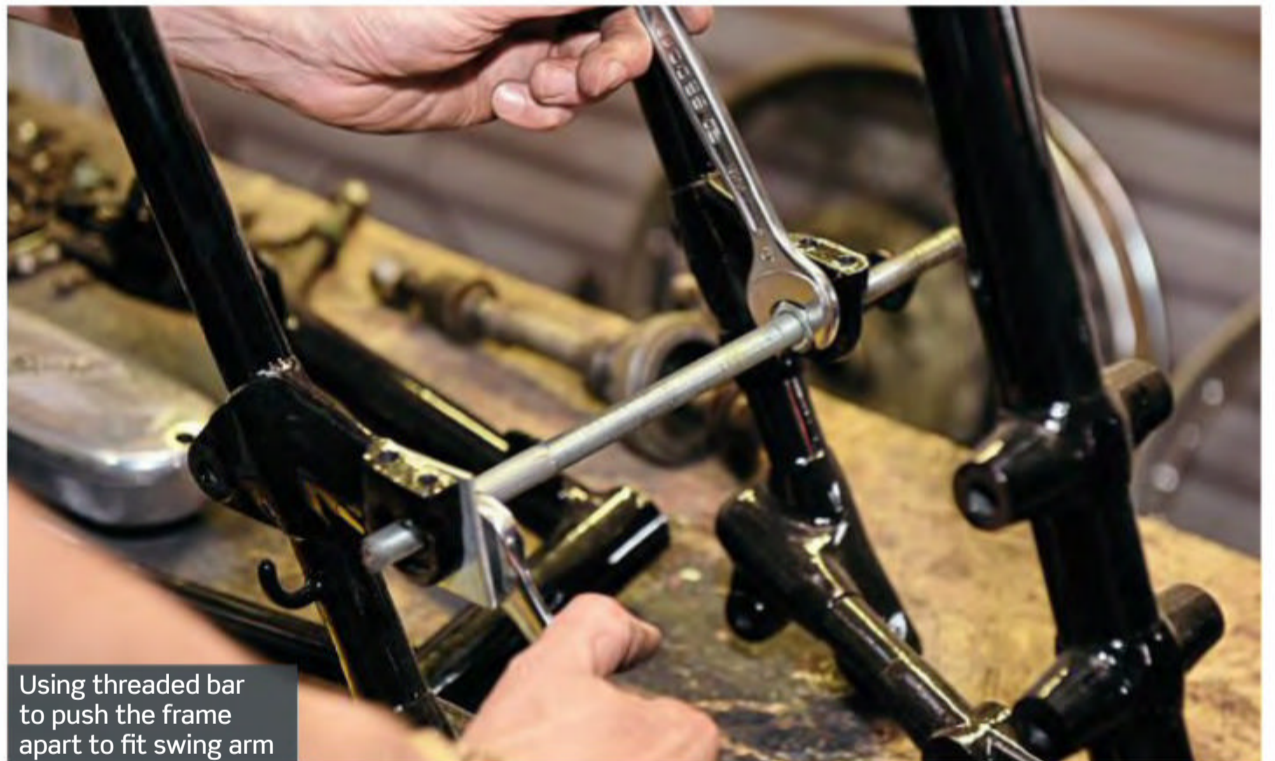
Where's that bit?

the fork, allowing you to pull it up. I could make one from an old fork top, but I should only need this once, so why bother? So I removed the top yoke, pulled them through the bottom yoke (plenty of grease helps it stick), fit the headlight shrouds and then fit the top yoke again. Success!

Until you then realise the mudguard can't be fitted unless one of the forks is removed – damn Nortons! And now the fork brace, which was a new part with the bike, won't fit with the mudguard. I think they're both right, so will need some 'manipulation'. With a leather hammer. And probably swearing. The spindle had been hammered in at some point, creating a lip, so that was removed in the lathe. But it still wouldn't fit, until I realised I'd used three washers instead of one to fix the damper rod and the nut was sticking proud...

The rear mudguard – large enough for someone to use as a boat – is a reproduction item, so has no holes drilled yet. I know it bolts to the frame, but really need the pillion hand rails that double up as stays to make sure I get the drill in the right place – and I don't have them. The engine and gearbox plates all seem self-explanatory, though there's a concerning amount of bolts missing. The long bolt that holds the footrests on is there, and the tool and battery box need work, but fit. The headlamp also needs fiddly rubbing down, but is all there and not too rusty.

Once all these small but time-consuming jobs are sorted, I can rub down/blast all parts for spraying, along with the tank. Yup, I'm not having the tank rechromed – at £300-£400 for most of it then to be rubbed down and painted, I just



Using threaded bar to push the frame apart to fit swing arm

can't justify, so I'm going to paint it silver. Trevor, a member of the excellent and helpful Norfolk Norton Owners Club, has told me 60s Ford Silver fox Silver is closest to Norton silver, so I'll use that, apply the black and red pinstripes, then lacquer it.

THE SWING ARM PIVOT

These don't wear out, you rarely lose one, and any out there are generally being used to hold said swing arm to a frame – so I can't find one. So, James at BDK engineering said 'Let's just make one'. I love how talented people use the word 'just'. But what do you use? James recommends EN24T, a through-hardened steel, easily available and used for gears and bolts; he has just made a batch of power valves for Kawasaki two-strokes

from it and says it is lovely to machine.

A 24in length (enough to make two in case I muck one up) cost £8. The head is blind and to hold it has to be machined to fit in an elongated hole in the frame, as there is no clearance between that and the chaincase. But the thread should be easy enough. For now, it's replaced with a length of threaded bar! This has come in handy, as the swing arm didn't fit within the two frame plates – so I used the threaded bar to stretch them for an hour, allowing the swing arm to pop in.

So, apologies for there not being a major step this month, but believe me there's still lots been going on! I'm aiming to have the bottom end together next month along with a rebuilt head, and a few of the missing parts sorted. **CBG**

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NM13821CBG	BALL END - ROCKER - OHV SINGLES - 1958-1964	£17
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2020CBG	BEARING - BIG END - 1, 16H, 18 - 1926 & 1927	£172
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A2/31CBG	BEARING - MAIN - ROLLER ES2, 50, 16H, 19S, - EACH - QCB MAK	£40
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C3/11055CBG	BOLT - ROCKER BOX-1/4" X 26 THREADS PER INCH-ALL OHV SINGLES	£9
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13805CBG	BOLT - ROCKER FEED - ES2 & 50 - 1958 TO 1964	£10
E4102CBG	BUSH - LITTLE END - 1, 16H, 18, 19, 20, 50, ES2	£13
C3/93CBG	BUSH - ROCKER - 18, 19, 50, ES2 - EACH - 1946 & 1947	£10
NM13804CBG	BUSH - ROCKER - EACH - 19, 50, ES2 - 1958-1964 - 2 REQUIRED	£10
13804HCBG	BUSH - ROCKER - ES2 & 50 - 1958-1964 - WITH SIDE HOLE	£11
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C3/96CBG	BUSH - ROCKER ARM - OHV SINGLES - EACH - 2 REQUIRED 1946-57	£10
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19080CBG	COLLAR - VALVE - BOTTOM - 18, ES2, 19R, 19S, 50 - PRE 1959	£18
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H2157CBG	COLLAR - VALVE - TOP - 18, 19, 21, 25 & 44 - 1923 TO 1927	£22
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16133CBG	COLLAR - VALVE - TOP - 18, ES2, 19R, 19S, 50 - PRE-1959	£19
NM16133CBG	COLLAR - VALVE - TOP - PRE-1959 - FITS INLET AND EXH.	£19
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A2/148CBG	COLLAR - VALVE SPRING - HOLDS COLLETS - 16H & BIG4 - EACH	£22
2156CBG	COLLAR - VALVE SPRING FOR COTTERS - 16H - 1922 TO 1929 EACH	£22
A3/147CBG	COLLAR - VALVE SPRING TOP - 18, 19, 50, ES2 - PRE-1959	£9
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8910CBG	DISTANCE PIECES - ROCKER BOX - ES2, 18 & 20 - PRE-1947	£46
C2/63CBG	GUIDE - TAPPET - 16H & BIG 4 - 1947 TO 1955	£50
C3/63CBG	GUIDE - TAPPET - 1946-1954 - ES2, 18, 19, 50	£50
19800CBG	GUIDE - TAPPET - ES2, 19, 50 - 1957 TO 1963	£50
K4/63CBG	GUIDE - TAPPET - ES2, 19, 50 - 1955-1956	£50
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A2/156KITCBG	KIT - STUD, NUT & WASHER - CYL/HEAD - 16H & BIG 4 - SET 9+9+9	£56
037000KITCBG	KIT - VALVES & GUIDES - 18, 19, ES2 - PRE 59 - WITH COLLETS	£92
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D3T/156CBG	NUT - CYLINDER HEAD SLEEVE - ES2, 19, 50 - 1956	£8



A3/15655CBG	NUT - CYLINDER HEAD SLEEVE - ES2, 50, 18, 19 - STAINLESS	£18
C3/105CBG	PAD - ROCKER - OHV SINGLES - 1946 TO 1957	£19
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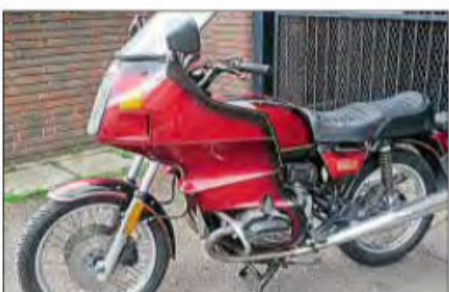
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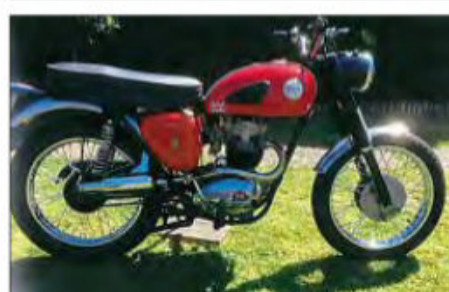
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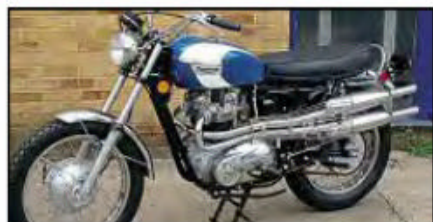
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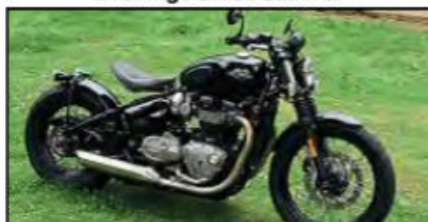
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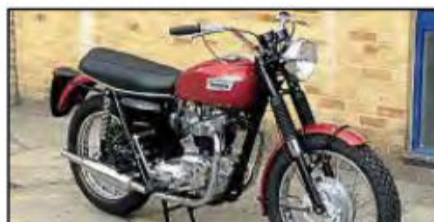
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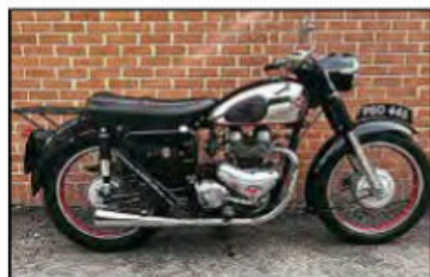
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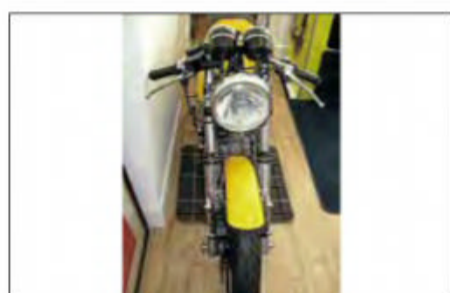
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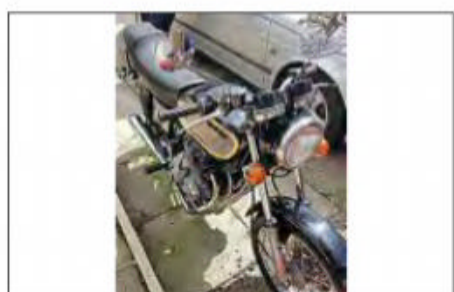
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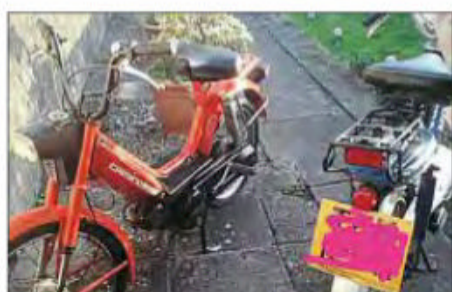
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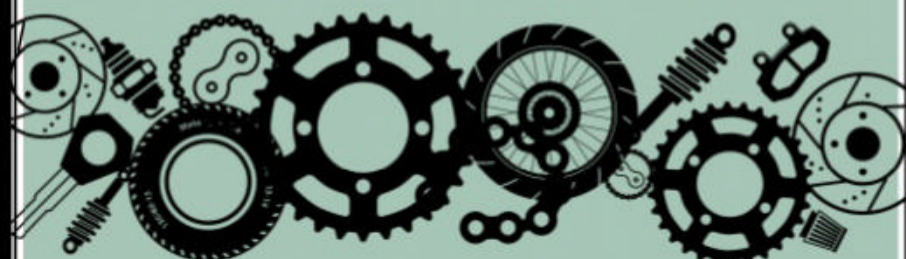
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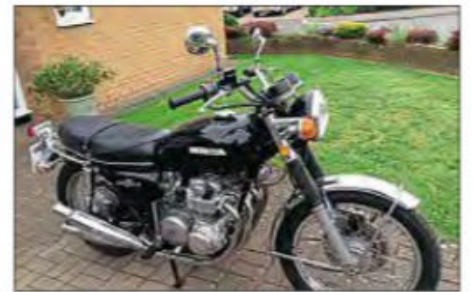
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HARLEY-DAVIDSON XLH 1000cc, 1973, Ironhead Sportster, early 1973 model, imported in 1980, on 1973 age related plate, MoT, £3700 ono. Tel. 07548 235347. Staffs.



HONDA CB400/4F 1976, very original, previous long term ownership, just serviced with many new parts, £3250 Tel. 01723 372219 North Yorkshire



HONDA CB500/4 1972, early model, carbs reconditioned, new seat cover, one exhaust is serviceable but looks worn, have a new old stock replacement Tel. 07977 554243 Herts



HONDA CM400T 1979, 22,000 miles, MoT, very sound machine, starts first time, kickstart & electric start, 5 speed box, twin clocks, UK reg, £1295 Tel. 01323 765162 East Sussex



HONDA CUB C90 1977, vgc, strong frame, low mileage, starts & runs nicely, new tyres, matching engine & frame original, £1100 ono Tel. 07526 000910 Tyne & Wear



HONDA CX500 W reg, first reg March 1981, currently on Sorn & requires MoT, very nice condition, excellent starter, must be seen Tel. 01420 474032 NE Hants



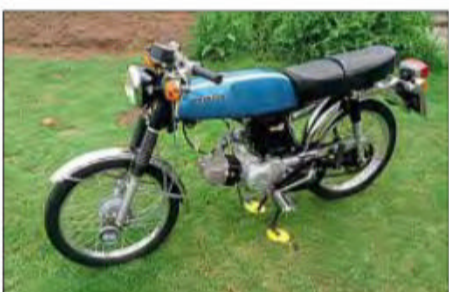
HONDA GB250 MoT, good condition, contact for details, £1800 Tel. Jim 07591 134791 Lancs



HONDA GL1000 Goldwing, 1977, vgc, runs but will benefit from a recommission, it is in remarkable rust free condition, £3150 Tel. 07971 470445 Cheshire



HONDA GL1100 1982, bought as bike & sidecar 2000, converted to trike 2008, 48,000 miles, on Sorn, £6000 ono Tel. 01524 852372 Lancs



HONDA SS50 1973, 4 speed, genuine UK model with V5 first reg in December 1973, two previous owners, £2850 Tel. 07341 663376 Leics



JAMES AUTOCYCLE 1946, good condition, easy starter, new tyres, good paintwork, good runner, ready to ride, reducing collection Tel. 01484 649119 Yorkshire



KAWASAKI 750L4 1985, fitted with Watsonian Grand Prix sidecar, 30,000 miles, excellent all round, £2750 or may swap for small classic upto 350cc, £2750 Tel. 07470 387302 Durham



KAWASAKI EN500 1995, MoT, 24,000 miles, wire wheel, belt drive model, fully documented history, £2000 Tel. 01886 880815; 07929 953158 Worcs



KAWASAKI FII 250cc, 1975, not a USA import, UK supplied bike, fully restored, historic bike, low mileage all original parts used £2500 Tel. 01895 824491 Middx



KAWASAKI W800 exceptional clean condition, 2000 miles, Kawasaki engine, bars & rack, top box all original, only used dry weather, £4200 ono Tel. 07526 000910 Tyne & Wear



MATCHLESS G12 650cc Twin Deluxe 1959, starts and runs perfectly, vgc with paperwork and photos including original log book, £5000 ono Tel. 01787 224385 Essex



MATCHLESS G1R 1965, sounds great and looks awesome, electronic ignition, alloy rims, pleasure to ride, £3800 Tel. 07770 421624 Cornwall

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Ducati 750GT 1975, fully restored by us. £35,000



Ducati 750SS Replica, complete new build by us £45,000



Bimota DB1RS, stunning..... £25,000



Ducati 750 sport Fully restored by us, stunning £59,950

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MATCHLESS G3 1961, starts, stops, runs & rides well, converted to 12V, new battery, fuel lines, fuel tap seals, £3350 Tel. 07854 928974 Durham



MATCHLESS G80S 1950, 500cc, single, original and unmolested, rebuilt mag, V5 and buff logbook, four owners, £5650 Tel. Geoff 01903 246512



MATCHLESS WOG3 1940, 350cc ohv, rare girder fork model with a panel tank, excellent restored condition with build history, £7995 Tel. 07798 866071 Middx



MORINI 350 K2 1985, last of classic 350s, recent recommission, very original condition, great runner, £3250 Tel. Paul 07518 519374 Oxon



MOTO GUZZI V7 Cafe Racer, 2011, nice smooth ride, sensible mods, centre stand, EBC pads, screen, adj front brake lever, workshop manual, £2900 Tel. 01642 649292 Cleveland



MOTO GUZZI California, 1989, fitted with Swallow sidecar, 35,000 miles, Bonnie outfit, MoT, £4950 Tel. 07773 171348 Lancs



MOTO GUZZI Nevada Club Trike, 2003 Model, 8000 miles only, fully equipped, vgc throughout, MoT, large history file, £3750 ono may p/x late Royal Enfield Tel. Callum 01297 489578 Dorset



MOTO RUMI Junior Gentleman, 1960, Italian classic excellent condition, all original, must be seen, restored by Club Member Tel. 01424 848766 East Sussex



NORTON 600cc, 1960, V5C, original reg, very nice bike, £5250 consider smaller British bike in p/x Tel. 07743 370641 Staffs



NORTON 16H 1949, all original parts, runs & rides really nice for a 70 year old bike only 13,000 miles, restored about 10 years ago, £8000 Tel. 07710 894575 Cambs



NORTON ATLAS 1967, 750cc, top end restoration project, 14,000 miles, stored since 1975, matching frame & engine numbers, £4800 ovno Tel. 07598 922760 Essex



NORTON COMMANDO 750cc, Roadster, 1969, full rebuild, alloy rims, lots of stainless, big bore pipes, £7500 ovno Tel. 07922 548294 Norfolk



NORTON COMMANDO 850cc, 1973, full rebuild, lots of stainless, excellent ride and condition, £7500 ovno Tel. 07922 548294 Norfolk



NORTON COMMANDO Interstate, 1973, 750cc, good condition throughout, sensible mods, £6250 Tel. 01792 203057 Swansea



NORTON COMMANDO 750 1970, full restoration by Keith Dixon two years ago, still not run in yet, stunning example, 9437 miles, £10,000 ovno Tel. 7774971010 Lancs



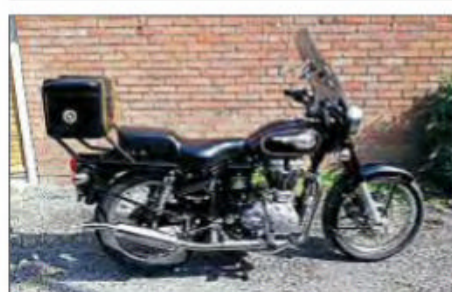
NORTON COMMANDO Mk III, 1977 Interstate, vgc, matching numbers, historic classification, sensible upgrades, £10,800 ono Tel. 01737 221834 Surrey



NSU QUICKLY 1960 powder coat, all new control cables, exhaust front pipe, drive chain, intake hose, fuel tap, runs well, £1200 Tel. 01142 488183 Derbyshire



PUCH M125 1970, fully restored with no expense spared last year, immaculate condition, ready to ride away, 16,800 miles, £3200 ono Tel. 07964 155461 Essex



ROYAL ENFIELD Bullet 500, 2014, vgc, low mileage, fitted freer flowing silencer & K&N Air filter, screen, new tyres, rear rack fitted, £3000 ono Tel. 07860 384693 Hampshire

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1955 AJS 18S 500cc Single... £4,450



1939 Ariel Square 4 600cc Rigid Resorted £18,950



1948 Ariel Competition Hunter Trials £9,950



1965 BSA Hornet Replica 650cc £7,450



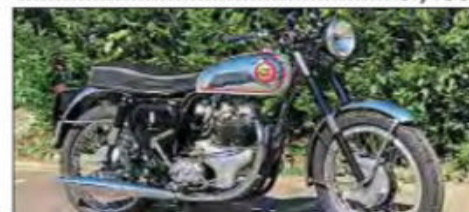
1965 BSA A65 Lightning Rep. £7,750



1962 BSA A65 Special 650cc. £4,950



1959 BSA Super Rocket 650cc £6,950



1961 BSA RGS Replica 650cc £8,500



1955 BSA A10 650cc £5,500



1960 Chang Jiang R71 BMW Rep £4,250



1972 Honda CR750 Jim Redman £15,000



1976 Honda CB400 Four Cafe Racer £4,950



1981 Honda CB750F Super Sport £3,450



1961 Norton Model 50 350cc . £6,450



1969 Norton 650SS Dominator Matching £7,450



1965 Norton Atlas 750cc £6,950



1930 Scott Flying Squirrel Sports 500cc £11,950



1952 Sunbeam S8 500cc £5,350



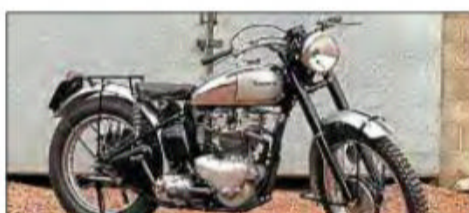
1980 Suzuki DR 400 Trials £2,250



1956 TRIBSA Tiger 100 500cc £6,950



1949 Triumph T100 Mint Condition £14,950



1952 Triumph TR5 Trophy 500cc £14,950



1973 Triumph Daytona T100R £6,950



1946 Triumph Speed Twin 5T £11,950



1975 Triumph Trident T150 Cafe Racer £8,950



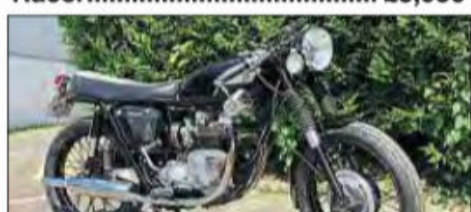
1953 Triumph 6T Thunderbird Matching £11,950



1955 Triumph 6T Thunderbird Matching £6,950



1960 Triumph Trophy 650cc Matching £10,500



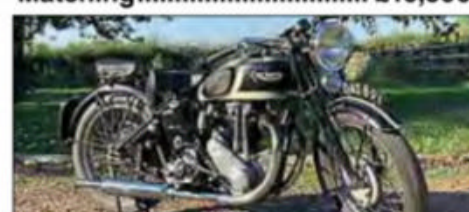
1967 Triumph T100SS 500cc Matching £5,950



1961 Triumph 6T Bath Tub Matching £6,850



1972 Triumph T150 750cc Matching £8,750



1936 Triumph 5/5 Twin Port 500cc OHV £13,750



1935 Velocette MSS 500cc OHV Vintage £12,950



1961 Velocette Venom Clubman Original £14,950



1963 Velocette Venom Thruxton Rep £10,950



1978 Yamaha SR500 Cafe Racer £4,950

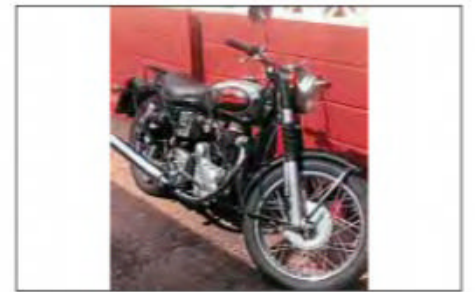
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VELOCETTE LE 1965, MKIII, 41,700 miles, extensive o/haul £1000's spent, indicators, full fairing, full exhaust, clean tidy bike, £1900. Tel. 01248 681466. Conwy.



ROYAL ENFIELD Classic EFI, battle green, Dec 2012, original saddle + rear shocks available and silencer, carrier extends, £2200 Tel. 01935 429814 Somerset



ROYAL ENFIELD Bullet, 1997, new battery, owned for 10 years, V5C, stored in living room nine years, great condition, £1000 Tel. 1300 Devon



ROYAL ENFIELD Electra, 208, vgc, MoT June 2020, rebored new Sprag clutch, new rear shocks, Sorn, £2850 Tel. 01524 733604 North Lancs



ROYAL ENFIELD Constellation, 1961, fully sorted engine & wiring, original reg & correct numbers, new concentrics, power box, electronic ignition, £5650 Tel. 01832 731844 Northants



ROYAL ENFIELD Bullet, Redditch built, 350cc, maroon with period alloy rims, vgc, original registration with green log book, V5C, £3750 Tel. 01723 372219 North Yorks



ROYAL ENFIELD Bullet 500, Electra EFI, 2010, very good condition, 4300 miles, red, MoT October 2019, £2150 ono Tel. 07825 941887 Herefordshire



ROYAL ENFIELD Constellation, twin carburettors, was first reg 1960, owned since 1968, £1064 spent on parts recently, 29,485 miles, £5500 Tel. 01383 725967 Fife



ROYAL ENFIELD Crusader, 1966, Sorned, never ridden, runs well, good tyres, £2500 Tel. 01524 733604 North Lancs



SIMSON S51 1988, good condition with electronic 12 volt ignition & many new parts fitted, lots of money spent, MoT, V5, £1465 Tel. 07899 995772 South Yorkshire



SUZUKI 1200S 2002, vgc, extras inc heated grips, rear jerry can holders, black widow exhaust, engine/exhaust bars etc, 24,000 miles, MoT, £2250 Tel. 07442 511315 Shropshire



SUZUKI B100P 1969, 118cc, excellent runner, two owners plus dealer from new, all original, crank seals done, easy starter, reducing collection, £1000 ono Tel. 01484 649119 Yorkshire



SUZUKI GS850 and Watsonian sidecar, 1988, 15,000 miles, been well cared for, two previous owners, MoT August 2019, £6000 ono Tel. 01202 575026 Dorset



SUZUKI GSX750ET 1981, MoT April 2019, 62,000 miles, restored chassis, engine, electrically & fuelling, compression excellent, £1595 Tel. 07944 295672 Middlesex



SUZUKI GT750 1976, vgc, restored, 2014, new crank, carbs set up and chromed, stainless steel spokes, new tyres, chain, sprockets and Suzuki seat, original pipes, £9500 Tel. 07799 785888 Cornwall



SUZUKI GT750 1976, originally built as a model A, now non-standard engine rebuild 2018, crank rebuilt and balanced by Chris Applebee, £4750 Tel. 07775 653894 Warwickshire



SUZUKI SV650 2000, solid bike, almost new Pilot Road 3 tyres, extra lights, Givi topbox, new battery, 35,286 miles, MoT, on Sorn, £750 ovno Tel. 01162 774128 Leics



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TRITON T110 1963, £5650 ono p/x why? Also Triumph T110, 1957, original condition, £6850 ono bargain bikes with paperwork Tel. 07443 642408 West Yorks



TRIUMPH 1998, Thunderbird Sport, vgc, dual & single seats, serviced regularly, MoT, 38,000 miles, £3500 ovno Tel. Tim 07795 022603 West Sussex



TRIUMPH Speed Twin, 1956, 500cc with Craven luggage panniers, good tyres and condition, 23,660 miles, £5750 Tel. 01271 343790 North Devon



TRIUMPH Model P, 500cc flat tank, 3 speed hand change, 1925, good very original condition, unrestored, original reg, gas lights, runs well, £8500 Tel. 01844 345750 Bucks



TRIUMPH 3TA 1958, beautiful condition and runner, 350cc, has all original documents and log book, three owners, been restored, £3600 no offers Tel. 07723 751330



TRIUMPH 500 Speed Twin (5TA), 1960 all original numbers and registration, 80% fully restored, all other components there (no bathtub guards), £4600 Tel. 07764 577133 South Yorkshire



TRIUMPH SPRINT 1994, original good condition, very clean some history, two keys, 34,021 miles, Sorned, MoT when sold, owned since 2015, £1350 ono Tel. 01485 529109 Norfolk



TRIUMPH T100 1966, matching numbers, good condition, £5250 ono Tel. Tony 01728 832364 Suffolk



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



TRIUMPH T100SS matching numbers, recent renovation, many new parts, good clean condition, electronic ignition, £5250 ono Tel. 07732 121847



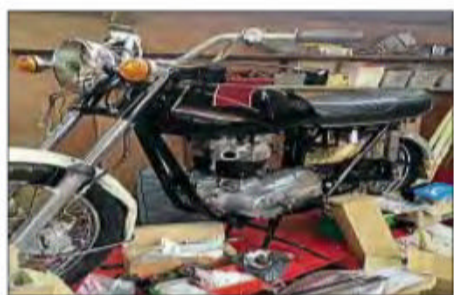
TRIUMPH T100SS 1965, 500cc, good condition, historic reg, same ownership last 20 years, only 126 miles since restoration, £5250 ovno Tel. 01545 590525 Wales



TRIUMPH T120 Bonneville, 1965, older restoration but in lovely original condition, two owners from new, 21,000 miles, £10,850 Tel. Mick 07968 306692 West Yorkshire



TRIUMPH T140 Bonneville, 1977, stood in garage for over 25 years, matching numbers, had full engine and gear box overhaul with all new bearings valves guides, £6000 Tel. Mike 07756 784805



TRIUMPH T140 Bonneville, 1977, unfinished rebuild, all new parts, new carbs, silencers, complete nuts bolts cables chain headlight Nacelle, offers over £3500 Tel. 07873 945639



TRIUMPH T150 1972, fantastic Cafe Racer, so much fun, lots done, fast and beautiful, call for details, £8000 Tel. 07770 421624 Cornwall



TRIUMPH T90/100 1968, 500cc Daytona top end, fast and handles well, well maintained owned for 20 years, £4000 Tel. 07770 421624 Cornwall



TRIUMPH TR6R 1961, immaculate condition, matching nos, £10,950 ono Tel. 01883 348187 Surrey



VELOCETTE VOGUE rare, good condition, superbly engineered with no oil leaks & a shaft drive, panniers & indicators, LCD head & tail lights, £2800 Tel. 01782 303209 evenings



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

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

ARIEL ARROW 1960, matching numbers, original reg, old log book, nice restoration, £2450. Tel. 07743 370641. Stoke-on-Trent.

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 BANTAMS 1960s, three Bantam D7's one has G Todd head, all require fettling but good condition, £750 each. Also C11, C15 for restoration, no V5s, £1000 each. Tel. 07842 287137. Northants.

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 750KZ 1979, custom, engine rebuilt some years ago, unused for five years, needs battery & exhaust system to make roadworthy or make good restoration project, £475. Tel. 07873 638038. Hants.

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

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.

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.

KAWASAKI W800 in green, this 2011 bike is in great condition with 14,200 miles on the clock, regular service & MoT'd in March, comes with Givi screen and top box, £3500. Tel. 07946 585060. Lincs.

KAWASAKI ZR1100 1992, 35,000 miles, all original, including exhaust, needs little tlc, new MoT, runs and rides very well, a very good bike, £3250. Tel. 07949 868824. Kent.

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

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

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.

TRITON project/restoration Triumph TR6 engine with Bonneville head, (engine has been rebored and comes with new Hepolite pistons, rings etc to match for 9-1 comp ratio) Norton Slimline Featherbed frame with yokes and swinging arm, Roadholder forks, rear shock absorbers, wheels with alloy rims, 2 x Amal Concentric carbs, set of clip-ons and straight handlebars. Also spindles, clutch housing, a number of spare Smiths clocks, stators and assorted parts, this is obviously not a complete Triton but is reflected in the price £950 ono. Tel. 07460 761779. Middlesex.

TRIUMPH T120 1962, pre-unit Bonneville, very good condition, not original colour, matching numbers, easy starter, £12,000 no offers. Tel. 07751 428573. East Yorkshire.

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 & 3rd from new, £50,000. Tel. 07814 104934. Wales.

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

GEAR CHANGE rubber, rear brake light switch (Triumph), h/bar light switch, pair Amal 200 Jets, 2 concentric float gaskets, £30. Honda CB750K1 Workshop Manual Honda publication, £20. Tel. 01204 397033. Lancashire.

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.

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.

HONDA SLR 1999, good condition, rolling chassis, V5, document complete exhaust, system, interesting number ACU, offers. Tel. 02083 045132. Kent.

ITALIAN PARTS OFF: Ducati, Benelli, Laverda, Morini, Cagiva etc, sell in lots, exchange considered. Ariel Square 4 head. Tel. 07833 906288. Essex.

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.

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

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

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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.

LOOKING FOR PANTHER 65, 250cc, reg NSJ 351, former owner interested in possible re-purchase if considered and still about? Tel. 01284 753974 or 07783 277629. Suffolk.

SPEEDOMETER wanted for British bike, Smiths chronometric either 80mph or 120mph needed to complete restoration, may consider D shape, any condition. Tel. 07538 696157. Midlands.

TRIUMPH TWIN restoration project wanted, any model, unit or pre-unit any condition considered, any spares welcome, will travel. Tel. 07538 696157. Midlands.

WANT TO KNOW whereabouts of a BSA 500cc, reg number KJY 940, 1955 may be still for sale, seen at Stafford show in 2014, would be interested in possible purchase. Tel. Simon 01284 753974; 07783 277629. Suffolk.

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.

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

Miscellaneous

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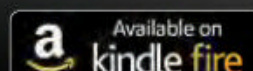
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FRANK WESTWORTH

LIFE IS (STILL) FULL OF SURPRISES

Frank discovers the highs and lows of internet forums, where everyone can have their say...

“However, during an entirely entertaining and only a little bit frightening e-conversation recently I was told – in all seriousness – that this was just an opinion”

TO BE COMPLETELY HONEST, I’D THOUGHT THAT BY the time a chap had reached that dizzying stage in his life when he’s eligible for the state pension, there would be no more surprises. The surprises jar would have emptied long ago. That frisson of bewilderment, that twingle of excitement at discovering a bold new thing would have gone, along with the ability to devour a bottle of sour mash in a single hour and to leap tall buildings in a single bound. Or something like that.

But no.

Despite hovering disturbingly close to that biblical three score and ten, I must confess that life is still peculiarly packed with surprises. There’s a cautionary note here, of course. Memory weakens with the passing of the years and bottles of sour mash, so what are now certain surprises may in fact be repeats. Much like the BBC but more interesting.

And today’s big surprise is the discovery that what I had previously considered to be facts are apparently negotiable. This really did come as a surprise. Facts are facts, surely? Not so. Apparently facts carry the same weight as opinions. Which is a remarkable thing, is it not? Try this: Early Honda CX500 V-twins notoriously suffered from camchain tensioner problems. I’d always considered this to be a fact, and I can even tell you how to check easily whether the fix has been carried out. Wearing an anorak is its own reward. However, during an entirely entertaining and only a little bit frightening e-conversation recently I was told – in all seriousness – that this was just an opinion. I was told that lots of CX500s did not have a camchain problem ... which is not what I’d actually said.

And sticking to the delicious topic which is 1970s Hondas, I’d also remarked that the oil filter housing retaining bolt on CB750 Fours had a nasty habit of rounding off, which is inconvenient, because changing the filter at least once or twice in, say, 50,000 miles is a good idea. I know the fix for that, too, and how to spot whether it’s been done. But no ... apparently this is also an opinion. How so?

Well, it’s like this. My somewhat adversarial social media chat-person knew that these Hondas didn’t suffer from any problems. I was glad that I’d managed to avoid the vexed issue of the scarily undependable single-piston, swinging-caliper front disc brakes, because maybe they never seized up.

Maybe their repeated failure on several of my own bikes and on several more of my pals’ bikes in the wayback was ... an opinion. In fact, they failed. A lot.

The argumentative and fortunately distant fellow plainly believed that I was spreading discord in the cosy world where you meet the nicest people. In fact I wasn’t. I was attempting to be helpful.

I was attempting to offer advice to a would-be buyer. And this was apparently not actually true. I was apparently spreading fake news, a term I’d only previously heard in connection with the current president of the USA. I’ve never actually heard ‘The Donald’ holding forth on the thorny and globally toxic topic of CX500 camchains, but I may have simply missed it, due to ... old age. Or something.

And it got worse. A nice man (probably: other views may be available) asked for advice about the purchase of a BSA A65. He sent me a picture. I know what an A65 looks like. I own an A65. The bike he was interested in was an A10, which is somewhat similar but considerably different. I shared this intelligence. He was happy. Not so another joiner-in to the conversation. This is the joy of social media – any lunatic can join in and very many of them do exactly that. Hurrah for free speech.

BSA twins can suffer from main bearing failure. They can. It’s a fact. Or not. A chap was concerned that his A10 might need a seriously expensive rebuild to convert its main bearings into an engineering masterpiece largely undreamed of in the smoky assembly halls at Small Heath. Which is where BSA built these bikes, unless that is an opinion as well.

Would I, my inquisitor asked, have the bearing conversion, were I buying a BSA twin? As mentioned, I do indeed have a BSA twin and it does not have the conversion. Not yet. Why not? Because it runs well and sounds fit enough, and I don’t want to rebuild its engine.

So I don’t rate the conversion?

What? I didn’t say that. In fact were I having a bottom-end engine rebuild I’d almost certainly fit the conversion. Why not? It’s a fine piece of engineering.

Not good enough. I’d said I hated the conversion. No I hadn’t. And so it goes. Facts become opinions, opinions become statements of intent; value judgements. And there is only one thing to do when this happens: ride more and talk less in public. It works for me... **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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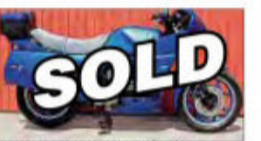
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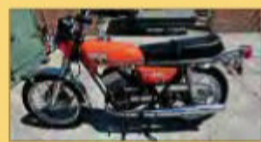
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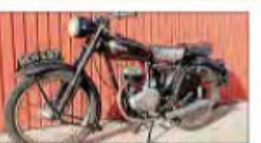
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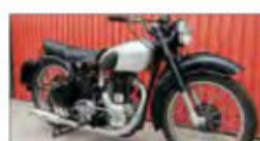
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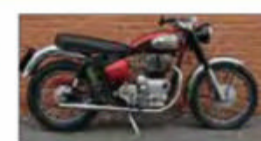
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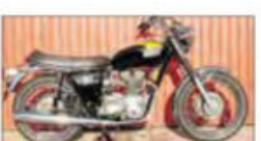
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