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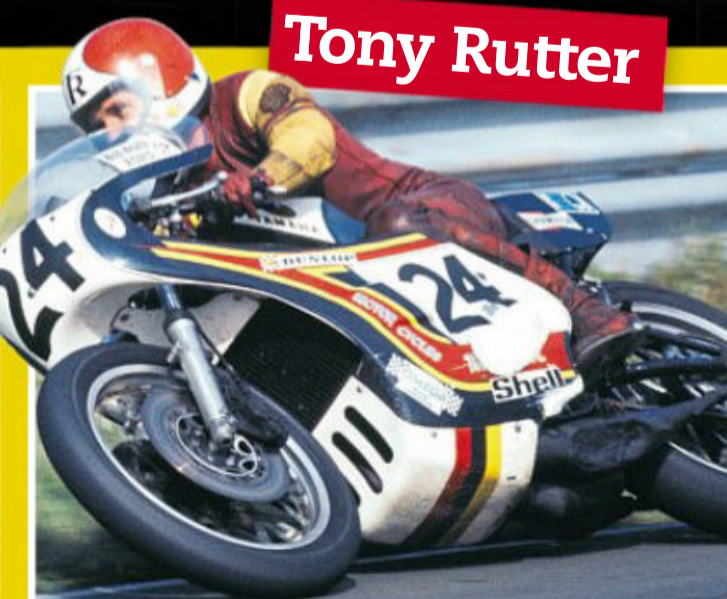


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Better times gone by;
but they will return

Welcome

IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT TO WRITE. LIKE so many people, I have family members who are vulnerable. Like so many businesses, it's uncertain how the coming months will play out. That said, in the lull before the effects of all this bite, the world feels simpler. Family, friends and community are centre stage. Kind thoughts and acts are commonplace. As someone who graduated two months before Lehman Brothers collapsed, worked through years of recession as a freelance designer and then launched a business during the Brexit spin-cycle, rather than worry, I prefer to remain hopeful and look for the positives.

Whilst self-isolating from the black plague, Isaac Newton invented Calculus, discovered that white light is made by combining every colour in the spectrum, and theorised about a force he dubbed 'gravity'. By any measure that's a solid stint of self-isolation but, we should keep things relative; Newton didn't have Netflix.

It's worth a thought though, with our routines upended and the social filling stripped out, in the coming weeks we're going to have time on our hands. Time to rest, to recoup. Time to spend with family. Time to finish off old projects and start new ones. Time to explore all the ideas put to one side because there was never quite enough – time.

The branches on the tree twenty feet

from my window are showing the first sparks of vivid spring. The sky behind is blue. From day five in isolation, that's good enough for me.

Stay safe

Ashley Watson
(Ashleywatson.co.uk)

I was struggling with what to say to everyone, when Ashley, a bright, young, motorcycle clothing designer and bike adventurer sent the above passage to all his customers. It was perfect and encapsulates exactly what I wanted to say. Thanks, Ashley!

We have the solution though – our sheds/ garages/ workshops! Isolation and biking in one easy step. Most of the spare parts suppliers are still operating through websites and via the phone if you don't have one of those fancy typewriters. And the posties are still doing a grand job. I've got the Norton, which I'm trying to focus on, but there's an Opel Kadett, its engine and a Moggy Minor, too.

So what if you don't do much work on your bike? Then when has there been a better way to learn? Friends aren't able to come over and help, so look for some books for advice. I recently got sent one from Veloce Publishing about restoring a Norton Commando Mk3. I don't have a Commando, but some of the steps have

helped me understand my ES2. And the internet is a source – just be careful of what to trust – but you'll find plenty on there, which may help.

Don't forget the clubs. My local Norton club has many friends who are only too happy to give advice over the phone, as does the Brimbo club, a club for those in and around Norfolk and Suffolk, with between them, a lot of knowledge. And sarcasm, which we can all do with now and then!

But mostly, without sounding like one of those irritating, patronising folk, have a quick think about those friendly faces you see at the local bike meet. And if you have a minute spare, just give them a call, to see if they're ok. And in return, they may be able to help you with advice.

Classic Bike Guide will continue to give you a little piece of the old bike world throughout this, as well as we can. If you're struggling to get to the shops, give us a ring on 01507 529529 and we can get one in the post to you, or see page 20 for details on how to subscribe.

Stay safe, stay happy and be good!

Matt Hull

editor@classicbikeguide.com



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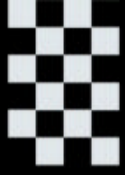
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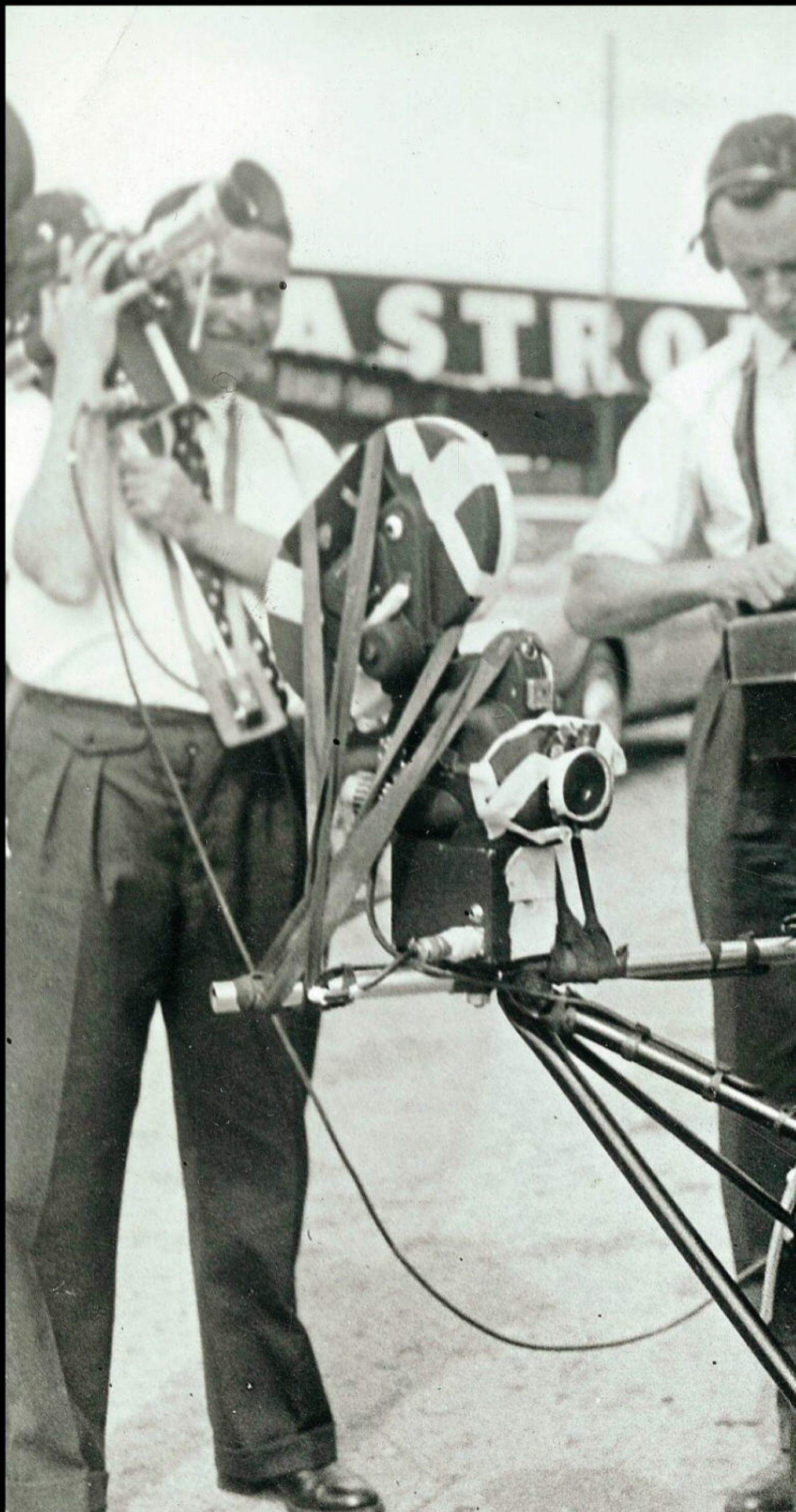
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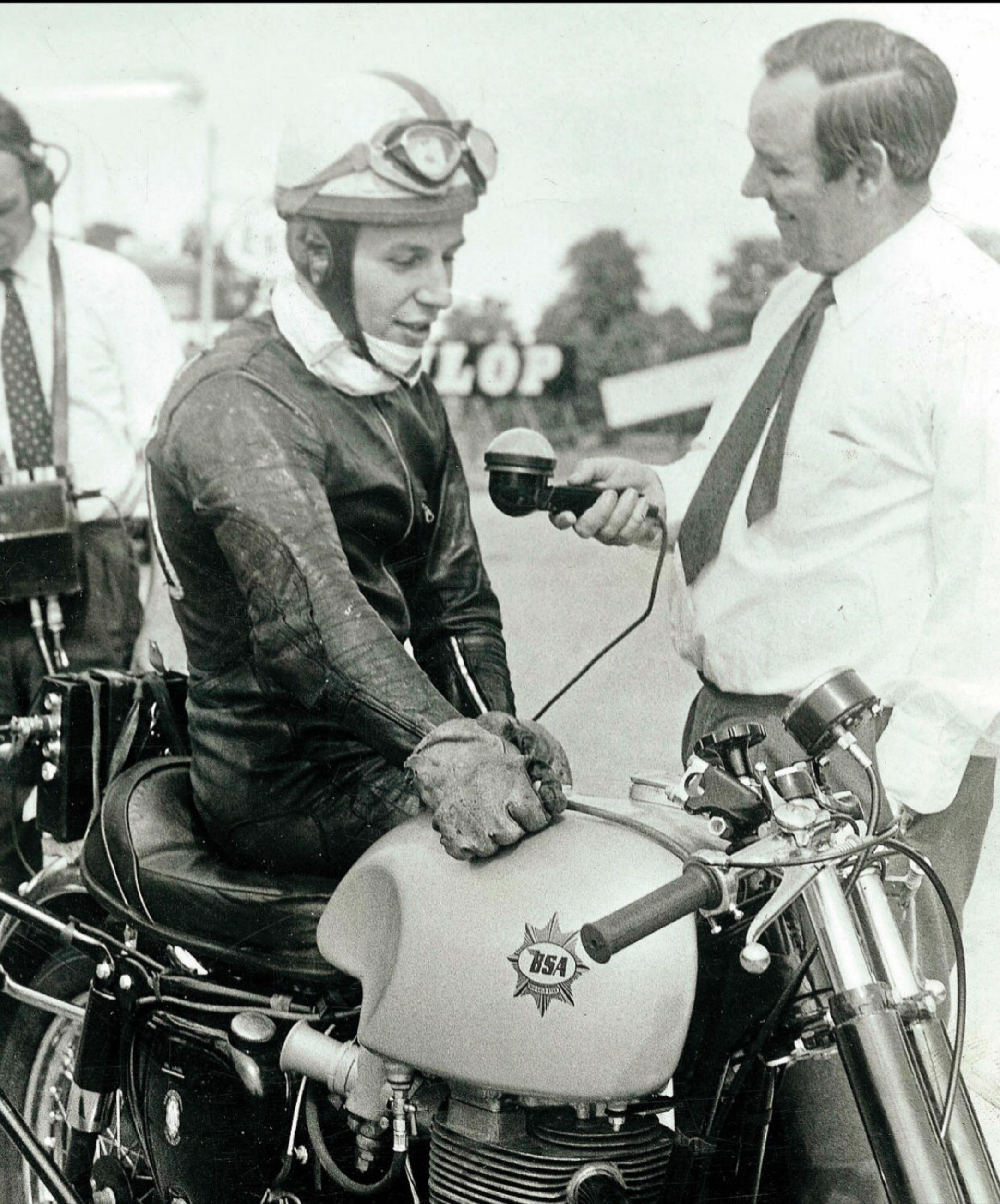
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■ Action camera, you say?

How about this for a dashcam? Back in August 1957, John Surtees took viewers for a ride when the BBC's television programme, 'Let's go motor cycling', filmed a lap of Oulton Park with the World Champion. That June, John had come second in the Senior TT on his 500/4 MV Agusta, in the longest ever Grand Prix, at 8 laps, 3hrs, 5 mins and more than 300 miles. He also came fourth in the Junior TT for MV Agusta, though only managed 3rd in the 500cc World Championship, thanks to numerous retirements. And within three years, John would be the darling of the car world. **CBG**







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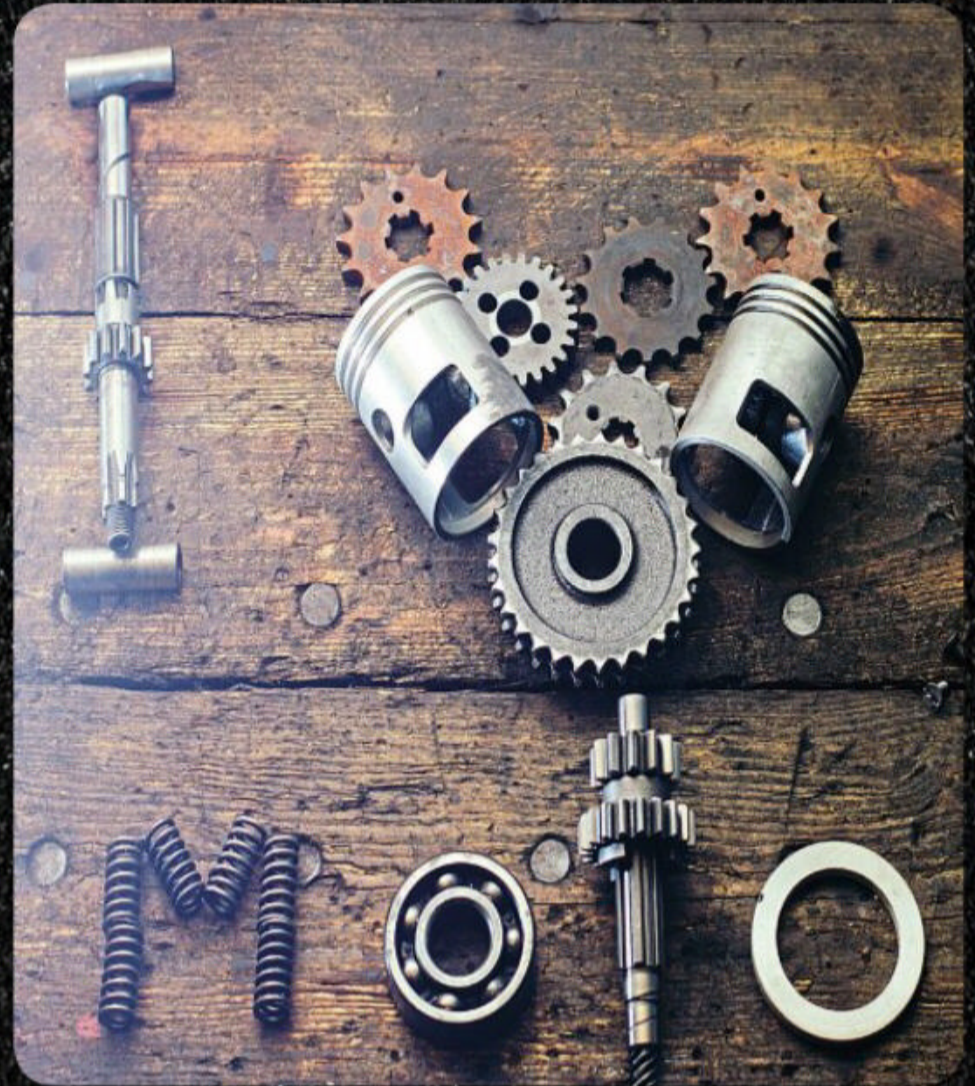
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The logic is clear – if you want a haircut, you don't go to the supermarket. So, if you want a certain part for your classic motorcycle, then you approach the companies that deal in parts and expertise in those very models. And look what we have here – a number of specialists whose focus is on certain makes and models of classic motorcycle, just the job!

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The Ferrari

BY GREG PULLEN
IMAGES FROM A HERL INC.

motorcycle club

Did Enzo Ferrari start in motorsport racing motorcycles? With Rudge? Greg Pullen uses his detective skills to head back 90 years in the search of facts for this oft-asked question



Enzo Ferrari with
Eugenio Castellotti,
Monza 1956



Enzo and Juan Manuel Fangio at the Mille Miglia, 1956

EVERY NOW AND THEN THE STORY THAT ENZO Ferrari Scuderia started out racing motorcycles rather than cars resurfaces, usually supported by little more than a list of motorcycles entered into races by one Scuderia Ferrari. The supposition is then supported with some ancient photos of Enzo in the proximity of a few racing motorcycles.

There's even a nicely illustrated book on the subject, *Il mistero delle moto inglesi di Ferrari* (The mystery of Ferrari's English motorcycles) by Nunzia Manicardi available, with a fair English translation, from the Rudge Enthusiasts' Club. Yet, despite some heavyweight authorities claiming the story to be true, the more you dig the less hard evidence there is.

Enzo is rarely – if ever – quoted, and the other members of the Ferrari family involved in motorsport are conveniently forgotten. Certainly a Scuderia Ferrari entered motorcycle team races in the 1930s, but was it the same team that Enzo founded and still competes in Formula 1 today?

And the Scuderia Ferrari motorcycles weren't Italian but rather usually Rudges so, to an impartial observer, there seems to be a lot of wishful thinking going on. Blurry images of shield-shaped badges are claimed to be the famous yellow SF and prancing horse logo, but an awful lot of other businesses had a shield motif. Then there are the articles in *Motociclismo* said to be by Enzo – conveniently claiming he's writing under an assumed name – based solely on content and that Ferrari briefly flirted with sports reporting.

Yet Ferrari did commission Vittorio Guerzoni, builder of the smaller Mignon motorcycles, to develop a 500cc racer. But the two fell out, with Ferrari telling the press – under his own name – that Italy lacked the talent to build a competitive racing motorcycle. This

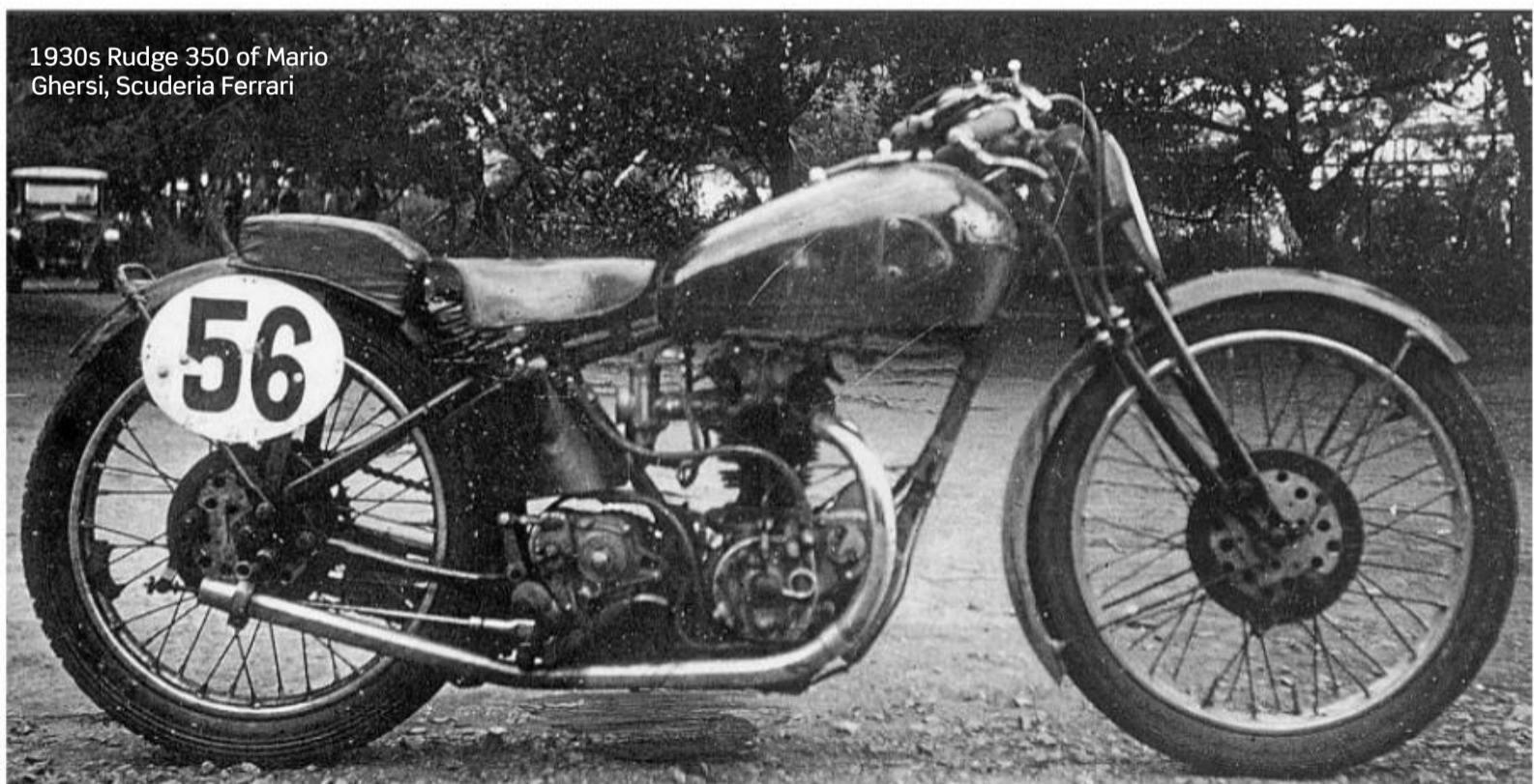
was in 1932, with Bianchi's previously unstoppable 350 Freccia Celeste at the end of its glory years, but Moto Guzzi's 250 was already five years into a fantastically successful career.

Enzo's comments seemed disingenuous, so what was he up to? Loitering with intent, perhaps, looking for a fast motorcycle racer ready to move on to a better paid career in cars? After all, the first driver Enzo signed up when his Scuderia Ferrari took over Alfa Romeo's racing team was Tazio Nuvolari, Bianchi's one time star. Enzo never mentioned motorcycles in his rare interviews or memoirs, but in one of his final interviews in 1977 he singled out just two drivers as being greats: Stirling Moss – 'the most complete driver I've ever known' – and Tazio Nuvolari. 'The greatest drivers were distinguished by their supreme ability to handle any kind of situation, any car, any driving condition, any kind of race' Enzo opined, 'Nuvolari was a great driver in my sense'.

Enzo once told John Surtees – a world champion for Ferrari and MV Agusta – that he admired motorcyclists' talent for coping with all weathers, and having 'fire in their belly'.

So perhaps Enzo really was just keeping motorcyclists close to him, supporting them where he could, ready to sign up the next Nuvolari. Which he did with Achille Varzi and Piero Taruffi, both great motorcycle racers who made successful transitions to cars under Enzo's tutelage. But one of those old magazine articles – *Ferrari e il motociclismo quell'amore di breve durata* (Ferrari's brief love of motorcycling) – includes a single and solid quote as to why he campaigned Rudge motorcycles, rather than an Italian marque.

'Because I already have contacts with the Rudge- ▶



1930s Rudge 350 of Mario Gherzi, Scuderia Ferrari

Mario Gherzi, Scuderia
Ferrari, 1932



“ ‘Because I already have contacts with the Rudge-Whitworth, who gave me the spoked wheels for my cars’ explained Enzo.”

Whitworth, who gave me the spoked wheels for my cars' explained Enzo. 'In addition these bikes weigh very little, the 500 less than 144kg, and the engine had very advanced technology, with four radial valves and a light alloy conrod mounted, along with other parts, on needle and not on plain bearings.'

The reference to wheels alludes to Ferrari and Alfa Romeo's use of Borrani wheels, a business established on the back of an idea by Rudge to give their new motorcycles a unique selling point. In 1908 Rudge Whitworth Coventry, to use their full title, registered a patent for mounting a wheel onto a splined hub, fixed by a winged central nut. This 'knock off' locknut allowed easier and faster wheel changing, a huge advantage at a time when roads were little more than farm tracks, and bent wheels and torn tyres were a fact of pioneer motoring life.

But the system required a car style stub axle so, given that Rudge motorcycles lacked single-sided swingarms, they were happy to licence the design to others, including one Carlo Borrani in 1922. He must have been a modest young man because, rather than name the new business after himself, he retained the Rudge Whitworth title and even their badging with the red hand symbolising Daniel Rudge's Ulster roots. About the only change he made was replace 'Coventry' with 'Milan'.

Borrani's new venture was an immediate hit. Within a year Alfa Romeo, Auto Union, Bianchi (who then also made cars) and Lancia were using Borrani wheels. Then, in 1924, a young Enzo Ferrari won the *Coppa Acerbo Pescara* atop Rudge Whitworth Milano's wheels, impressing Alfa Romeo sufficiently to engage Enzo as a works driver and manager.

From the very start Borrani (a change in Italian legislation required Carlo to use his own name) was their official wheel supplier and sponsor along with Pirelli. After founding Scuderia Ferrari in 1929, Enzo kept his ties with Alfa Romeo, so that when the factory curtailed its racing efforts Scuderia Ferrari was the natural choice to take over the cars and equipment. If Enzo really did decide to run his own motorcycle racing team in 1931, given the Borrani connection, Rudge motorcycles were a good choice. After all, Italian factories were unlikely to supply a newcomer with motorcycles capable of winning. And Enzo did like to win.

None of this amounts to proof that Enzo actually ran the motorcycle team, rather than just allowing them to share the facilities he enjoyed at Alfa Romeo. The motorcyclists even raced with 'Rudge Whitworth Coventry' on their jerseys, and there's no convincing appearance in the old photos of Ferrari's name or famous prancing horse logo although the latter didn't appear until 1932.

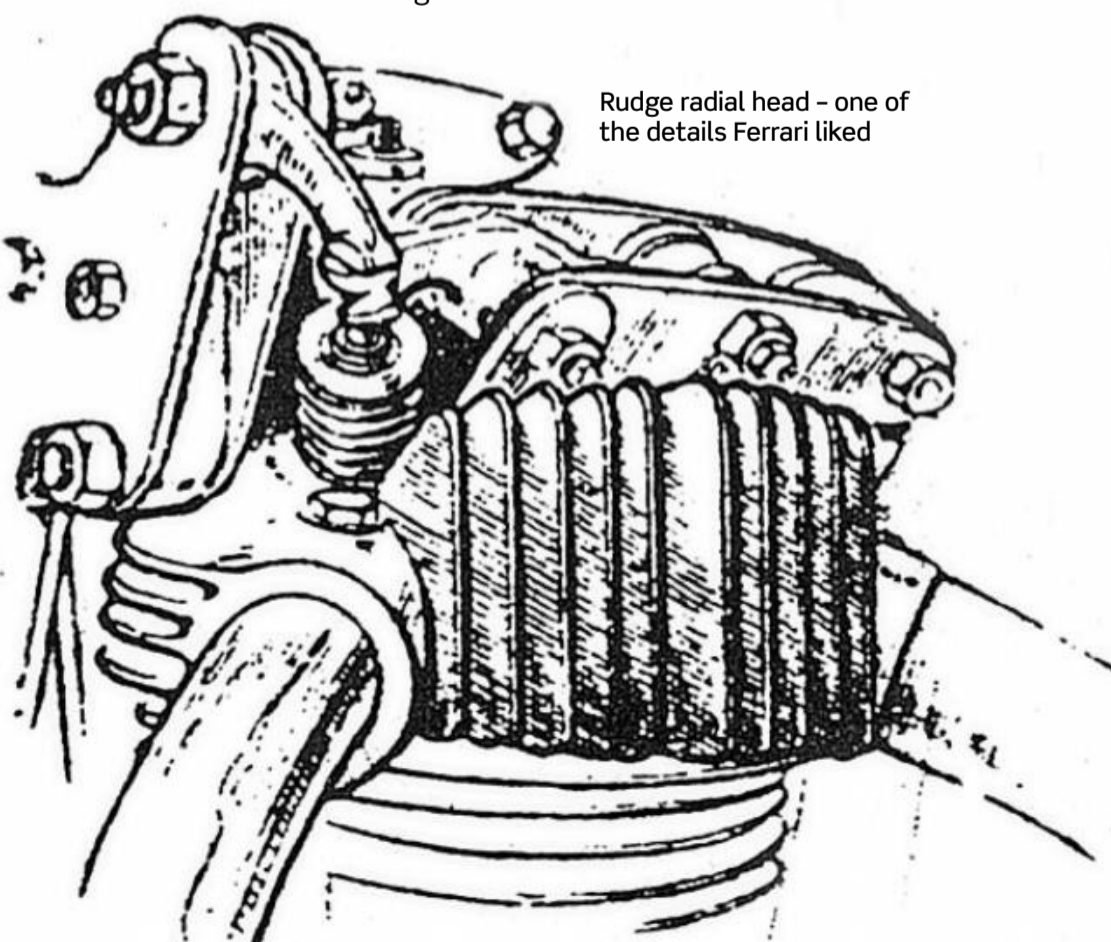
The best evidence is a canvas cover printed with 'Societa Anonima Scuderia Ferrari Modena' on a truck with Rudge (and Pirelli) sign-written on its flanks. Societa Anonima Scuderia Ferrari is the name Enzo registered, and he was based in Modena, but the canvas cover may have been intended for another truck. Good circumstantial evidence, certainly, but where's the conviction? The fact that Norton riders, notably Piero Taruffi, also raced under the Scuderia Ferrari banner, along with the rapid turnover of riders, still hints at Enzo simply keeping potential car racers close to him.

Taruffi certainly used Scuderia Ferrari's facilities on the way to winning the 1932 500cc European Championship aboard his Norton CS1, and postwar would drive for Ferrari. There are also mentions of Gherzi and Susini on Nortons – so much for Enzo's declared admiration of Ridges. It gets worse for Rudge fans. When Ferrari commissioned Guerzoni to build that Italian world beater, it was Taruffi's Norton he smuggled into the Mignon workshop as a template. This had a two valve head with a single overhead bevel driven camshaft, arguably less advanced – and less successful – than either the Rudge or Bianchi Freccia Celeste. Some even say Enzo simply bought Guerzoni a Norton International, the updated version of the CS1.

So there must have been another reason for racing Ridges, beyond the Borrani connection, especially when you discover Enzo was dealing with the Italian importers rather than with Rudge's factory in Coventry.

Perhaps he had a plan and, as was Enzo's way, perhaps he planned on taking advantage of someone else's misfortune. Although Rudge motorcycles filled the podium at the 1930 Isle of Man Junior TT, and took a one-two in the Senior, sales didn't follow. 1929's Wall Street crash turned into the Great Depression and Rudge sales tumbled from some 7000 in 1930 to just 2500 the following year. In desperation Rudge started selling their Python racing engine to anyone who could pay: this included Miller in Italy and it must have crossed Enzo's mind that there was no need to develop an engine when you could buy a proven race winner off the shelf.

So in the early days at least, it seems Enzo was only offering management and support, rather than motorcycles, to riders. Like the original owner-drivers of his 1929 Scuderia, Enzo's riders bought and owned their motorcycles. They were even persuaded to share them, with Taruffi lending Nuvolari his Norton. Enzo had already talked of building his own racing cars, so it's not an unreasonable leap to suggest he was planning to build a Ferrari racing motorcycle around a Rudge engine. But in the meantime what did being part of Scuderia Ferrari offer a rider?



Rudge radial head - one of the details Ferrari liked

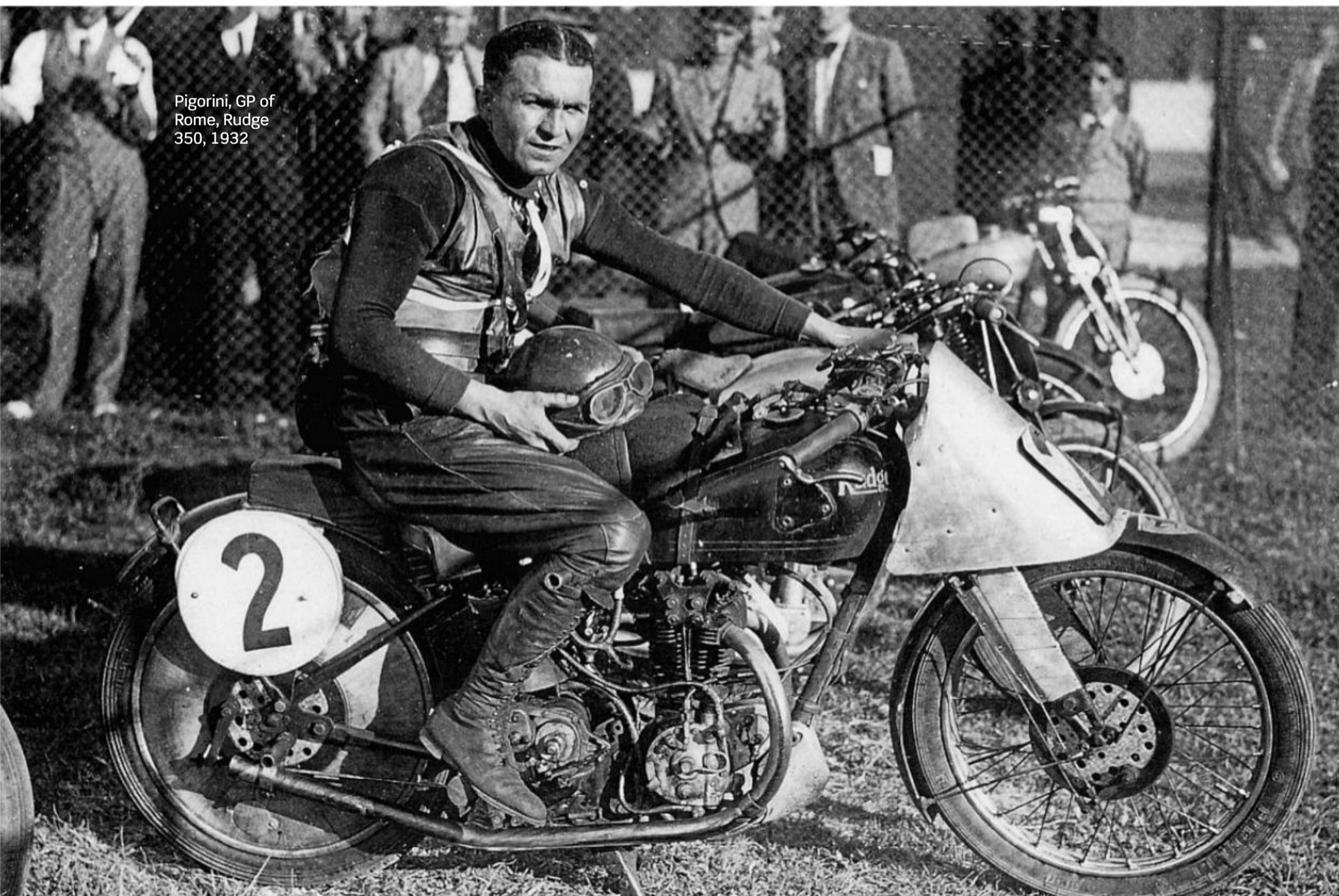


Rudge were the team's favourite

“After all, Italian factories were unlikely to supply a newcomer with motorcycles capable of winning. And Enzo did like to win”



But there was room for Nortons! Piero Taruffi, 1932



Pigorini, GP of Rome, Rudge 350, 1932



M Ghersi at the Pontedecimo hill climb, 1932

“In the early days, Scuderia Ferrari was really a club for racers, offering mutual support and companionship”

In the early days Scuderia Ferrari was really a club for racers, offering mutual support and companionship. Enzo was already a public relations genius, issuing yearbooks of the Scuderia's exploits with pages dedicated to the bikes. Based on his own racing experience, Enzo believed that factories treated riders and drivers abominably, drip feeding opportunities for racing while prohibiting them from competing on another manufacturer's machines.

His opinion of race organisers was even lower. Enzo felt they were debasing a new sport that could be the greatest spectacle ever seen. And neither manufacturers nor race organisers seemed to have any interest in nurturing new talent. Calling his Team Scuderia, meaning stable (of horses), Enzo dreamed of bringing the prestige and organisation associated with the sport of kings to motor racing. For riders and drivers alike Scuderia Ferrari offered something new: the chance to focus on racing – and winning, if they were to stay in Enzo's good books – while Enzo and his staff took care of entries, publicity, transport, repairs, spares, and all the dull minutia that gets a racer to the starting line.

Within a few years he would have a team of 29 support staff, making sure racers were left to concentrate on what they did best, fighting for victory. And with some members of the Scuderia racing on two wheels as well as four there was clearly a need for tight administration and what we now call logistical support.

It might seem obvious today, but Enzo Ferrari effectively invented the concept of team ownership and management. After his own difficult racing career he knew that a relaxed racer – confident in what's going on around him, knowing that he just has to turn up and race – is a fast racer. It seems to have worked, with the Scuderia Ferrari's first recorded entry into a motorcycle race – the 1932 Grand Prix Primavera at Modena on March 28 – being won by Guglielmo Sandri on a Rudge.

The listings tell that, over a two-year period, Scuderia Ferrari entered over 90 riders into almost 40 events. But was this really Enzo's work? Others have suggested that the team manager was Enzo's nephew, Renzo Saracco Ferrari. Which makes you wonder if Enzo was really involved.

Historian Ivar de Gier has spoken to Ferrari archivists over the years while curating his famous photographic archive. These are the old boys of Maranello, who were there at the beginning and have access to all the records. Ivar believes what they told him of Ferrari's motorcycle history.

'Scuderia Ferrari featured a car racing team and a motorcycle racing team, it really was Enzo Ferrari's team and he led it. There were very successful motorcycle riders in his team, who he picked out and moved on towards the cars, which is where the bigger money was. I don't believe that Ferrari had this bike team just so that

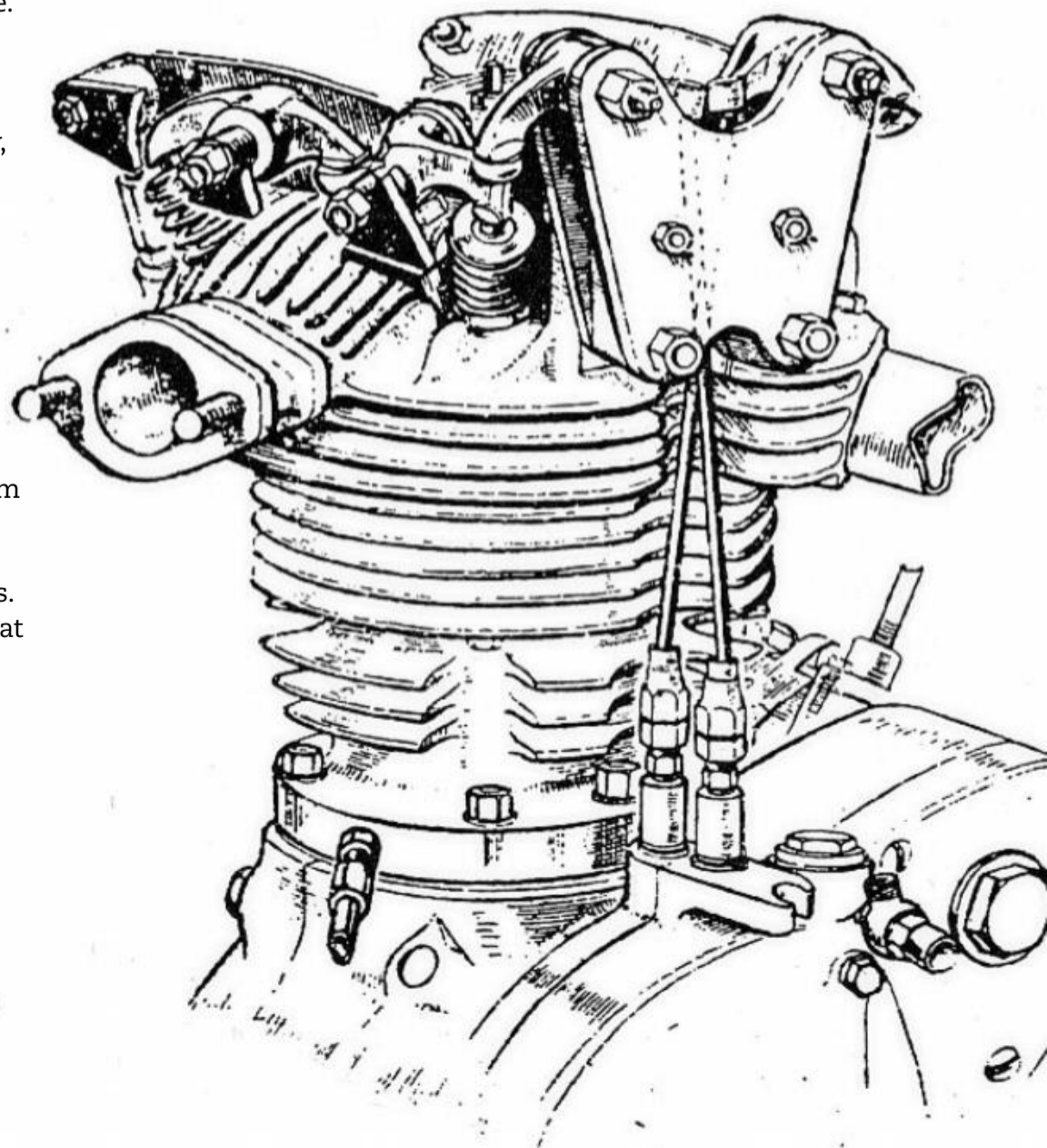
he could pick out riders for his car racing team. He took the bike team very seriously and he invested greatly in machines as well. He had to, as it was a private team.

'In that era you needed more than good luck, battling with the CNA/Gilera supercharged fours, Moto Guzzi, BMW etc. There were Italian companies also building racing bikes, using the English Rudge Python engines in an Italian chassis. Miller was one such company. They would all build factory racers featuring Rudge engines. In 1930s Italy Rudge was extremely popular as a racing machine, and its engines more or less became the standard mount for many small companies with sporting ambitions.

'If you really wanted a go at motorcycle racing, Rudge was a more than popular choice for the better privateer and race team owner like Ferrari. But there are many myths around it, fed by the fact that most people do not know the high status or popularity of Rudge in Italy.'

Indeed the vast majority of Scuderia Ferrari's entries in motorcycle races were Rudges, with Nortons a distant second. It seems there might have been the odd 175 Benelli in there as well. The races entered were an eclectic mix of small circuits and the big events such as the Circuito del Lario, and the Raid Sud-Nord that became the Milano-Taranto. There were even entries for the Targa Florio in Sicily. These events suggest the Scuderia were racing with an eye on likely prize money as much as winning championships.

Sandi seems to have been the number one rider initially, but Giordano Aldrighetti soon took over, riding for the team in perhaps 26 races. Mario Ghersi and Aldo Pigorini also had a handful of races with the Scuderia, but the other dozen or so names on the roster are listed as racing only once or twice. But if Ivar's expert testimony still leaves a yearning for hard facts, here's



the killer. All Scuderia Ferrari cars have had a serial number prefixed by 'SF' stamped on them somewhere. But even the earliest Alfa Romeos have numbers in the 50s and 60s. Since the numbers run sequentially, it's reasonable to assume the series started at number one. So where are SF1 to 50-something?

From 1929 to 1933 Scuderia Ferrari ran the Alfa Romeo works team yet, looking through the old photos, it's clear that not only did the bikes outnumber the cars, but that there were probably a handful of cars at most. There may have been a dozen or so more if the original Scuderia owner-drivers had agreed to have their vehicles stamped, although that seems unlikely. And that's still a long, long way shy of 50 cars. The shortfall points to the rows of motorcycles in Ferrari's year-books but, if they really were Enzo's motorcycles, where did they all go?

As the Great Depression bit, Scuderia Ferrari's motorcycle team paid a heavy price. In 1933 Alfa Romeo closed their racing department, as did Rudge. Enzo's main backer, Count Trossi, became disillusioned and closed his wallet. By 1935 Rudge were bankrupt and Enzo would have needed another manufacturer to come on board if his motorcycling adventure were to continue. Perhaps worse in Enzo's mind was that Mercedes and Auto Union were taking advantage of rule changes and advances in aviation technology – and Nazi funding – to beat his aging Alfas. For 1935 Mercedes had 4.5 litre engines and Auto Union a monstrous six litre motor, which was double the capacity of Scuderia Ferrari's

hand-me-down Alfa Romeo P3s.

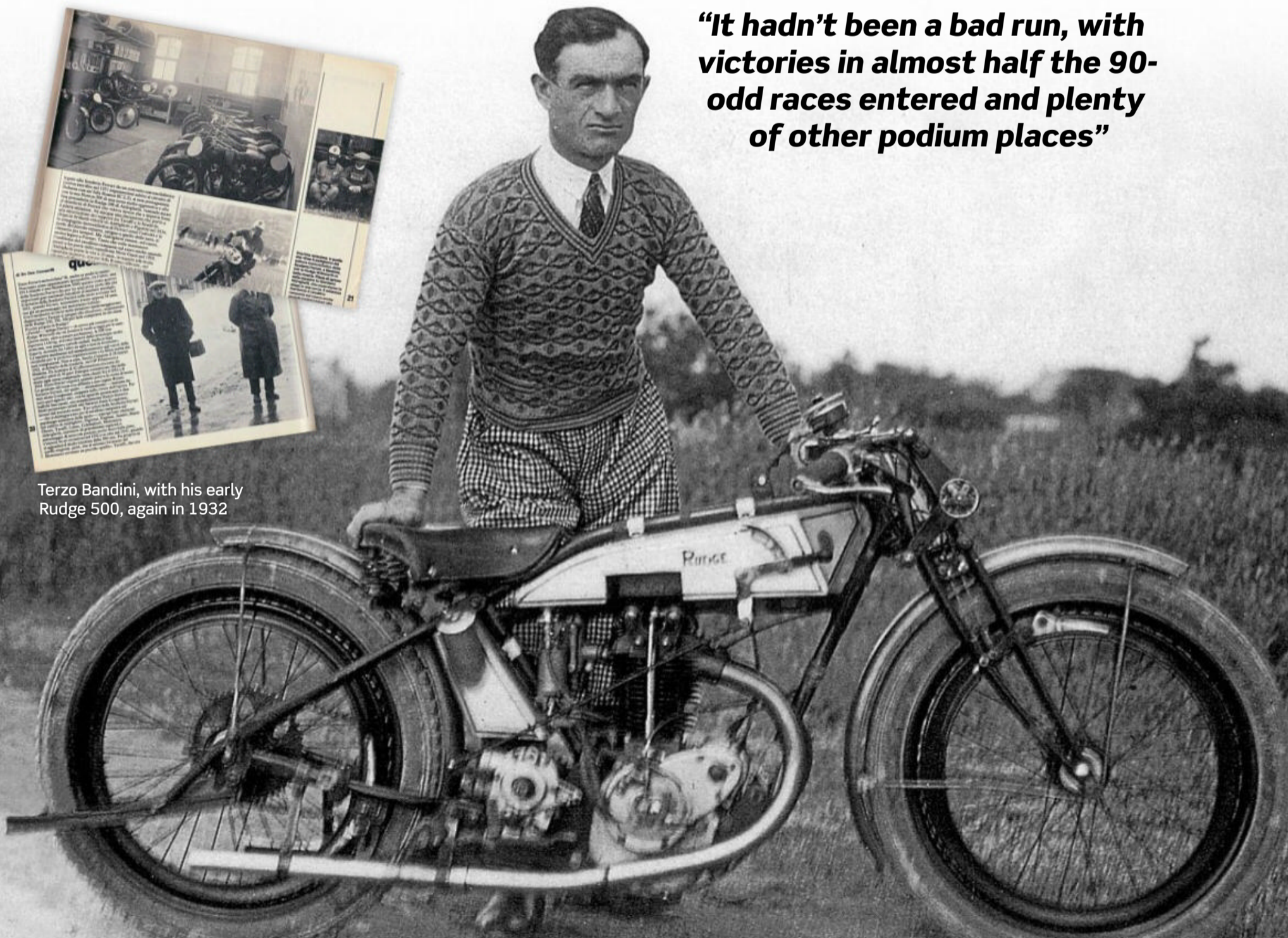
On paper Enzo's days as a team owner looked over, but that was to underestimate the man and his people. Even so, he decided to focus on cars and abandon motorcycle racing at the end of 1934. It hadn't been a bad run, with victories in almost half the 90-odd races entered and plenty of other podium places. Ferrari's decision, in the end, paid off handsomely.

The three or four Rudges the team still owned were tucked away and plans were drawn up to make the Alfa Romeos as competitive as possible. They were still good cars, and Scuderia Ferrari was a great team, with arguably the greatest driver in Tazio Nuvolari. At the Nürburgring, Nuvolari would stake his claim as the greatest racer of all time by winning the 1935 German Grand Prix, defying all the odds, and humiliating Mercedes and Auto Union.

To rub salt into the wound, before mounting the podium, Nuvolari insisted that the Italian flag flying be replaced because it had a small tear. There was more good news. Well, a little. EMI – yes, the record people – bought and revived Rudge, although their commitment to building the new, top secret radar meant this was short-lived and Rudge disappeared forever in 1939.

And, although Scuderia Ferrari would never return to motorcycles, over the years its ruthless, Machiavellian, unknowable leader would continue to prove what determination and good judgement could achieve. **CBG**

“It hadn't been a bad run, with victories in almost half the 90-odd races entered and plenty of other podium places”



Terzo Bandini, with his early Rudge 500, again in 1932

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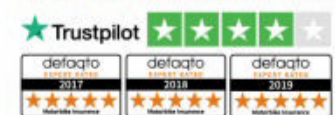


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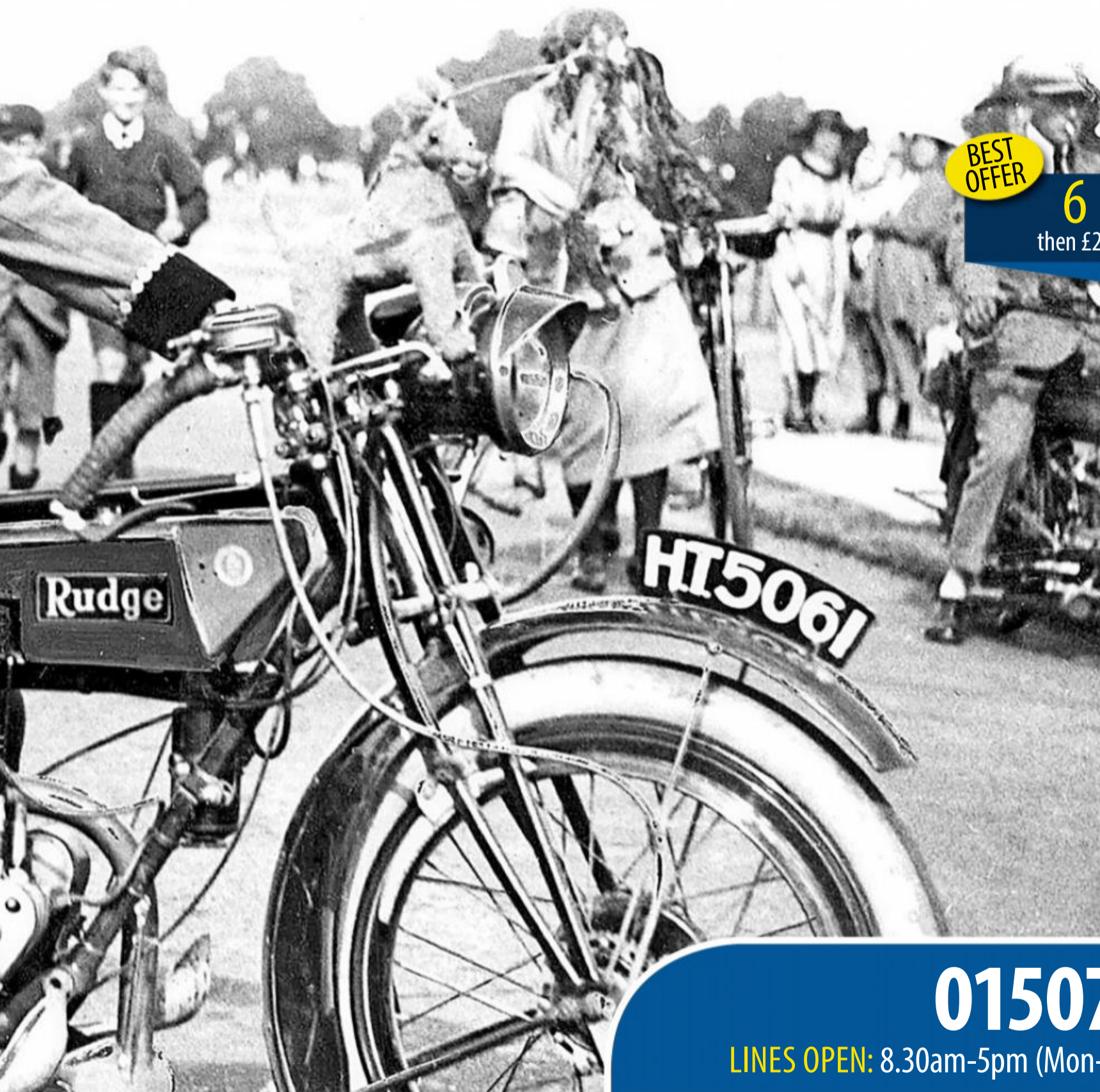
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BRONTE STEAM 21

APRIL STAFFORD POSTPONED UNTIL AUGUST

THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK has cut a swathe through the events programme for the spring and summer of 2020.

From high profile events like the TT to the smallest club meet, rally, AGM or bike night, pretty much the whole classic calendar is off until August as the Government's advice to stay indoors bites.

The biggest classic show of the year, the 40th Carole Nash *Classic Motorcycle Show* at Stafford, due to be held on April 25/26, has been postponed – twice. Originally rescheduled for June, as the impact of the outbreak became clearer, this has now been rescheduled again with a new date in August.

A spokesman for organisers Mortons Events said: "The safety and well-being of our visitors, exhibitors, partners, contractors and staff is the most important factor and the key reason for postponing the event. The events team have been continually monitoring the latest public health and Government guidelines regarding the



evolving Covid-19 situation and acting in accordance with their advice.

"We have secured new dates for the show at the Stafford County Showground which will now take place on Saturday and Sunday, August 15/16, 2020. All ticket and trade bookings will be honoured for this new date.

However, if you are unable to make this new date, please don't hesitate to get in touch."

For all ticket enquiries please contact 01507 529529 or email customerservices@mortons.co.uk. For all trade enquiries please contact our shows team on 01507 529430 or email exhibitions@mortons.co.uk.

BILL CROSBY: 1932-2020

WILLIAM 'BILL' CROSBY, whose efforts kept many a British classic bike fan from London and beyond on the road, has died at the age of 87. Bill was born into Westminster Barracks in April 1932, the son of Sgt William Crosby, Master of the Stables in the Grenadier Guards.

After completing his national service in the King's Royal Rifle Corps, Bill returned to civvy street.

In 1958 Reg Allen Motorcycles came up for sale and an enthusiastic young Bill bought the 'name and goodwill'. After months of waiting for Reg Allen to move from the shop it transpired that the premises were not part of the deal. A hunt for premises ended when Bill established a shop in Grosvenor Road W7 which still retained the old Reg Allen name.

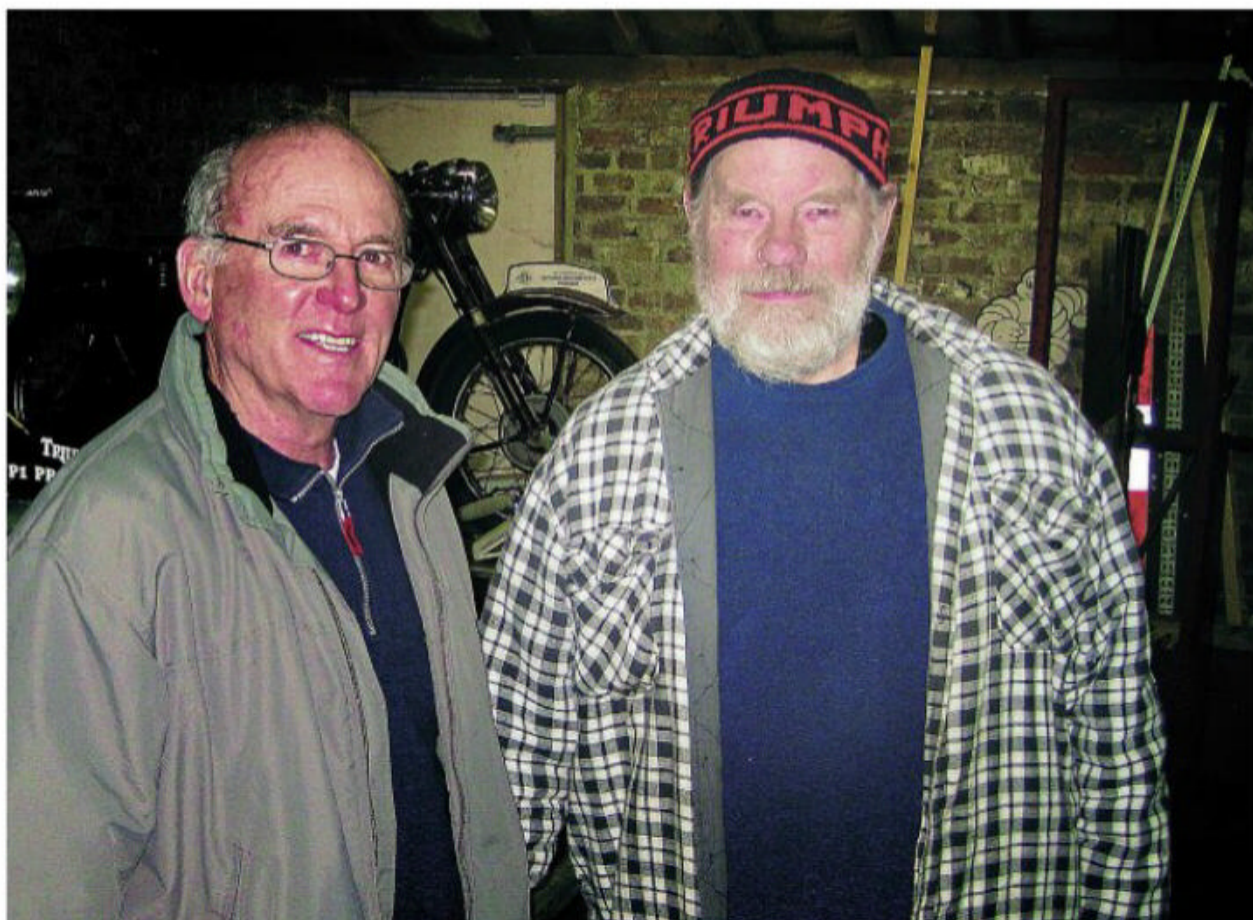
Bill was a Meriden Triumph main agent from 1977 and also nurtured scramblers, sidecar racers and 24-hour production racers with his sponsorship, knowledge and enthusiasm until Reg Allen's closed in 2019.

In 1999 Bill opened the only motorcycle museum in London – the London Motorcycle Museum. The museum housed almost 200 bikes, with some dating back to 1907. The museum contained one of the most comprehensive collections of Meriden-built Triumphs in the world. More than 70 machines from the Crosby Collection, including the last Triumph Bonneville to leave Meriden and the fully faired TS8 prototype, went under the hammer at Bonham's Stafford auction last October.

For the last year or so Bill attempted retirement but his head remained firmly in motorcycle mode until the end.

A message from the Crosby family said: "He left us on Sunday, March 29, a month before his 88th birthday. This no doubt irked him somewhat as, if he had reached his 88th birthday, he could have started telling everyone he was nearly 89. In the current situation his funeral will be, by necessity, a

small family affair but we have set up a JustGiving page – justgiving.com/fundraising/billcrosby – in his memory which will remain open until after his memorial party, to take place when all this current hooah is over. It is in aid of the British Legion as he said that his time in the Army were the best years of his life, second only to motorcycling, and that wartime sacrifices should never be forgotten."



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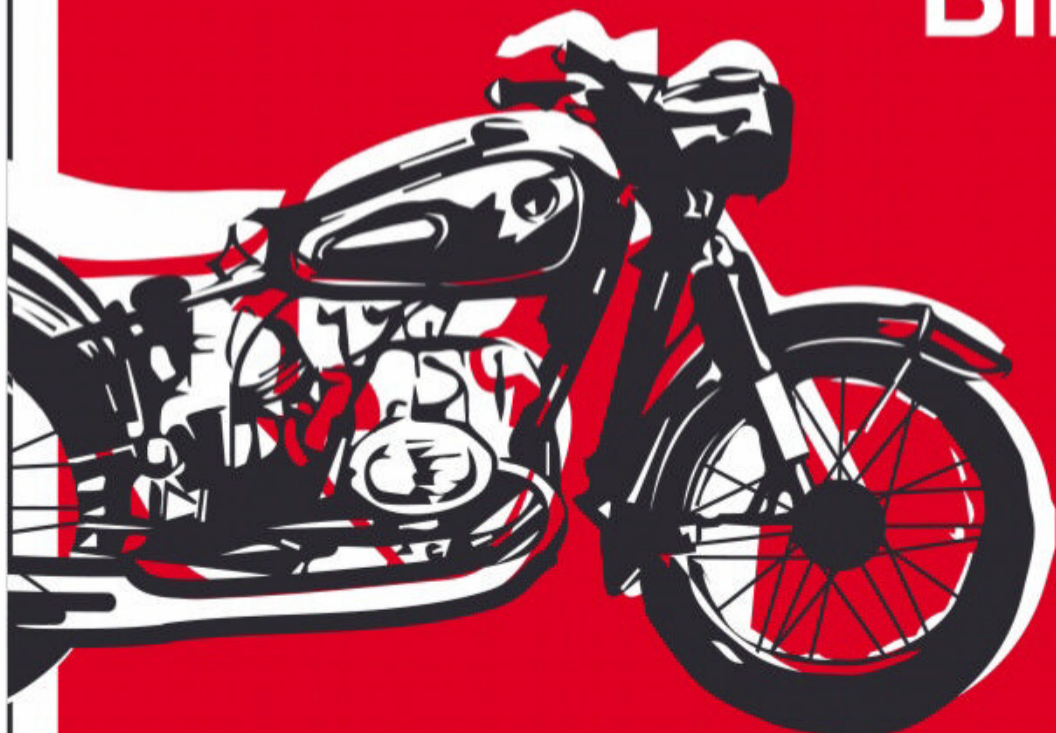
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CORONAVIRUS AND YOUR MOT

WHILE UNMODIFIED CLASSIC bikes over 40 years old don't need an MoT or road tax, those with newer machines will welcome the news that MoT tests have been suspended for six months from March 30, to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

The change is automatic, and the six-month period will run from the date your MoT runs out. So, if your MoT ran out on April 3, 2020, you won't need to MoT it until October 3, 2020. You can find your new MoT date by visiting www.gov.uk/check-mot-history and entering your registration number. You'll still be able to tax it without an MoT.

You do need to make sure your vehicle is kept in a roadworthy condition, which is a legal condition for any bike, whether modern or a classic. You can be fined up to £2500, be banned from driving and get three penalty points for riding a bike in a dangerous condition.

If your MoT ran out before March 30 and you haven't retested it yet then you still must, not least because you can't tax it without an MoT. You can SORN the bike if you aren't going to use it or until you can get the bike tested.



Booking an MoT 150 miles away so you can go for a ride isn't considered acceptable. You must only leave the house to do vital shopping, because you have medical needs to fulfil, to take one form

of exercise a day or have to travel to work and cannot work from home.

At this time paper MoT certificates won't be issued by testing stations to reduce person-to-person contact.

Tune in to Motorcycle Views: A magazine with a voice



A NEW RADIO show and podcast about the world of motorcycling has been launched. *Motorcycle Views* is on the online streaming radio service FAB Radio International at fabradiointernational.com. Presented by Kawasaki classic four guru Dave Marsden from Zed Power, *Motorcycle Views* is a magazine type show, covering all aspects of motorcycling, along with guests, motorcycle and kit reviews and up-to-date news. There's

also a Q+A section where the listener can email in any motorcycle-related questions they have to: motorcycleviews@yahoo.com. The show will be aired twice weekly, on Thursday at 7pm and on Saturday 10am, also on various podcast channels. It can be found at www.fabradiointernational.com/fab-radio-schedule/thursday/motorcycle-views or you can visit previous shows at podomatic.com/podcasts/motorcycleviews

COOPER'S PLACE OF HONOUR AT THE NMM

THE NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE MUSEUM is currently closed, but when visitors are welcome again, there will be a new attraction. This new feature is dedicated to racing legend John 'Mooneyes' Cooper and includes not only his famous Agostini beating F750 BSA, but also a live interview conducted with John by the museum's archives and collections assistant Sarah. This informal chat gives a fascinating insight into the racing career of Mooneyes and contains some choice anecdotes. The display is in Hall 2 of the museum and will be available to see until the end of 2020.



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Products

Vecta key safe



The average burglary takes just 45 seconds. And most of us apparently leave our keys by the door – makes sense – but also makes it easy for a scumbag to grab them on the way out.

But there's now another problem. More modern cars and bikes are using keyless ignition, where the key operates the vehicle with radio signals. As opposed to old bikes that also have true keyless ignition – with no key...

This is one potential solution: a small safe. It's easy to use and has just enough room for keys, valuables and things like passports; but it's small enough to be easily fitted into the wall without making too large a hole.

It also has a Faraday bag inside to shield your fancy keys from being read and your bikes and cars being stolen – a problem that is getting worse.

We haven't seen one but the idea looks good and it has passed several security tests. It's also battery-powered, so no wiring is needed and it'll still work if the power is cut.

My car cost less than a McDonalds and my old bikes don't have keys. But two Land Rovers and a BMW motorbike have been stolen locally recently and apparently you can't shoot thieves nowadays; so this safe sounds like a great idea.

■ www.vectasafes.co.uk

■ £149

LED headlight bulb

AFTER A FEW scary evening rides on my T140V last year, I resolved to avoid riding it in poor light until I could find some way of improving the old Lucas headlight.

At the Bristol Classic Show in February I visited Paul Goff's stand, gritted my teeth and splashed out £25.95 on one of his headlight LED bulbs. I've been looking at other LED light conversions, but some require serious modification to the headlight, or adapters and extra resistors. Paul's on the other hand was the simplest option.

It's plug and play. On the Bonneville, upgrading the lights just involves undoing the screw holding the headlamp rim, popping the reflector out, then you just pull the old tungsten bulb out and pop the new one in. It's got the same dimensions as the original bulb.

The new bulb has LEDs that sit in their own heatsink, with a set on either side. The dip beam shines out of the bottom, reflecting off the bottom of your headlight's reflective bowl. At full beam both top and

bottom of the reflector are illuminated.

The difference is striking, especially at full beam. The light is white rather than yellow and throws the beam a lot further. It doesn't scatter either, or illuminate the top of trees, which can happen with some of the cheaper options.

On older bikes the vibration can shatter a conventional filament, and the LEDs don't have them to shatter. The LEDs are less drain on the electrical system too. Paul offers a range of these bulbs, including a halogen replacement with the heatsink inside the headlight body that connects to the loom via a wire and a connector block.

£26 for a headlight bulb might seem expensive but this will last longer. In any event I remember spending £60 for a Cibie unit for my Honda to do the same job back in the 1980s. And now I'll be able to see where I'm going...

Paul is continuing with his mail order business – norbsa02.freeuk.com – during the Covid-19 lockdown. Oli



■ www.norbsa02.freeuk.com

■ £25.95



Ashley Watson Klisham longsleeve top

Ashley Watson makes some cracking bike clothing, which doesn't look like all the rest. It's expensive, but you get more than you pay for, as the quality, material and design is better than any other manufacturer out there. And the Klisham jumper is a perfect example.

I like white tops, but white tops don't seem to like me. But what I love about the Klisham jumper, designed by Ashley, is he knows, being a biker himself, how impractical white is, so the back of the sleeves are a darker colour.

Add to this the sumptuous organic cotton, the shoulder seam has been removed so it doesn't rub against shoulder armour if riding all day and the cut is especially long so everything stays where it should when out riding.

£75 for a jumper is a lot of money, but this one is beautiful and worth it. Trouble is, you don't want to take it off. Even to wash it...

■ ashleywatson.co.uk

■ £75

BMW Airhead Twins - The Complete Story by Phil West

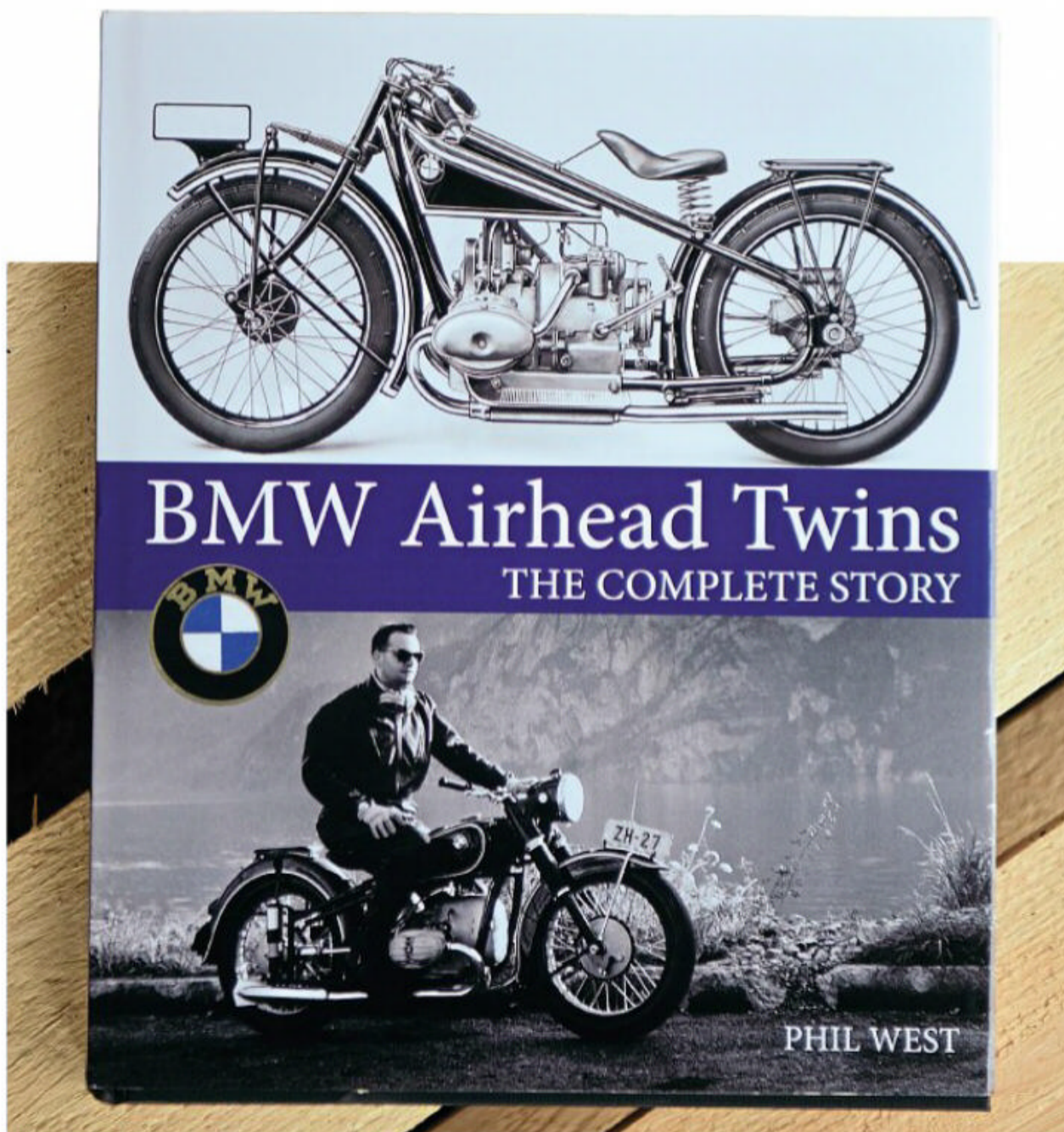
When the publishers first told me there was yet another book on BMW airheads coming out, my first thought was: 'Oh great, another book on BMWs no one wants'. There's just too many.

However, I was wrong. You see I knew this one was worth a read, as I had the pleasure of working with the author, Phil West, years ago and, while often aloof or downright miserable-looking, Phil always knew his facts and always researched his features thoroughly.

If you like BMWs or the story behind this fascinating company, it's a great read. I only really like the R100RS, but the prewar racers, its near collapse and the way the company tended to look at things differently means this is a very interesting read, and well worth the £25.

■ crowood.com

■ £25



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CTC900B	9 Dr chest	610x255x380	£79.98	£95.98
CTC500B	5 Dr cabinet	675x335x770	£109.98	£131.98
CTC800B	8 Dr chest/cab set	610x330x1070	£119.98	£143.98
② CTC700B	7 Dr cabinet	610x330x875	£129.98	£155.98
CTC1300B	13 Dr chest/cab	620x330x1320	£159.98	£191.98
③ CTC103	3 Dr step up chest	672x310x250	£54.99	£65.99
CTC109	9 Dr chest	662x305x421	£89.98	£107.98
④ CTC105	5 Dr cabinet	685x465x790	£169.98	£203.98
CTC107	7 Dr cabinet	685x465x950	£199.98	£239.98

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CBB228B	41" 8 Dr cabinet	1126x468x1000	£379.98	£455.98
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② CBB211DF	11 Dr Cabinet	785x490x1075	£289.98	£347.98
③ CBB309DF	9 Dr chest	975x370x420	£169.98	£203.98
④ CBB311DF	11 Dr Cabinet	1045x490x1075	£339.98	£407.98

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Letters

Show me the money!



I never thought I'd be saying this, but I'm becoming more and more disillusioned with the classic biking scene, and it's nothing to do with losing the love for all that marvellous old machinery out there. No, it's just that everything is so increasingly focused on value now.

I have been riding bikes since the mid-seventies, and started restoring bikes I'd lusted after back then in the early nineties, when it was still a cheap hobby. I've had a crack at Japanese, German, Italian and British projects over the years, all built to be ridden, with no concern about getting something wrong and, say, blowing an engine. The thinking being I'd just fix it again as parts were cheap. But that's not a philosophy I can afford to subscribe to now.

The money thing was further brought into focus when I managed to get out for a ride on my built from bits Honda CB750K1 up to my local bikers' café in Northumberland, just prior to Boris confining us all to quarters. Before I'd even got my helmet off the guy next to me climbed down from his modern SUM (Sports Utility Motorcycle) and greeted me with: "Nice bike, what's it worth?" Now I'm quite used to the bike attracting attention and I'm quite happy to chat about it, even the rivet counters are amusing in their own way, but that approach just got my back up. Anyhow, after politely ignoring biker number 1, and getting my helmet off, biker number 2 comes over, with exactly the same opening gambit...

It's very apparent that the 'proper bikers' involved in the classic bike scene are being rapidly replaced by people only looking at investment opportunities, with little interest in the machinery itself, and I for one find it very depressing. It's getting to the point where I'm considering looking for something else to tinker with in the garage, something that



won't lead to a bill running into the thousands if I do get it wrong. I'd be very interested to hear you and your readership's views on this topic.

Cheers,
Alan Davison

Thanks for your letter Alan, and in many respects we agree with you – but don't be disheartened! That's why Classic Bike Guide rarely shows auction results, and also tries to give the smaller, cheaper bikes just as much space, like the 125s we've had over the last few months. For us, like you, it's about building, fixing and riding.

But it's not biking's fault, it's society in general. Envy has turned to jealousy, and money is, and has always been a way that many, wrongly, position people. How many people actually need a £100,000 Range Rover? Is it just to show others how successful they are? My nanny used to say: "A flash car or large house does not a gentleman make. A Spiv is still a Spiv, no matter what they wear"...

The classic car world has, in my opinion, been ruined by this infatuation with what something is worth. The truth is, we don't do bikes, or cars up for others, but for ourselves. So spend that time on a CZ125 (as I am), or that Morris Minor if you'll enjoy it once it's done. And if it's what you want, who the hell cares what anyone else says or thinks? And I think we'd all love to see your CB750!

Matt



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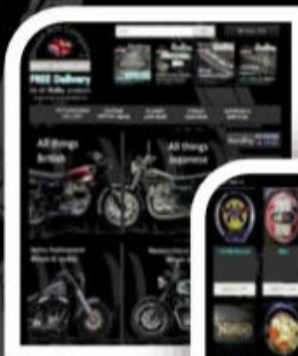
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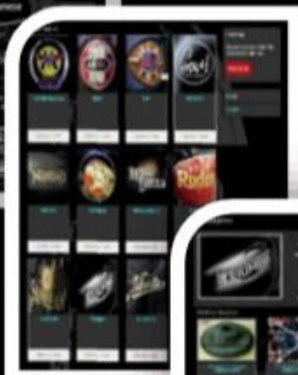
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Triumph 3TA

WORDS BY OLI HULME PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY CHAPMAN



WHAT IS IT?

Triumph's first and smallest unit twin



GOOD POINTS?

The looks, the ride and the engine



BAD POINTS?

Some of the original Lucas parts were of variable quality and the early handling was a little unpredictable

COST?

Restoration project:

Basketcase: £1500 (plus)

Good runner: £2500-4000

Concours/museum quality:

£5000



T HAD BEEN A FRUSTRATING DAY. A 350-MILE ROUND trip had been made to ride a small selection of classics. It had been a decidedly risky plan in any case given the time of year, but the weather forecast had been for a little light rain first thing, with things getting brighter later. However, when we arrived it rained. And rained...

Sometimes in torrents, sometimes in that nasty greasy drizzle that coats the roads with a mixture of water and spilled diesel, making things ultra-slippery. I'd manage to grab a few rides, but it was tough getting the best out of what was on offer.

There was a two-stroke trail bike that produced most of its power at 5000rpm. This was something of a challenge on the slippery road, as was the gearshift on a somewhat primitive old British single.

The skies began to clear a little. A diminutive 1965 Triumph 3TA was wheeled out into the weak sunshine. The roads hadn't really dried, but a proper ride was what was needed, and I wasn't convinced that an under-powered unit Triumph was going to cut it. The little twin hadn't been used in anger for a while, but after a splash of 95 octane was put in the tank and the carb was tickled, it started first throw of the kick-start.

Helmet and jacket were donned as it burred away happily. Although it looked tiny compared to Triumph's other unit twins, after slinging a leg over it didn't feel small once I was in the saddle. Admittedly, as a later model, it had a 30in seat height and 18in wheels, and it was a surprisingly good fit. The seat felt a little firm being of the sprung type which was popular in the mid-1960s before the invention of high-density foam.

Time to take it on the road. I pulled in the impressively light clutch and it snicked into first; and we were off. All those tiny frustrations that had built up all day just evaporated. According to legend, the 3TA wasn't supposed to handle thanks to the flimsy frame but this late model did, sweeping along at around 50mph beautifully. The gearshift was near perfect. The power delivery was as smooth as a very smooth thing. The controls, as they used to say, really did fall easily to hand. There were none of those archaic and arcane rituals you often have to become accustomed to on an old Brit which can spoil the initial riding experience.

On the road that firm seat was found to be more than capable of cushioning the behind, and this 55-year-old motorcycle felt entirely capable of hauling me around.

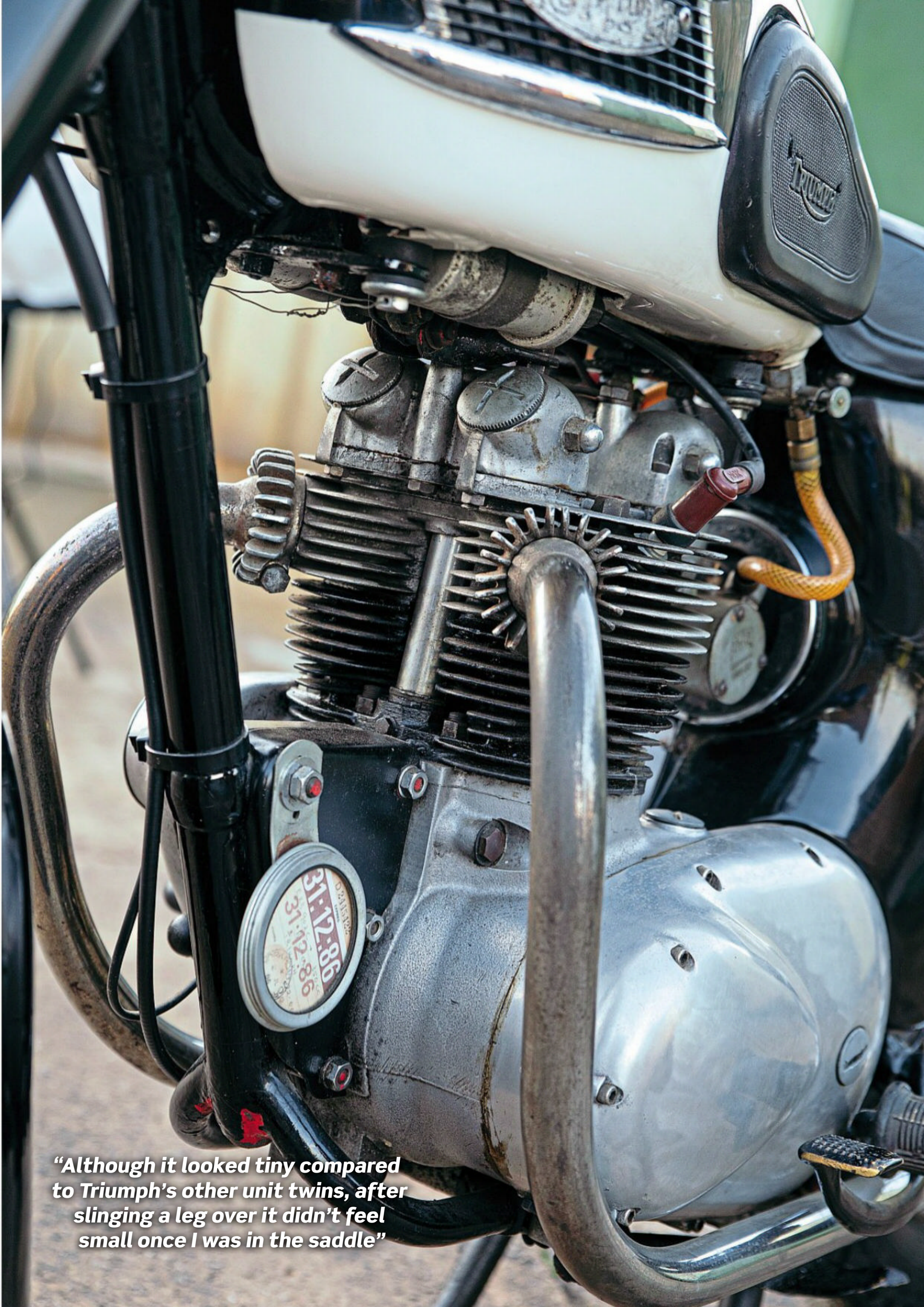
Now I might have been slightly biased, as I really do like my Triumph twins, but this was lovely. The first real contact I had with Triumph's offerings had been a when a mate in the sixth form bought a bathtub 350. Not bothering with such fripperies as insurance, road tax or indeed a licence, his £50 3TA cut something of a dash in the bike shed parked next to Fizzies and Honda 125s. I was smitten.

Years on, while pootling about on the tiny, allegedly under-powered little twin it made it me wonder just why anyone wouldn't want one in their shed. It's a little gem of a bike.

1957: TRIUMPH CHANGES EVERYTHING

In 1957, while most other manufacturers were persevering with the separate engine and gearbox arrangement for their machines, Triumph came up with the basis of a design that would last until the end of the 1980s – and the look continues into the Hinckley Triumph twin of the 2020s.

The 1957 engine was a 350. Triumph decided that the model it would go into would be called by two



“Although it looked tiny compared to Triumph’s other unit twins, after slinging a leg over it didn’t feel small once I was in the saddle”

names – it could be the 3TA, a continuation of the 3T branding used on their pre-unit 350, and it could also be called the Twenty-One, partly to mark the 21st anniversary of the establishment of the Triumph Engineering Company, and partly because in the USA, a 350 was in the 21 cu in class. The American obsession with not adopting the metric system survives to this day with Harley-Davidson model codes.

The new design became known as the unit construction engine. This meant the engine and gearbox sat in the same casings and the primary drive centres were fixed.

Apart from the casings and the primary drive arrangement the new engine wasn't that different from the old. It still had vertically split crankcases, a forged crank and a bolted-on central flywheel and external pushrod tubes. It was still dry sump with a separate oil tank and the gearbox held its own lubricant. The top end used a cast iron barrel which Triumph painted silver, so it matched with the alloy cylinder head. The valve inspection covers were screwed on and would work loose if the engine was revved hard, resulting in a number of imaginative solutions being found by owners. Ultimately the factory fitted small spring clips to hold them on to the twins.

Under the timing cover on the left was the oil pump and gears to the twin camshafts. Behind the block was a car-type distributor. This allowed the use of a single set of points with a condenser and a twin-lobed cam. Adjusting the timing could be carried out by rotating the unit. Below that there was a four-speed, one-down-three-up gearbox. Fuel got pumped in through a single Amal Monobloc. Air to this came through a rubber hose

from an oblong air filter attached forward on the left of vertical main frame rail.

The frame was a little flimsy – designer Edward Turner was never one to expensively over-engineer things. There was a single downtube and a single top tube, which curved downwards at the steering head and a dibble cradle at the bottom. This bore more than a little resemblance to the frame used on the Tiger Cub, which used the petrol tank to stop things flexing. The rear sub-frame was bolted on. In 1965 the 3TA got an extra tube from the top of the steering head.

At the front end the 3TA followed Triumph styling cues with a nacelle enclosing the headlight and speedometer, but the bodywork was the real surprise. The motorcycle press had been banging on about enclosure with an almost religious zeal. *The Motor Cycle* was so keen on the idea they designed their own. So, manufacturers bought into the idea, with Triumph including the 'Centurion's Helmet' front mudguard, so called because it looked like, er, a Roman centurion's helmet. At the back you got the 'bathtub' rear enclosure. This was made of two pressed steel panels sealed in the middle by a rubber trim. On the plus side this kept the road muck off your brogues and flannel trousers. It also made access to the rear end to deal with chain adjustment and punctures far more of a chore than it needed to be. The 7in brakes front and rear did the job (though they might lack a little power on 21st century roads).

In 1964 rear enclosure was partially dropped, with a conventional rear guard used in conjunction with a kind of half bathtub that swooped round the back of the engine. The

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: 348cc OHV vertical twin **BORE/STROKE:** 58mm/65.5mm **COMPRESSION:** 7.5:1 **GEARS:** four **WHEELS:** 3.25 x 17/18 **FRONT SUSPENSION:** Telescopic hydraulic forks **REAR SUSPENSION:** Twin shock swinging arm **BRAKES:** 7in single leading shoe **LENGTH:** 84in (2133mm) **SEAT HEIGHT:** 29in (745mm) **WHEELBASE:** 52in (1370mm) **DRY WEIGHT:** 345lb (156kg) **FUEL TANK:** 3 gallons (13.1l) **POWER:** 18.5bhp @ 6500rpm **TOP SPEED:** 80mph



original air filter was replaced by a pancake type. The distributor also departed, and the points were moved to the end of the exhaust cam at the front of the engine. There were two sets of points and thanks to a combination of poor design and equally poor manufacture by Lucas, setting the points was problematic. Eventually Lucas redesigned the points, but by the time they did the Triumph reputation had been badly damaged. As a 'touring' model, the 3TA retained the headlamp nacelle until the model was dropped in 1966.

A FASTER 350

A sportier version, sans bathtub, had been launched in 1962 without the nacelle and was called the Tiger 90 – presumably because Triumph were trying to convince buyers their littlest twin would top 90mph. It featured a pair of 9:1 compression ratio pistons, compared to the 7.5:1 of the 3TA. It revved harder too, claiming a max rpm of 7,500. In the last year of 3TA production it got 12v electrics too. The Tiger 90 bowed out in 1968, by which time development of its 350cc replacement, the stillborn DOHC Triumph Bandit 350, was well underway.

TRY A TRIUMPH

Thinking of buying a 3TA? Before the term was coined these were entry-level Triumphs. If you are lucky, a machine will have had a gentle life, but there's a



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fair chance it will have been hammered. Look out for normal evidence of butchery like rounded-off bolt heads and nuts. Try to get hold of original factory pictures of the model you are after to compare with machines in the flesh. There are thousands of restored bikes out there, but a 1960s factory photo of the bike should show you what it's supposed to look like – try searching www.mortonsarchive.com. Get an original factory workshop manual too, it'll save you hours of time looking at possibly inaccurate stuff on the internet.

Getting bodywork has always been an issue as a lot of the unpopular bathtubs and big front mudguards got binned early on. Glass fibre replicas can be found. Spares back-up generally is really good; all those normal day-to-day engine and cycle parts are readily available. If you want to keep your 3TA rolling, fit a solid-state regulator/rectifier, get rid of the points and fit electronic ignition and a three-phase alternator to provide more amps at lower revs. If you are no stickler for originality and would rather be able to stop, look out for a TLS front brake hub from a late 500 twin or Triumph/BSA 250 single.

A 3TA is easy to chuck about, a doddle to start and stylish as hell, in the later half-shrouded versions at least. Okay, so perhaps the early model with the bathtub rear end might be a little questionable in the looks department but you can't see it while you are on the move. Some people like those enclosures, anyway. The 3TA seems ideal for anyone who is short in the inside leg, feels uncomfortable hauling around something bigger or just needs something that's easy to start but isn't a modern retro.

If you haven't got a Triumph twin, and haven't owned one before, the 3TA has to be the cheapest way to Triumph twin ownership and if you are lucky, you'll end up with a cracking little bike. **CBC**

Thanks to Lawrence at Classic Motorcycles Ltd for the use of their lovely 3TA, which at time of going to press is still available. See our back page for details.

ALSO CONSIDER:

Norton Navigator/Electra

Not many other manufacturers built small twins, but Norton was the exception. The Navigator has enough performance for cruising the byways and excellent handling. The Electra was slightly bigger and had the benefit of an electric start. Light and agile, with great steering and stopping, both are worth a look.

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BSA B40

The B40 was similar to the 3TA in that it had a unit engine and modest workmanlike performance. Basically, a bored out C15, they are sound and usually reliable if treated kindly and understressed. Good spares availability. The sports SS90 version is now very rare.

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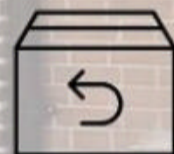
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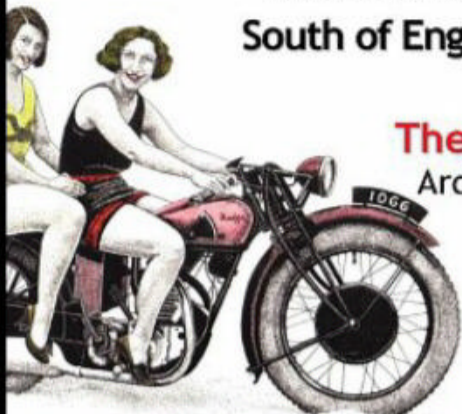
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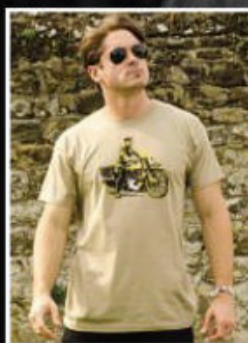
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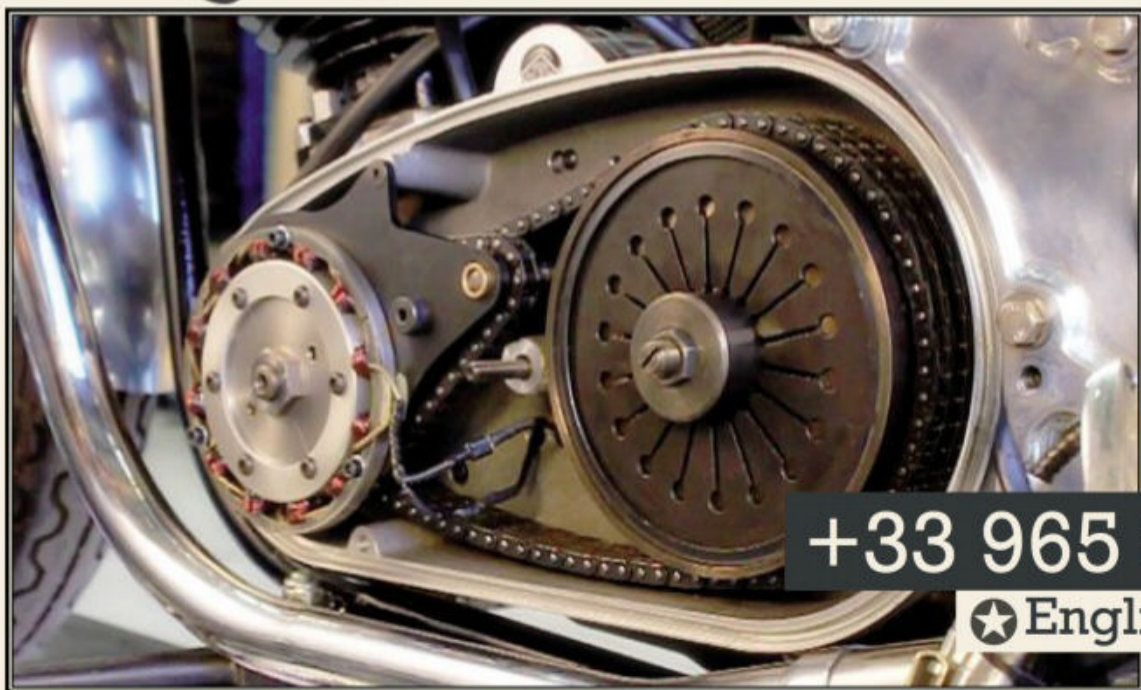


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THE DOUGLAS *Dragonfly*

It was meant to save the Bristol-based manufacturer, and failed. But the Dragonfly is much better than history would suggest. Phillip Tooth takes a closer look

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: PHILLIP TOOTH





WHEN IT WAS LAUNCHED AT THE LONDON Earls Court Show at the end of 1954, *Motor Cycling* magazine described the Douglas Dragonfly as 'one of the most advanced designs in its class, with performance to satisfy the enthusiast just as the layout delights the stylist'. Compared to bog-standard Brit singles, the transverse twin certainly looked special.

The Dragonfly featured Reynolds-Earles long leading-link forks designed by Ernie Earles – that's right, the same man who patented the fork that would grace the front end of thousands of BMWs. Also designed by Earles and manufactured at Reynolds Tube alongside the famous Norton Featherbed frame, the Dragonfly's arc welded cradle frame featured a large-diameter top tube and neat triangulation of the headstock and subframe. Girling shocks controlled the front forks and swingarm.

Earles, who owned a sheet metal press shop about eight miles from Reynolds, manufactured the huge 5.5 gallon fuel tank that appeared to extend forward beyond the steering head into a nacelle that carried the headlamp, speedometer, ammeter and light switch. Even the engine looked new, with streamlined rocker box covers and a light alloy casing covering the top of the crankcase. But like all postwar Douglas models, the 350cc boxer engine was developed from a wartime fan-cooled generator unit.

ON YOUR MARKS

More than 20,000 of these side-valve stationary engines were made; with both air and water-cooled versions available in capacities up to 1000cc. Designer George Halliday decided that his motorcycle version needed overhead valves. Unusually for a British



design it featured almost square dimensions of 60.8 x 60mm, with unit construction of the engine and gearbox and a single-plate, car-type clutch.

Oil was carried in the sump. There were two separate camshafts beneath the crankshaft, with a train of seven gears under a polished alloy cover driving the Lucas Magdyno that was mounted on top of the crankcase in front of the cylinders. Pushrod tunnels were cast into the underside of the iron cylinders and heads.

Douglas produced only one shaft-drive model, the 1934 Endeavour, an appallingly bad design, cobbled together when the company was virtually broke. As it often was. Halliday wasn't going down that road again, so he used a pair of bevel gears to turn the drive from the gearbox output shaft through 90 degrees so that the rear wheel could be driven by chain and sprockets.

Halliday was a man in love with self-damping, torsion bar springing. His first postwar Douglas – we'll call it the Mk.I – used torsion bar suspension at both ends. The rear torsion bars, housed in the lower frame tubes, worked fine. But the short leading link front fork simply wasn't good enough and it never went into production. Walter Moore (of Norton and NSU fame) came up with the idea of using square-section coil springs and conventional oil damping. The short leading links were retained and because the brake

torque arms were set parallel to the links, the forks didn't dive during breaking. This was the Radidraulic fork, often robbed from old Douglas machines in the Sixties and fitted to grasstrack racers.

This Mk.II version was named the T35 and finally went on sale in 1947, but low-speed vibration and poor performance demanded a rethink. It took prewar Douglas race ace, Freddie Dixon to turn the updraught of the original carburettors into a slight downdraught, rework the heads, fit flat-top pistons with cutaways for the valves, and reposition spark plugs before the officially-named Mk.III began to fly.

Tested by *Motor Cycling*, a top speed of 84mph was recorded – not bad for a 500, never mind a 350cc. Although it was probably a bike specially prepared by Dixon for the press, Douglas lost no time in advertising it as 'The Fastest 350 Sports Model on the Road Today'.

But time wasn't on the Bristol-based company's side. In 1949 it was revealed that Douglas was in debt to the tune of a whopping £660,000 (about 25 million euro!) and Westminster Bank had appointed a receiver. Importing Vespa scooters, before making them under licence, kept the business afloat.

Minor updates gave us the Mk.IV, and there would be two newcomers for the 1950 season. Finished in polychromatic gold and available in road or





“Each 90-Plus engine had to achieve 25bhp on the dynamometer, enough for 90mph - making it one of the fastest 350s on the market.”

Clubman's race trim and with a purposeful-looking 360mm diameter front brake, the 90-Plus had heavily finned heads and barrels to aid cooling and an engine that was individually assembled and bench tested. Each 90-Plus engine had to achieve 25bhp on the dynamometer, enough for 90mph – making it one of the fastest 350s on the market. The dark red 80-Plus was basically a 90-Plus that failed to hit 25bhp. Only 268 of the 80-Plus and 219 of the 90-Plus machines were built.

Although the full race spec 90-Plus was fast, it still wasn't quite a match for a BSA Gold Star. Out of a field of 100, there were 25 Douglases entered in the 1950 Junior Clubman's TT. Goldies took the top two places, with a Norton Inter finishing third. Yet the Douglas boys claimed fourth and fifth which, against much bigger factories, was no mean feat.

The Mk.V joined the line-up for the 1951 season. Plus-type exhausts, Burgess silencers and a new front mudguard were some of the changes, which hardly merited a new model name. At least the polychromatic blue or green paint, the same as used on the Douglas Vespa, added a touch of class and over 3000 would be sold.

Although the Mark series of twins could be fast and smooth, they had a reputation for leaking oil from just about every joint. When the factory asked owners via their dealer network what they wanted from a new Douglas, answer was a two-up touring motorcycle with a larger fuel tank, coil ignition, modern styling... and no leaks.

The Dragonfly engine is essentially a single-carburettor Mk.VI and both the crankcase and gearbox

are stamped /6. Updating the motor included discarding the bulky Lucas Magdyno in favour of Miller coil ignition, which made easy starting easier. The Miller alternator was mounted on the front of the crankshaft with the distributor bolted to the rear of the timing chest, protected by an aluminium cover that contributes to the clean lines of the engine.

The crankcase was stiffened internally with webs cast into the alloy. Because alloy heads and barrels used on some 90-Plus models suffered from extensive leaks at the joints and the steel retaining studs would pull when the engine got really hot under racing conditions, the Dragonfly stuck with cast iron cylinders. These were recessed 25mm deeper into the crankcase. Through-bolts clamped the heads and barrels to the crankcase as on the 90-Plus, with the latest Klingerite gaskets to keep oil inside.

Perhaps because the Dragonfly was designed as a tourer, the two Type 276 Amal carburettors of the Mk.V were replaced by a single Monobloc. Mounting the Monobloc above the gearbox meant that the inlet tracts measured a meandering 360mm, beginning as part of the clutch bellhousing and terminating in chrome plated steel tubes fixed to the cylinder head. Guess what? The carburettor suffered from icing in cold weather.

With over 168,000 visitors to the seven-day Earls Court Show, salesmen on the Douglas stand were soon filling up their order books. Full-page adverts appeared almost weekly in the pages of *The Motor Cycle* and *Motor Cycling*, attracting many more hopeful customers. But the Bristol factory didn't have the bikes to meet demand. The first production bikes weren't ready until September 1955. By that time, many would-be buyers had spent their money elsewhere. Available in both stone (light brown) and green or black and silver, the Dragonfly was originally priced at a few pennies under £200 – for the same money you could have bought a Triumph Speed Twin

and still had a few quid left in your wallet. That didn't stop the Bristol factory increasing the price to £225 in a desperate attempt to shift them. It didn't work, and in early 1957 the price was slashed to £195. The last batch was sold through London motorcycle dealers Pride and Clark for £160 a pop.

BARGAIN BIKE

John Cooper's 1957 Dragonfly is one of those Pride and Clark bargains. "My father Albert has one which he used to take me to rallies on when I was in junior school. He bought this bike for spares, but a few years ago I decided to restore it."

Now a sprightly 97 years old, Albert was a dispatch rider during the Second World War and landed in Normandy with his Ariel NH a few days after D-Day. He later served in Burma and West Africa. "My favourite DR bike was the Matchless G3L," he says.

Albert bought his Dragonfly in 1968 after it had been traded in at Balderstones of Peterborough. "It was only 11 years old but the gearbox was missing so I paid £20 for it," recalls Albert. "I got a new 'box from GD Brown Motorcycles in Surrey. They took over the Dragonfly spares when the company went bust and they are still the oldest Vespa dealership in the country."

With less than 10,000 miles on the clock the engine didn't need much to put it right and the cycle parts were in excellent condition, so they were freshened up with new paint. The seat was recovered and the handlebars, shocks, inlet manifold tubes and exhaust pipes rechromed. "You could still find new old-stock Burgess silencers then," adds John. "You'd be lucky to find a pair today."

All that was missing was the rear brake plate. "An old friend told me he had just what I was looking for. In the 1960s he used to race a special with a Dragonfly chassis, but wanted better stoppers than the 180mm diameter Douglas single-sided drums. The complete



hubs were still hanging on a peg in his workshop.” Ah... the brakes. What do you think of them? “Bloody awful!” they laugh together. And performance? “Next to zero! If it had been a 500 it would have been a good bike.” Handling? “Nine out of ten!”

DOES THE DRAGON FLY?

The Douglas advertising department certainly had a way with words. “If you like dash with dependability, plenty of power at your fingertips plus perfect control, the Dragonfly is the motorcycle for you.” But could you trust adverts in the Fifties any more than you can today? Let’s find out.

One of the first things that you notice is that the Dragonfly feels cumbersome to move around with a dead engine. It seems much heavier than a claimed dry weight of 166kg would indicate, and getting it up on the stand is a back-breaking, muscle-straining effort. At 690mm wide it is also 150mm broader than a 500cc BMW and the seat is too high. You would have to be on tiptoes to reach the ground if you have anything less than an average inside-leg measurement. At least the footrests, gear lever and handlebars are all fully adjustable, so you can get everything just right.

Easy starting is one of the Dragonfly’s strongest points. On with the ignition key, a tickle of the Monobloc and a half-hearted prod on the kick-start is all that’s needed before snicking into first. The easy-spinning 350 twin has a reasonable turn of speed. It’s not as fast as the earlier Mark series because, although the frame is lighter, the complete package is bigger and heavier. And that single carb set-up doesn’t help either. To get a move on you have to make full use of the ‘box and rev the engine hard. First gear will take you to 30mph, second to almost 50 and third past 60. Top speed is a shade over 70mph. Cruising at up to 60mph isn’t going to stress that tall fourth ratio, but if you let the revs drop it’s better to change down than let the motor slog.

While those performance figures wouldn’t have encouraged anyone to sign up for the Clubman’s TT, the Dragonfly is comfortable and the ride is smooth and vibration-free. At touring speeds the Dragonfly sips fuel at about 65mpg, so a full tank will take you 300 miles and still leave you with a gallon in reserve. And it doesn’t leak a drop of oil.

Those Girling dampers can be easily adjusted for preload with a C-spanner but the front and rear units (they are different lengths) are too firm. Lighter springs would make a huge difference. I’m not a fan of the Earles fork, whether on a Dougie or a BMW. Perhaps I’m too used to telescopics, but I think that the Earles front end feels a bit wooden. At very low speed the Dragonfly seems to wander but as the speed increases the handling comes into its own and long, sweeping bends can be taken flat-out.

I like to carry a spare inner tube on long trips and there is plenty of room for one in the Dougie’s toolbox. It is huge, and spans the full width of the machine. You could squeeze in enough tools and spare parts to rebuild the engine, an engineer’s vice, a packed lunch and a flask of coffee. But if you do get a puncture, make sure it happens near a bar because the rear wheel isn’t QD and it’s going to be a long job.

This is the motorcycle that was meant to save Douglas from going bust. It failed. Only 1570 were made before 50 years of motorcycle production ended at the Bristol factory in March 1957. It might not be the best 350cc tourer and it’s certainly not a sports bike but today the Dragonfly still attracts admiring glances. If you’re looking for something different then this could be it. **CBG**





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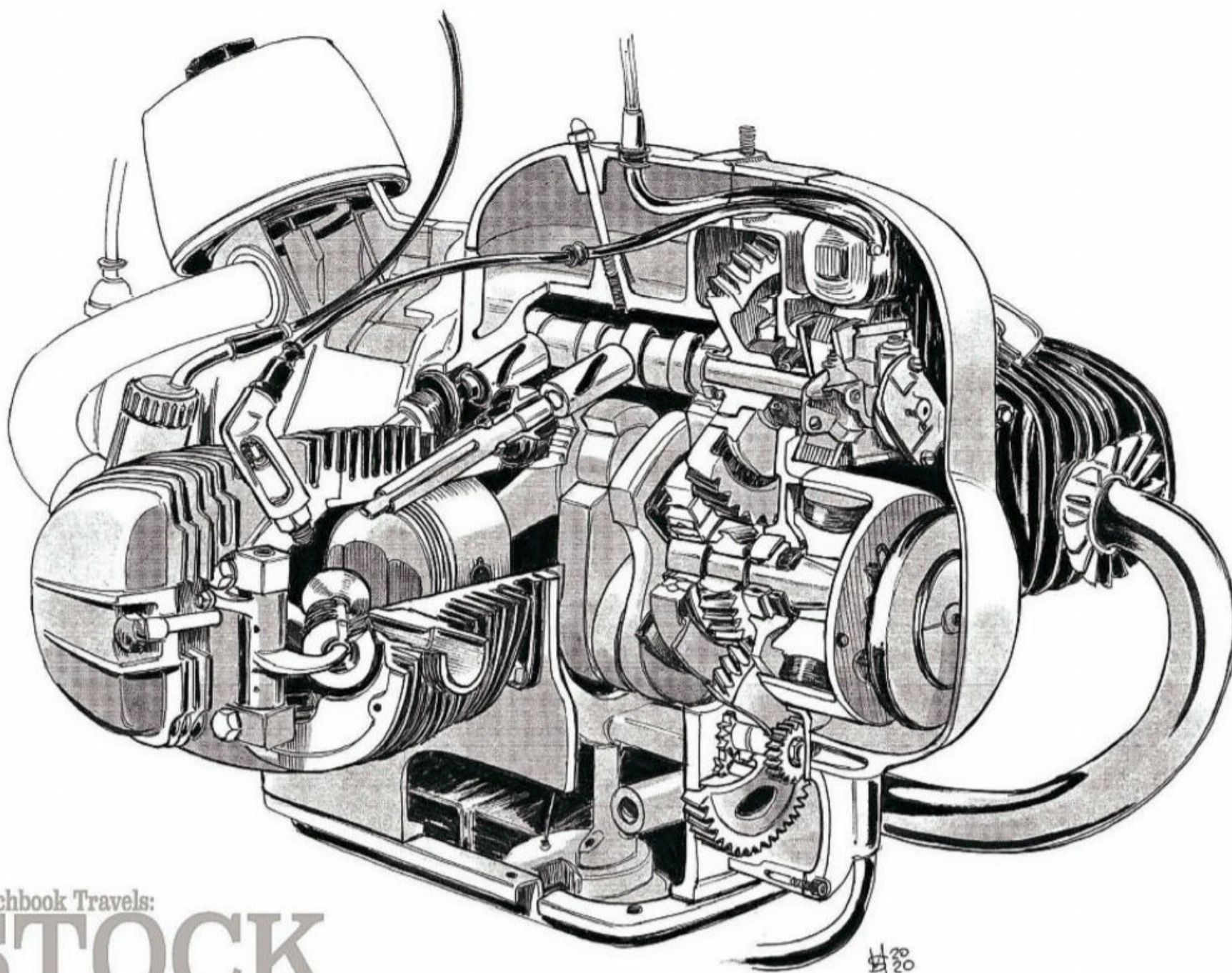


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BMW R69s

Illustrations and Words by Martin Squires



Sketchbook Travels:

STOCK
Motor Cycles

After The Second World War, the treaty of Versailles enforced a ban on Germany producing aircraft and aircraft engines. As a result in 1922, the head designer at BMW, Max Friz turned his attention to designing motorcycles. His choice of engine was one that had been used in various motorcycles before; the boxer engine.

The roots of this power unit can be traced right back to 1896 when German engineer, Karl Benz designed a new four-stroke engine. The design utilised a twin-cylinder design with horizontally opposed cylinders, in which the pistons both reached top and bottom dead centre at the same time. This synchronised motion of the two pistons was likened to two boxers trading blows, hence the nickname boxer engine.

This compact and reliable engine design would be used in various applications moving into the 20th century, including aviation, power plants and motorcycles. Initial configurations for motorcycles using the boxer engine mounted the unit with the cylinders running the length of the motorcycle; this arrangement regularly caused the rear cylinder to overheat due to lack of air flow. Max Friz thought laterally to solve the overheating issue and turned the engine through 90 degrees in order to expose both cylinders to open air. Not only were both cylinders now cooled evenly, the option for direct drive to the rear became a very easy implementation. With the crankshaft facing towards the rear of the motorcycle,

a shaft drive to the rear wheel resulted in a clean and smooth transmission of power, doing away with the more common chain and sprocket combination.

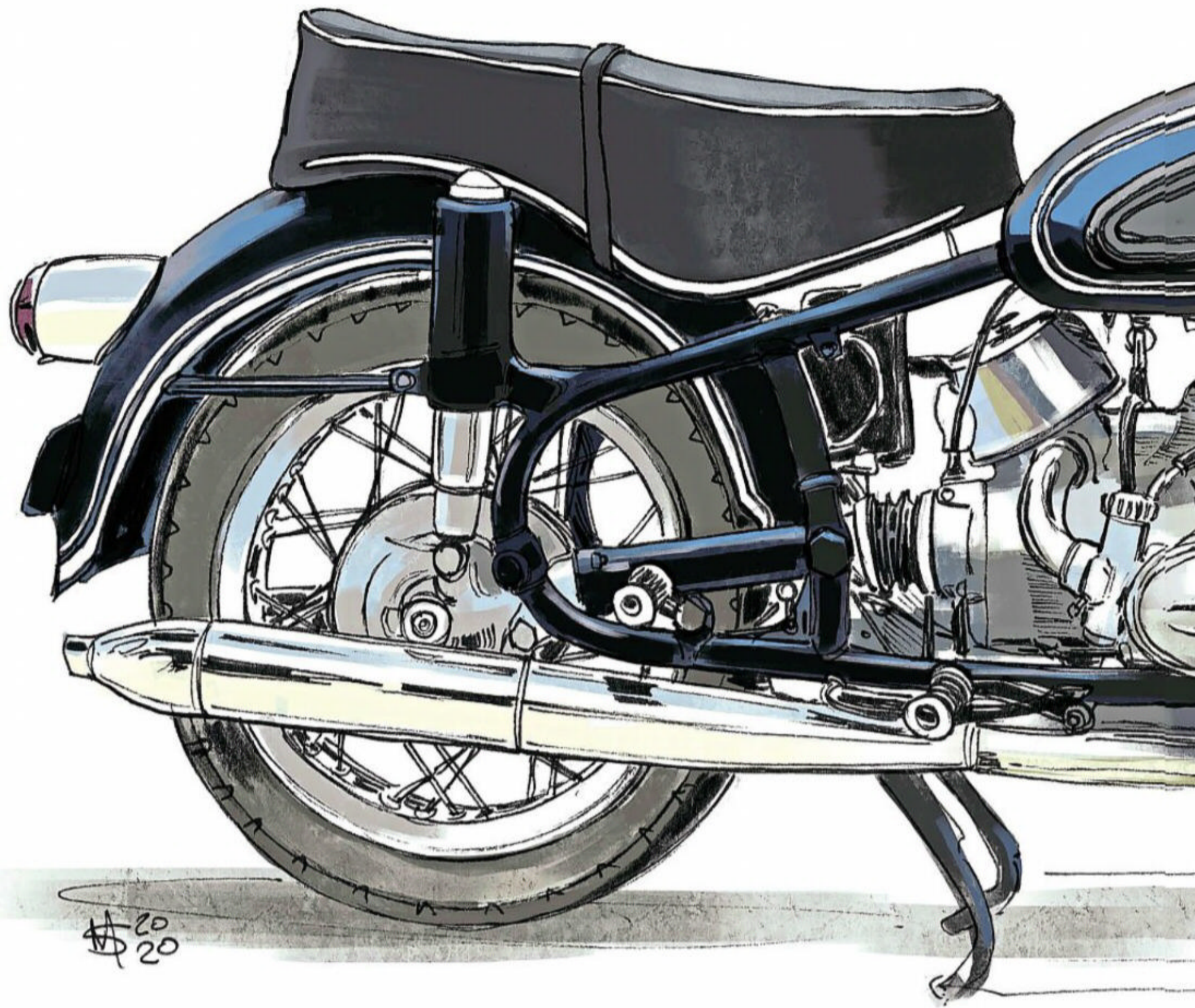
The first motorcycle made under the BMW brand was the BMW R32, released in 1923. From here onwards the boxer engine and shaft drive combination was constantly developed and became a mainstay in their motorcycle designs. Nearly four decades later the boxer engine was so developed that by 1960 BMW were now utilising a modular system which allowed for various engine sizes to be produced from the one core design.

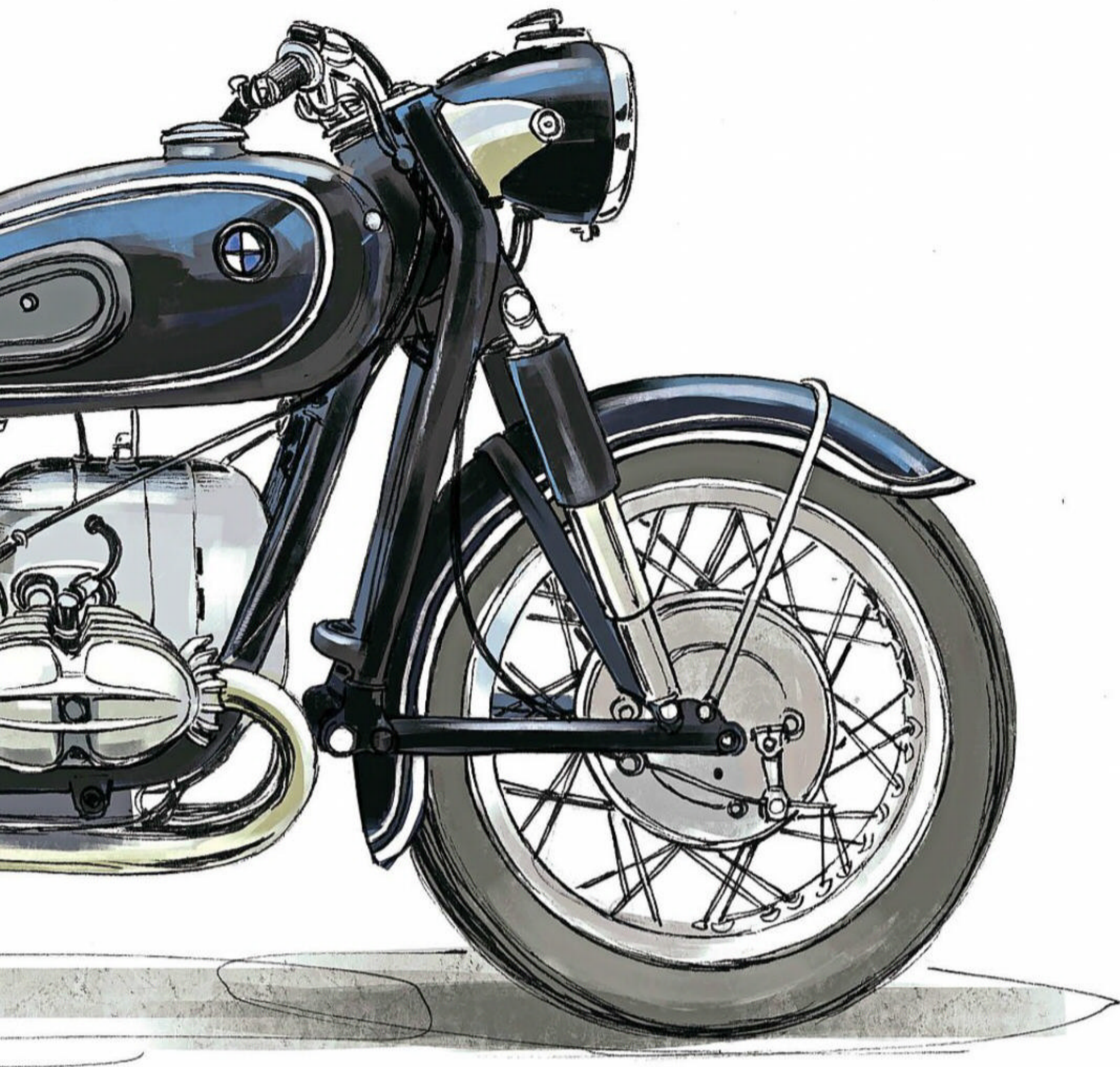
One of these engines was the R69S, a sports variant tuned with 9.5:1 compression and larger inlet ports. Gas flow was further aided by a larger air filter and a wider diameter exhaust tip on a less restrictive muffler. Crankcase ventilation was also improved for the S model with a rotary-disc ventilator. With closer ratio gears this all helped the R69S become the most powerful BMW twin to date, producing 42bhp at 7000rpm.

Designed as a sports motorcycle with touring capabilities, the S model made for a faster ride whilst keeping within the reputation of reliability that BMW had established. Their machines were seen as prestigious motorcycles with a smooth, quiet ride characteristic and a high quality finish. By this time BMW motorcycles were known for their touring capabilities as well, a reputation that came through various achievements in both sport and record breaking.

Above: BMW R69s engine cutaway

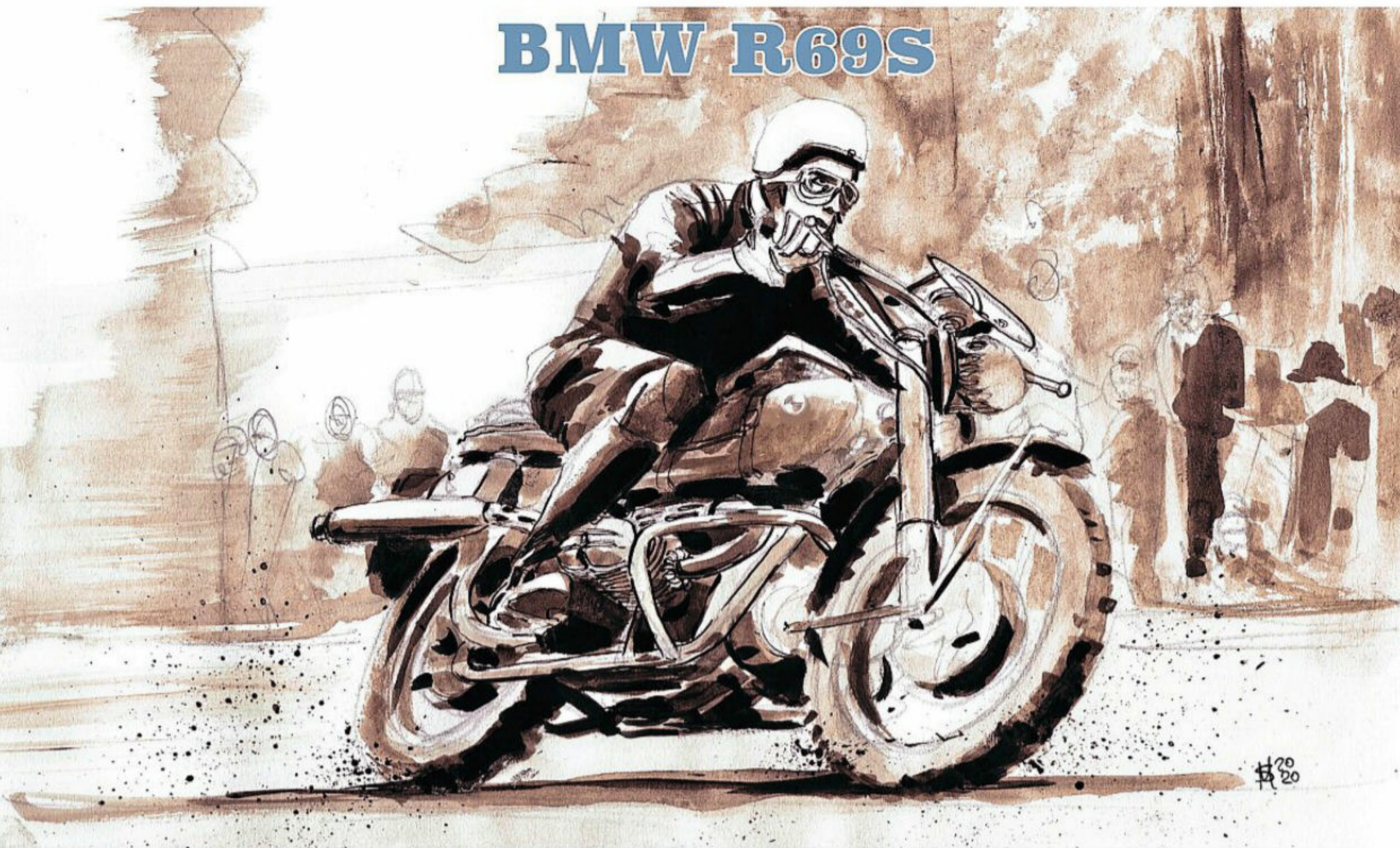
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References: BMWR69s_001	Sketchbook Travels: STOCK Motor Cycles BMW R69s	Drawing No: 001
Artist: MARTIN SQUIRES Date: March 2020		Amendment: 0

BMW R69S



In the 1950s BMW had much success with its road racing entries but by the end of the decade the company was approaching bankruptcy due to the expense of their car production. This had an impact on the motorcycle division with only 5429 machines being built in 1957, the majority of which were for export. The USA was an important market, with a need for reliable touring machines and BMW motorcycles ticked a lot of boxes for American riders.

Various events during this tough period for BMW helped keep their reputation for durable and reliable motorcycles. In June 1959 John Penton set a new coast to coast record, riding 3051 miles from New York City to Los Angeles in 52 hours and 11 minutes, on a standard R69 motorcycle. This was great publicity for BMW proving that their machines were more than capable for touring this huge continent.

Whilst emerging out of bankruptcy in the early 1960s due to support from major shareholder Herbert Quandt, BMW continued to further their reputation for reliability by switching their attention from the expense of road racing to the relatively more affordable endeavour of off-road sport. BMW entered a works modified R69S into both the German off road championships and the infamous International Six Days Trial (ISDT). Ridden by Sebastian Nachtmann, this highly modified R69S won both the 1960 and 1961 German off road Championships. Further success came in the 1960 ISDT, held in Austria, Nachtmann achieved the highest points out of 300 riders taking part, helping his team achieve third place. The following year when the ISDT came to Llandrindod, Wales, as part of a six man team Nachtmann won a Gold medal in the over 500cc class with the team winning the international trophy.

With heritage such as this, the R69S gained a reputation as a very capable and reliable machine. The versatility of the R69s was further proved by London based motorcycle dealers, MLG, who proved the possibilities of the sports model on the race track. Sporting a Peel dolphin fairing

the considerably modified R69S, with high compression Mahle pistons and shallow-taper megaphones, to name just a couple of the modifications, this racing special was taken to the banked circuit of Montlhery, just outside of Paris.

Riding the special a team of four riders: Ellis Boyce, George Catlin, John Holder and Sid Mizen broke the 12 and 24 hour records in March 1961. Velocette had only just broken the 24 hour record a week earlier breaking the 100mph mark with an average of 100.05mph. The MLG team achieved an average of 109.39mph over the 12 hours and 109.24mph over the 24 hours, clocking up 2621.77 miles along the way, at 34mpg. This record remained unbroken for more than a decade until a Kawasaki Z1 achieved 109.64 at Daytona in 1972. This shows that the 9mph BMW added to the Velocette record was a real achievement, testament to the tuning of MLG and nearly 40 years of development by BMW.

Further success in 24 hour racing came in 1960 when Rene Maucherat and Rene Vasseur won the Bol d'Or at Montlhery. In the same year the team of Peter Darvill and Bruce Daniels just missed out on winning the 24 hour race at Montjuic, BMW then supplied support for the team who returned in 1961 to win the same event. The same team also won at the Silverstone 1000km race. All this was a positive testing ground and promotional material for BMW who wanted to prove the persistent reliability of their machines.

BMW motorcycles would continue to be used extensively for touring and in endurance sport throughout the 1960s. By the end of the decade a Dutch BMW dealer, Henny Van Donkelaar took it into his own hands to provide customers with bored out, 730cc, R60 and R69S machines, using light alloy cylinders from West German specialist Wolfgang Kayser. Some of these machines were used in competition, especially in long distance trials and sidecar motocross, further testament to the durability of the BMW boxer engine.

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— The man that could win —
ON ANYTHING

Tony Rutter, father of Michael and four time world champion, has passed away. *Classic Bike Guide* remembers a remarkable talent with an appreciation of Tony's many achievements

WORDS BY GREG PULLEN PHOTOGRAPHY MORTONS ARCHIVE

TONY RUTTER LEFT US FOR THE great racetrack in the sky on the morning of Tuesday, March 24, aged 78. He was one of the finest racers of his era, as quick on short circuits as he was the roads, yet modest, unassuming and, perhaps, unappreciated as a rider who let his results do the talking.

He was a winner wherever he went, enjoying success on everything from a 125 to a 1000cc Honda. A statement from Tony's son Michael confirmed his dad's passing and paid tribute to his achievements:

"It is with sadness that after a period of poor health, dad passed away earlier today. I was with him when he died at about 2am and he was very peaceful.

"It makes me smile how dad lived his

life exactly how he wanted to and how he got away with so much!

"He will probably be best remembered for winning the world TT-F2 championship four times on a Ducati, as well as seven Isle of Man TT wins, nine North West 200 wins, and two British championship titles [the 1971 350 and 1973 250cc trophies], during his 22-year career.

"I'd like to say a big thank you to his carers for taking such good care of him, and also to his fans and supporters."

I was fortunate enough to interview Tony Rutter a few years ago in the company of a good mutual friend, Pat Slinn. Pat first knew Tony as part of a group of motorcyclists who would congregate in the Birmingham Repertory Theatre's car park, at a caravan

selling coffee, hot dogs and the like to nocturnal workers.

The Bull Ring – when it was still a livestock market and not a shopping centre – was another favoured meeting point before racing along the Hale's Owen bypass. Pat would go on to twirl the spanners for Tony as he knocked up four consecutive world championships for himself and Ducati, an achievement unmatched even by Carl Fogarty, whose four World Superbike championships came over a six-year stretch. And three of Tony's championships came on a bike he paid for himself.

Back in the early 1960s Pat worked at BSA and rode a Gold Star, as did toolmaker, Tony. "I became aware that there was another Gold Star rider in our group blowing all the rest of us into the weeds. It was Tony".

Tony inevitably turned to racing, the Gold Star being traded in for a Manx Norton. He was starting in an era when novices found themselves racing against legends from the start.

“Going back many, many years when I started racing I used to love Bob McIntyre; fantastic rider, although of course Mike Hailwood was brilliant. But I used to follow Bob round places like Oulton Park. He was like a mentor. And then Hailwood came along and blew everyone into the weeds. And then came back and blew everyone into the weeds again!” Tony laughed. But his first experience of racing at the Isle of Man TT, at the age of 20, wasn’t a laughing experience.

“First practice in 1965 was on the Manx Norton. A terrible Monday morning, five or six o’clock and it was pouring down with rain, mist and whatever else; you could hardly see the end of the Grandstand – it was still dark when you set off. Bill Stewart was there with me; he was an ex-Norton mechanic. I still knew him when he was 90 and he could still lift a Manx Norton engine, though he was ever so small. Only eight or nine stone, and he carried the engine under one arm. He helped me financially, although they paid you, possibly I think it was £100 to start a TT race – they didn’t pay you anything to race at the Manx – although out of the £100 you had to pay your entry fee.

“Anyway, we had a garage up at the Douglas Bay [hotel], went out on that Monday morning, conditions were absolutely terrible and I thought, ‘right, next bloke to pass me, I’m going to follow him, and that’s it.’ Deadly. I didn’t know what I was doing, and I bounced off every brick wall on that first lap.

“I had so many near ones until I got to Windy Corner and I smashed straight into

the brick wall. The footrest went through my ankle and made a mess of that. I went to hospital, they X-rayed it and said, ‘no you haven’t broken it’ so they sewed me up and two days later I took part in the Junior TT, finished 46th, which sounds terrible (49 riders finished, with another 44 DNFs including Mike Hailwood) but the majority of riders went out there to have a bit of a race and finish – and I finished. Thoroughly enjoyed it, and the result really set me up.”

Tony had caught the eye of Ray Petty, one of the most respected tuners of the Norton Manx engine, and an accomplished racer himself. But Tony suffered a string of DNFs on the TT’s unforgiving course, his sole finish over the next three years being a 26th place in the 1966 Junior TT. For 1969 Tony, like so many others, abandoned his Manx Nortons for a two-stroke.

“I had one of the first [Yamaha 350] TRs in 1969 which, like everyone else’s would seize up within about seven miles. Still air-cooled then with a big front drum brake, but everyone who wanted to win had bought one – Phil Read had bought one. In the Junior TT it felt like every one but mine had seized up by Ballacraigne, but I finished. 14th, I think.”

Tony’s memory was spot-on, his the third and final Yamaha home. Eight others failed to finish, including two entered by TT legends, Padgetts.

“I thought it was a marvellous bike, another world apart. A 350 or 500 Manx Norton was just a joke then. Then they were 10 a penny: not now, of course, but they were then; nobody wanted them. Everyone wanted a two-stroke.

“The other big change during my career was tyres. We had the Dunlop triangular tyres which were very, very good – well, I thought they were. Then we moved on to slicks, although I thought the rear slick was fantastic I used a KR124 treaded on the front which I thought was a marvellous thing with the slick rear. I was probably a one off but I thought that was a wonderful combination and I enjoyed racing them enormously.”

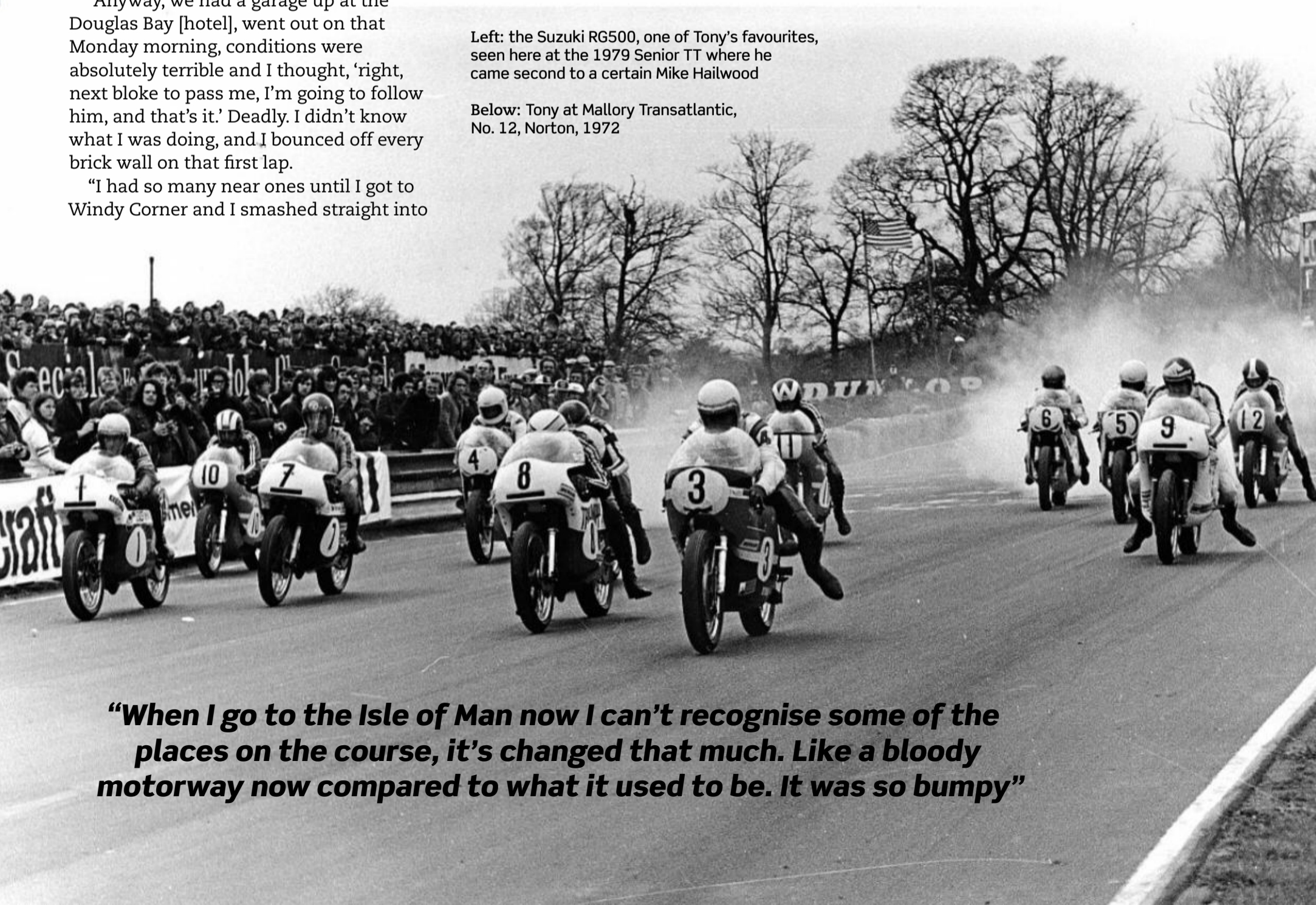
1973 saw Tony claim the first of his nine North West 200 wins with victory in both the 250 and 350cc races. He also won the Ulster Grand Prix Junior.

But perhaps Tony’s most impressive early result was the 1972 Junior TT, where he was runner-up to Giacomo Agostini on the MV Agusta. Tony then upped the stakes by winning the event the following two years, and at an average of 104.44mph in 1974, the fastest race average of a 10 race programme that was, admittedly dogged by bad weather. But that’s a constant threat at the TT, although Tony was less of a fan of other aspects of racing there over the years.

“When I go to the Isle of Man now I

Left: the Suzuki RG500, one of Tony’s favourites, seen here at the 1979 Senior TT where he came second to a certain Mike Hailwood

Below: Tony at Mallory Transatlantic, No. 12, Norton, 1972



“When I go to the Isle of Man now I can’t recognise some of the places on the course, it’s changed that much. Like a bloody motorway now compared to what it used to be. It was so bumpy”

can't recognise some of the places on the course, it's changed that much. Like a bloody motorway now compared to what it used to be. It was so bumpy; a big bump by the Methodist Church halfway down the Sulby straight I thought would break the frame, and another one outside the schoolhouse going into Ramsey.

"My favourite short circuit Brands Hatch was always the ultimate to me but on the roads it was always the Isle of Man – I used to love it, really did."

Tony's favourite bike may come as a surprise giving his association with svelte Yamaha and Ducati twins. "In 1979 I was sponsored on a Suzuki RG500 by Harold Coppock, and that was a damn good bike. I was second to Hailwood in the Senior but a lot was down to the fuel stops in those days.

You could use any refuelling system you had a mind to use in those days. We only had the basic system so I thought, being clever, I'll go for one fuel stop and had a big seven or seven-and-a-quarter gallon fuel tank. Well, the bike was just too heavy. If it went too far over I'd have lost it. And anyway, the refuelling took ages and of course Hailwood with his quick filler was

gone in probably less than 20 seconds. Mine was something like two-and-a-half minutes, something bloody crazy. But hey, I finished second to Hailwood and enjoyed it." Tony also set his fastest ever lap of the TT course at 112.32mph.

"Anyway the RG500 was a beautiful bike, a proper Grand Prix bike. But they were so expensive to run. Harold Coppock was a chicken farmer, a rich man, and he could afford it, but the engines were so expensive to run. The crankshafts needed replacing after 500 miles, and were enormously expensive. Then you were replacing pistons and cylinders and all that. It was so expensive in those days compared to what had gone on before. And of course the new parts were always bang up to date. But a beautiful bike to ride – fast and reliable."

Away from the TT, Tony's short circuit speed made him a front runner in every 250 and 350cc British Championship race and, in a remarkable show of versatility, also on big four-strokes, riding the JPS Norton in 1973 and contesting the World Endurance Championship in 1977 with Honda Britain. He also finished fourth overall in the 1978 British Formula 1

Championship whilst riding for the Mocheck Honda team.

Yet the best was still to come. Pat Slinn was now working with Steve Wynne at Sports Motorcycles, having been part of the TT and Ducati's revival with Mike Hailwood.

Initially promised a 600 Racing Pantah (what we now call the TT2) by Ducati, they chose Tony to race in the 1981 TT Formula 2 race. But Ducati decided to keep the bike for the Italian championship, instead sending a tired bench test motor, leaving Steve and Pat to create a home brewed special.

Rutter wasn't an obvious choice of rider, a few months from his 40th birthday and five years from his last top flight victory. Although he has been described as "a rider who could win anywhere, riding anything" his successes had really been Yamaha two-stroke based, a flirtation with the John Player Norton team convincing many he was a TZ specialist. Especially at the TT, which was where Sports Motorcycles





ABOVE: 1978, Brands, Formula 1, Yamaha



LEFT: 1978, Tony chases Dennis Ireland, both on 750 Yamahas

BELOW: 1979 Senior TT, Tony chases Mick Grant and Alex George

Tony Rutter's greatest races with Pat Slinn

1: 1984 ISLE OF MAN FORMULA ONE TT

The engine used in Tony's Formula 1 entry for this race was the one that Ducati gave to us for the 1983 Daytona battle of the twins (BOTT) and 200 mile races.

This engine still had cast iron cylinder liners, the cylinders with the chrome lined bores not yet having arrived from Ducati's suppliers. However by the TT we had the chrome bore liners, which was fortunate.

During practice the engine was using oil and smoking badly, so I removed the cylinders and discovered that the oil control ring on the rear cylinder had broken and the front cylinder one wouldn't move in the piston ring groove. I contacted the factory and they air freighted me some revised rings. Then I found the engine oil had small metallic parts in it so I had to completely strip and rebuild the motor.

It was ready for the final Friday evening's practice, and the bike was fine. Tony told me that he didn't think that he would finish because of the noise that bounced off the walls as he travelled through Kirk Michael!

Tony finished third in this race behind the factory Honda's of Joey Dunlop and Roger Marshall. Tony's average speed for six laps, including pit stops, was 109.43mph; his fastest lap (the last) was just short of 112mph. This in my opinion was TR's finest ever race. Tony must have been pleased because he bought me a drink!

2: 1983 DAYTONA 200

We used one of the very first 750cc Pantah based racing engines with cast iron cylinder liners. Tony had already finished third a couple of days before the "200" in the BOTT race. Tony was determined to do well in this race as it offered a lot more money than the BOTT.

Tony raced the Ducati with his usual determination. I could tell that he was trying because he was really tucked in as he came off the banking. We had one refuelling stop during the race. After I had signalled to Tony to come in for fuel I had to run from the signalling area to the pit to refuel him, we only had a plastic can and a funnel! The factory teams had all kinds of quick fillers.

Tony finished 21st in this race, won by Kenny Roberts on a factory Yamaha. Tony's was the first four-stroke to finish, with all the people in front of him on either full factory Yamaha, Honda or Suzukis, or dealer supported bikes. People like Freddie Spencer, Ron Haslam and Doug Polen finished behind Tony. I think that the money that Tony had won for finishing 21st was three times what he had won for finishing third in the BOTT race. I think that he paid for the meal that evening!

3: MOST DIFFICULT

Perhaps the 1981 Formula 2 TT, or maybe any of the F1 and F2 world championship meetings. It was always an honour and a pleasure to build and watch Tony race a Ducati or a Yamaha. TR always gave of his best.



needed him to race a Ducati with TZ proportions.

Steve Wynne remembers the decision, and his lack of optimism. "Why Tony? He was a great rider and a friend of Pat's and spoke with the same funny accent" – which he doesn't really – "Pat will have recommended him, and made the introduction.

"Did I think we would win? Not really, but I was always full of hope and up for a challenge. I seem to remember that a Pantah-engined bike blew off the works Grand Prix Honda in Italy, so I suppose there was some basis for expectations."

And not just any Honda – it was the "oval" piston NR500 that Honda developed in the hope of beating the two-strokes and only started to show promise when Maxtons' Ron Williams took over the chassis development. Ironically it was Ron who also waved his magic wand over the written off Pantah with an engine rebuilt by Pat that became Tony's 1981 Formula 2 TT ride.

Ron completely rearranged the four vertical frame tubes between the Pantah frame's horizontal rails, and then added another each side. It now looked closer to a TT2 frame, but the most noticeable change was to make the rear shock absorbers almost vertical. Tony thought it made it look like a motocross bike, especially with the high level exhaust, but grew to love it.

"On a Wednesday, I think it was, we took it up to Oulton Park. I only managed three

laps and it was all over the place. I thought 'we haven't got a chance of finishing, never mind anything else'. Then the pistons seized so I only managed to do three laps.

"Ron Williams had the bike back, listened to what I said to him, modified the frame, while Fred Hadley organised the pistons and cylinders. Pat Slinn built the engine and the week before the TT we went to Aintree for a final test. Went to the Isle of Man, still thought 'I'm not going to do a lap on this', but it was just a fabulous bike. Broke the class lap record in first practice. It never broke down, handled beautifully: it was a miracle, a lovely bike.

"After the win Ducati promised the earth, but it never happened. Still, we had the TT2 for the second and final 1981 Formula 2 World Championship at Dundrod in Northern Ireland. It was much faster than the Pantah, I thought 'this is the way to go': lovely bike, very quick, very reliable; that's what made that bike, the reliability. The TT1 was even better, though of course the works Hondas had moved on. Getting a third place behind them at the TT and at Villa Real was probably my best achievements. We had maybe 80 horsepower and Honda had 120 plus. And Honda had this amazing refuelling system, and Joey would be in, refuelled, new back tyre and out in about four-and-a-half seconds. We had a fuel can and a plastic funnel!"

But even more remarkable was that Tony won three of his world championships on a

customer version of the Ducati TT2, and he paid for it himself. The 748cc motor fitted to it for Formula 1 races was given to the team by Ducati to use at Daytona in 1983 (see p57) but even that needed a rebuild. With Pat often his only companion, the pair toured Europe in a van, sometimes sleeping in the open air."

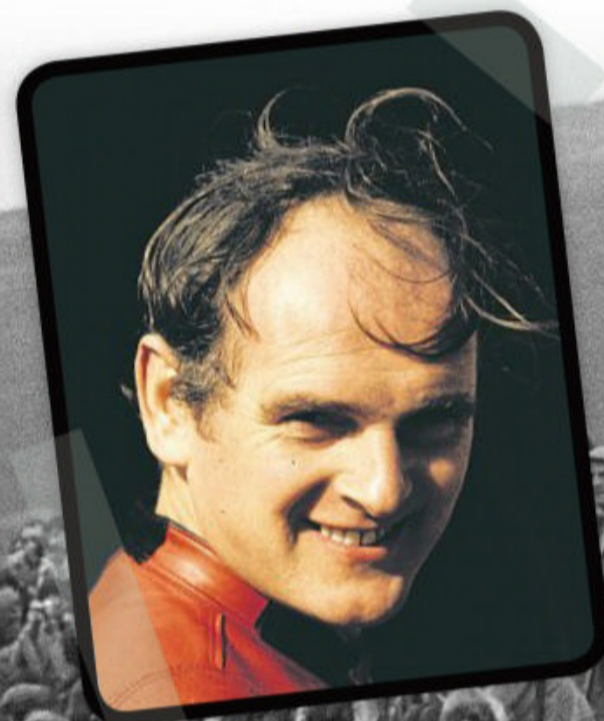
Although there was short circuit success, it was on the public road courses that Tony excelled, winning seven TT Races between 1973 and 1985.

A fantastic career was cruelly cut short by a horrific accident that almost killed him at Montjuic Park, next to Barcelona, in 1985, although he recovered and continued to ride in the TT until 1991. The race at Barcelona was one of just two he failed to finish with the Ducati, falling on oil spilt from a blown Suzuki GSX-R750.

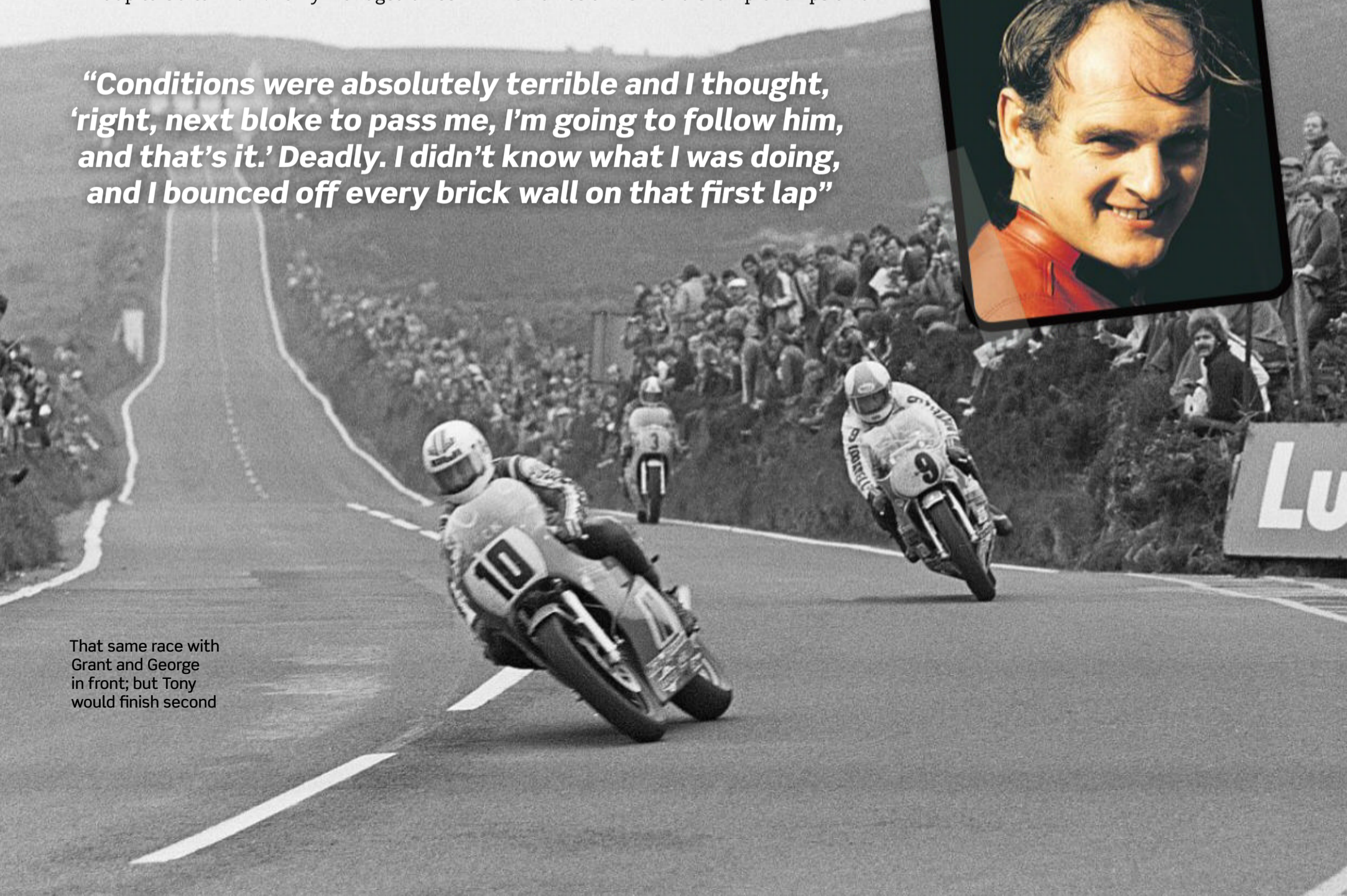
He leaves a remarkable legacy, one that too few recognise, from a golden era when world championships could still be won on a motorcycle bought off the shelf – as long as you had Tony Rutter's talents. **CBC**

Tony Rutter 1941-2020

"Conditions were absolutely terrible and I thought, 'right, next bloke to pass me, I'm going to follow him, and that's it.' Deadly. I didn't know what I was doing, and I bounced off every brick wall on that first lap"



That same race with Grant and George in front; but Tony would finish second



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Café Correcto

James Cracknell turned his skills in restoring classic cars to this wonderful Moto Guzzi. Adam Bolton has a go and reports back, lucky man!

PHOTOGRAPHY: SARA ZINELLI

WORDS: ADAM BOLTON





MANY RIDERS, AS IN THE PAST, HAVE TAKEN a standard motorcycle, maybe new, maybe old, and invested time, money and their ingenuity to produce a personal statement. A machine that – whatever its individual idiosyncrasies – immediately creates an impression of speed and purposefulness.’

Mike Clay’s words in his 1988 book ‘Café Racers’ explain eloquently and concisely the reason why beautiful motorcycles like the glimmering Guzzi in front of me exist at all. Café racers because these bikes were – and are – used for short, sharp speed trips from one legendary coffee bar to another. Places like The Ace Cafe, now of course once again a mecca for the rockers of today, The Busy Bee, Johnsons and the Dugout, all became watering holes and meeting places for the ton-up boys of the day.

Stripped down Triumphs, BSAs and Nortons with clip-on ’bars and racing tanks were tools of choice for those who wanted to experience speed and make a personal statement at the same time. Individuals like Paul Dunstall and Dave Degens were the driving force of café racerdom in the 1960s, and rightly so, as café racers represent the individual, not the corporate monster.

However, some factories felt compelled to produce their own café racers, and certain Ducati and Guzzi models in particular, such as the Ducati 750 Sport and the Guzzi V7 Sport arguably redefined the genre. ▶



Suitably enough then, I first came across James Cracknell's Moto Guzzi special on Italian Day at the fabled Ace Cafe some years ago. The forecourt was packed with Italian bikes of all makes, styles and ages, and there was some priceless machinery on show.

I was sitting on the wall sipping a coffee as they did back in the Sixties, when the silver Guzzi café racer pulled up, its noise attracting as much attention as its good looks. The Guzzi easily stood out for all the right reasons, and it drew admiring looks and comments. James had ridden it down that morning from his home near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, a 300-mile return trip that proved the bike just wasn't some sparkly show stopper but a reliable and quick motorcycle.

We met up at the family run garage near Bury where James works as a motor mechanic and also runs the motorcycle MoT side of the business. A well-used Guzzi California 850 parked in one of the workshops gives me the idea that James's special was also born of an extension of a passion for the Italian V twins. "I've had that Cali for 25 years," confirms James, "and covered more than 50,000 miles on it. It's been more reliable than my 1965 Triumph T120, that's for sure, and I've owned that for 19 years. I really appreciate the simplicity of these Guzzis, and I like the chunky engine that is so over-engineered."

The Guzzi bug bit hard and another bike was soon purchased. "A 1976 T3 came up for sale. It had had one owner from new, who'd crashed it at some point and replaced the frame, but didn't manage to sort out the documents properly. He was returning to his

native Australia but wasn't allowed to take the bike, so I bought it cheaply. I put it in a shed for six years and then eventually decided to get it going. It didn't take much to get a V5 and age related plate for it," smiles James.

The difference between the bike that James purchased, and what it looks like now, could not be greater. Transformation from ratty, tatty and corpulent tourer to lithe, light and fast sportster has been a process that has asked four years of patience and clearly quite a few pounds of James's hard-earned cash. The result is stunning, and a credit to James's mechanical and engineering skills, and in particular his attention to detail. Why a café racer though? Aren't Guzzis better at touring?

"It was a thought process that began with a friend who knew someone who had an alloy tank for a Guzzi. I've always loved how those two big Guzzi pots stick out from beneath the fuel tank, so thought an alloy tank would be ideal and the rest of the look followed from there. It's a traditional café racer but based round a Guzzi rather than a Triumph or Norton," enthuses James.

"I was also inspired by an old feature in a magazine that compared a Guzzi café racer with a Triton, and they came out level pegging. Difference is I can ride the Guzzi across Europe and not worry about it breaking down," he said.

While the Norton Featherbed frame may traditionally have been the starting point for the building of countless Tritons over the years, the low and stiff Lino Tonti-designed frame also has a reputation for excellent handling. A hotted up Guzzi motor compounds the low centre of gravity and gives V-twin torque and reliability. The factory V7 Sport racers proved this with race wins and speed records won in the early 1970s. The alloy tanks so beloved by café racer builders reflect the raw, unpainted racer look, and it was the starting point for James.

Owner of the alloy tank was Roger Powell of Guzzi specialists Astico Moto, and after some umming and aahing, sold it to James for £150. "The tank didn't really fit properly, so I stuck it under the bed and got on with stripping the bike down in the meantime, as I knew I'd be best off having a rolling chassis to begin with," says James. Roger also supplied a used front but original Borriani rim, and James bought a new 2.50 18in alloy Akront rear rim to enable him to fit at least a 130 tyre on the Guzzi, as opposed to the 110 choice found as standard.

"This meant cutting out a small part of the swinging arm to allow for the wider tyre," says James, "but it's worth it for the improvement in handling and tyre choice." Hubs were blasted and powder coated, and wheels rebuilt with stainless spokes and nipples by Derek Yorke at Essex Wheels. Luckily for James, the donor T3 was already wearing a set of 38mm Marzocchi forks, probably from a Ducati 860 or similar, but they're far better than standard Guzzi forks. They still needed work though, as the fork tubes were too long for the Guzzi's low frame and had to be modified for the lower profile special. James also reprofiled the T3 top yoke, removing the ugly handlebar brackets and cutting off the lugs for the clocks.

"Lots of evenings spent filing and polishing," laughs James. "I also had to have the Guzzi bearing carriers turned down to fit the Ducati front end, and a friend made up some stainless spindles, complete with imperial threads: unheard of on a Guzzi!"

The frame, which had been tastefully hand-painted



**"It was a thought
process that began
with a friend who
knew someone
who had an alloy
tank for a Guzzi"**



in Hammerite by its previous owner, was blasted clean and roughly primed as James knew he'd eventually have to have a dry run to check all fitted okay.

James then turned his attention to the motor, which Roger was put in charge of. The standard T3 engine is 850cc, with a heavy flywheel, small valves in the heads and 30mm Dell'Ortos. A reliable, but slowish lump.

James wanted something more, so decided on a blueprinted motor based on an up-to-date Guzzi Le Mans 950 spec. Larger valves, competition springs and guides were fitted to the T3 heads, which were also treated to harder seats for unleaded use. They were also given the twin plug treatment to aid combustion. Inlet tracts were enlarged to suit the 36mm Dell'Ortos which were to be fitted.

A lumpier than standard P3 cam, ideal for fast road riding was fitted, and new 950 barrels and pistons added. The crankcases were machined out to accept the larger size cylinders, and the bottom of the barrels skimmed to raise compression. The T3 crank was found to be in excellent condition, as were the main bearings, so new shells were installed and the standard rods replaced. The experts at Bassett Down balanced the whole lot, and unusually, the crank had to have weight added to it.

"Apparently, it was an earlier type T3 crank, which

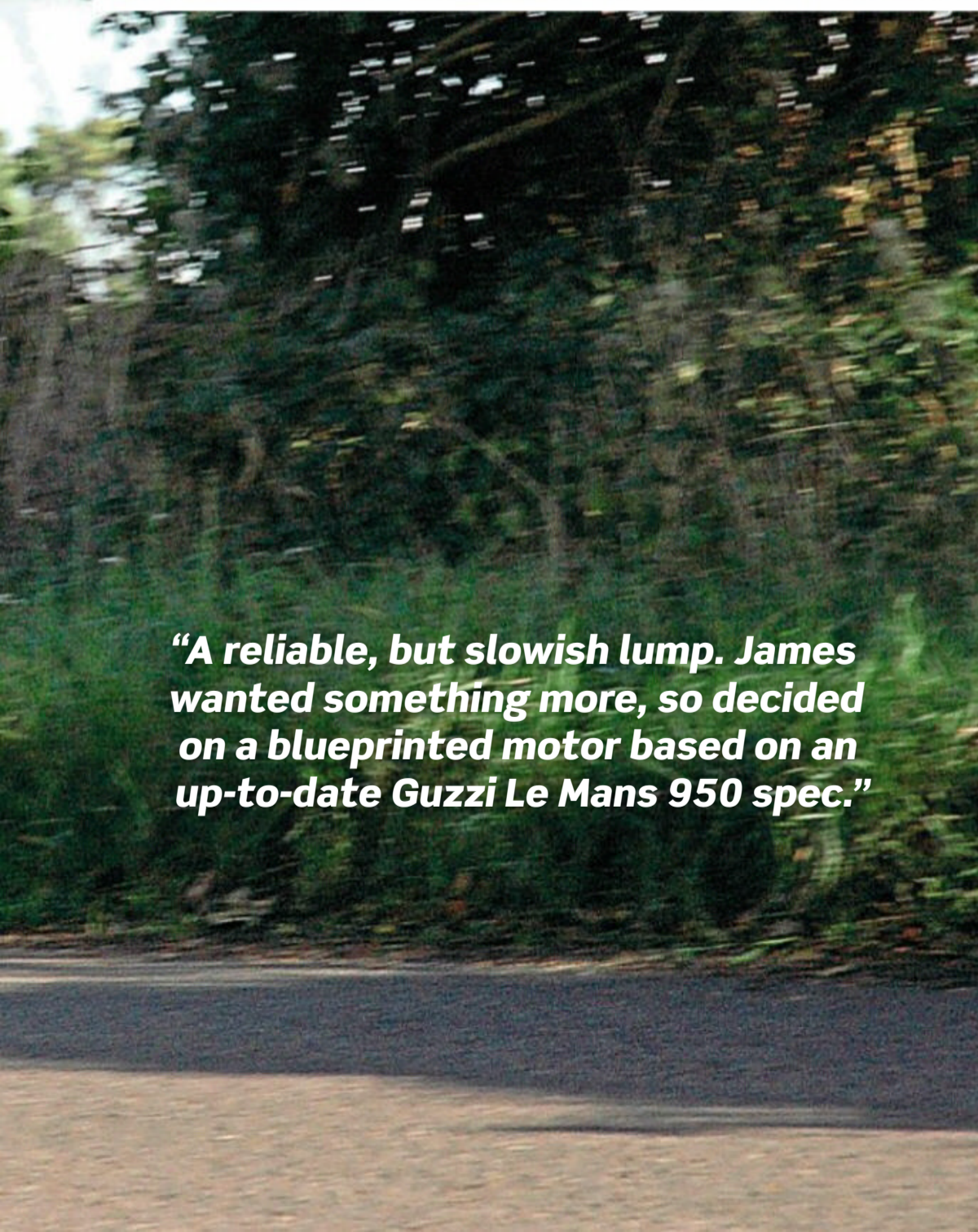
was lighter than the later ones. Once that was sorted, Roger replaced the crank for me and I built the rest," says James. James purchased a new Le Mans flywheel, which is lighter than that of the T3, and fitted a later and lighter Guzzi clutch. A new timing chain and tensioner and advance/retard unit completed the build.

A café racer needs a fast motor but also needs to look 'the business', and James's Guzzi looks just right. I've seen many Guzzi café racers over the years, and the factory produced their own gorgeous versions with the 750 sports models in the early 1970s. But the lines of this bike are just perfect.

"I wanted it to look right from the beginning, and in fact, most of the time has been spent on getting it to look just right," says James. "I spent a lot of time on the seat, as I didn't see one ready-made that would suit. I had to make some plywood formers, and then with the help of a friend, rolled the seat base in sheet aluminium. I wanted a Manx style seat base, but it had to sit right on the rear frame tubes, which I didn't want to cut off. After many hours of bending and shaping, I was happy, and cut the foam myself, then GB Upholstery of Bury (01284 388777) finished it off beautifully. I cut down the T3 mudguard by six inches. The front guard was something Roger had lying around."

Side panels are in polished aluminium, shaped





“A reliable, but slowish lump. James wanted something more, so decided on a blueprinted motor based on an up-to-date Guzzi Le Mans 950 spec.”

like the triangular toolboxes found on the Guzzi V7 Sport, and after having brackets fitted by James, fitted perfectly.

Eventually the bike took shape. Two pack paint on the frame and other parts was applied by Wayne Green Body Repairs of Rougham (01359 272555).

“They were great,” says James, “as they also knocked out the dents in the front mudguard and headlamp rim, caused by me on the buffing machine!” James did all the polishing himself, and made a fine choice in having chrome parts stripped and then nickel plated, giving a shiny but not over the top finish to the bike. The swoopy, one-off exhaust system was made by ace restorer and fabricator Nick Paravani of Attleborough, Norfolk, from photos of an Imola system found on a friend’s Guzzi. Rearsets are by Tarozzi, and the rear shocks are Konis, rebuilt completely with new seals by James. He also sourced the rear light that was sitting around his workshop.

“It’s an old bicycle dynamo, with a V7 lens added to it,” explains James. He also fabricated various brackets himself – to stiffen up the front mudguard, for hanging the twin output Dyna coils from the frame, and the neat bracket and lugs that allow the seat and take to locate firmly and neatly. Other parts that required machining were completed by J W Engineering, Rougham.

Seeing the end of this complete rebuild in sight, James had to then rewire the Guzzi, stripping it of its extraneous spaghetti. Hinckley Triumph switchgear is a patriotic and efficient choice, although no indicators in the pure café racer tradition means less to go wrong. Newtronic electronic ignition was installed at first, but it broke, so James has reverted to points. Brakes were overhauled completely, but the Guzzi linked

system that you either love or hate retained. "I like it," says James adamantly. James's attention to detail is incredible. The wiring is neatly held in place by stainless P-clips where required, and the chrome brackets that hold and guide the clutch cable are a great idea. "Harley accessories," admits James. The clock brackets that James fashioned from ally plate are beautiful, and every grommet, fixing, screw, nut and bolt sits neatly and harmoniously with each other on this Guzzi. This motorcycle is a work of art.

The net result of four years of work, long evenings and weekends – "my partner Zolii has been somewhat of a workshop widow, but fantastically supportive," James adds – is a very special motorcycle, but it's used often, having made trips to the IOM TT and so on. Riding it is a treat. I'm used to my own 750 Guzzi, but this special seems to have nothing much in common – in fact it's more like sitting atop a Jap two-stroke 250 than an air-cooled Italian V-twin.

Throttle pickup is unbelievably quick and precise, and the momentum of the lighter flywheel is far less intrusive than on a T3, allowing quick snicking through the gearbox. The light clutch helps matters, and the whole bike feels light and responsive. Having a big sticky Bridgestone BT45 back tyre on the Guzzi is fun, so I can throw the bike into bends with abandon, as the excellent forks really add to the surefootedness of the excellent frame and suspension combination.

I would have preferred, in genuine form-over-function caff racer tradition, a rather more radical angle of the clip-ons that the bike currently wears, and James agrees, but the current, flatter bars do make it a comfy ride. On straights, I just have to wring the throttle, and the Guzzi just pulls and pulls in any gear. The pit of torque seems bottomless, and it's an exhilarating experience.

The original Veglia clocks are not too accurate, but you can virtually rev it off the end of the range. After all, it's more or less a new bike, and wants to be ridden hard.

"It'll probably do 125mph as it's still on standard T3 cruiser gearing," says James, "but when I go out with friends on their Jap bikes, they still have to drop gears to keep up! The acceleration compared to my California is incredible, and that's more fun than worrying about top speed."

James is rightly very happy with the result of his labours, and seems almost surprised with the end product. "I

wasn't really sure how it would run, but it's great; no glitches or no flat spots. It's really satisfying to ride something you built yourself, and the best bit of the four years' work was putting the 'Moto Guzzi' stickers onto the tank at the end. I love the way it all looks. 'The public agrees, as the Guzzi won 'Public's Choice' and 'Celebrity's Choice' at the ever popular Copdock Motorcycle Show. Wooden spoon goes to me – my Guzzi has never felt the same after having experienced James's bike but I guess I'll just have to live with it... **CBG**

"The net result of four years of work, long evenings and weekends – 'my partner Zolii has been somewhat of a workshop widow, but fantastically supportive' "



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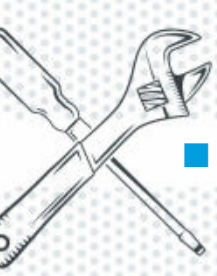
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TRYING TO PUT A MAGAZINE TOGETHER JUST got harder – as did everyone else’s job – if they are lucky enough to still have one. So I’m really glad to have got some time in on the Norton this month. With last month’s organising and constant evenings scrolling through original and modern books about Norton ohv singles, I’m happier that I feel know this bike I’ve never seen together, better. People work in different ways and I have to see and feel something, which I couldn’t, buying the bike in bits.

The bottom half needs to get back together, but the tappet guides are at a friends’ engineering firm, and he’s closed. As is the head. And essential travel, a 1956 Norton is not. But I can get the old bearings out, the new ones in and shimmed up. That will also get the crank somewhere safer than a box under the bench, where it’s been since the excellent Trevor Hedge, speedway maestro, built it up.

Another issue is I am completely untrained. And though mucking around with engines since a teenager, they’ve mostly been cars or more modern Japanese bikes. So bearings, bolted together crankshafts and Whitworth fixings, while not





Left: Getting out the outer bearing, spacer and roller bearing outer with local heat and persuasion

Above: "Oil That doesn't go in there!"

Top: Helping my missing knowledge

impossible, take time for my addled brain to get around. And boy, doesn't Norton aluminium castings look poor and fragile!

But it needs doing and I have some amazing friends around me with lots of knowledge. Both Hutch and Neville gave me tips on how to get the old bearings off and out, and the new ones in and on. First, remove the old outer bearing, spacer and crank outer race in the drive-side casing. Hutch said to heat the casing around the bearings with a plumber's torch until it is just all right to hold the edges; Neville said heat the local area until you spit on it and it sizzles! Matt at BDK warned me of getting old Norton casings too hot as all the old oil starts to come out.

In the end Hutch's method worked as I could only just hold on to the casing, so I tried Nev's spit method and it sizzled – perfect! The bearings took the slightest persuasion with a hammer and drift, coming out nicely.

Once out, there was the outer ball bearing in good shape, a 1/4in spacer, a shim the size of the outer race and the outer race of the main roller bearing. Yet the new roller bearing comes with shims to correct any end float; but they are the same diameter as the inner race. Nowhere on any diagrams could I find these larger shims. Hutch said they could be a washer, but it looks too thin. Still, I know it goes in between the roller bearing and spacer, so there it will return.

Next I checked the roller bearings on the crankshaft, to see how tight they would be. I will pop them in the cooker for a while and if that doesn't

allow a smooth fit, I'll pop the crank in the freezer. Effie did think it rather strange that I was putting engine parts in the freezer and cooker!

With the outer ball bearing and spacer in, and the roller bearings on the crank, it was time to put it all together so the end float – the amount of movement the crank has in the cases side-to-side – could be measured. The old books say it should be between 0.005-0.008in, with any slack taken up with shims. This means the cases will come apart at least twice, and probably more knowing my measuring!

But small problem, again arising from buying a box of bits, was I can't find any nuts and bolts that fit the cases. Some of the holes are for the engine plates, but I'm still short of a couple. So, don't tell anyone, but I'm using metric ones for now to get the shims right. The Norton specialists are all still bravely working via mail order, so I can specify new fastenings when I put a larger order in.

And on that note, I've an apology to make; Norvil do make cam followers and their guides, they just call them tappets! They also make the swing arm spindle, which I had started to make – but for £15.50 I'll buy one.

Next month, it's the continuing story of doing the jobs that I can while locked down. And also, if I'm honest, I don't want to spend too much money at the moment, just in case – you never know. But hopefully the bottom end will get a little more done, while the dynamo can get looked at, the carb rebuilt and some of the bodywork prepped for painting. At least I'm isolating! **CBC**



We're still all here!

Classic Bike Guide looks at how our trusty old bike specialists and traders are still looking after us and how we can help them, despite coronavirus

WORDS BY OLI

WITH PRETTY MUCH everything in lockdown we thought we would look into how the classic parts trade is doing.

Are we just waiting for all this to blow over while watching Bargain Hunt and reruns of Shed and Buried, or are we busy in our own sheds, garages, back gardens and, in some cases, living rooms, making our bikes better than they were before in preparation for the start of our delayed spring?

You can still buy motorcycle parts. Indeed, the Government is actively encouraging us all to buy things over the phone or online. And with so many of the suppliers that keep our wheels turning being small operations, our business is what's going to make sure they are all still there when we can get back to what makes us happy.

Hardest hit in classic motorcycling terms are the small operations that rely on shows and autojumbles for a good part of their trade – those hardy souls who travel

the country week in and week out.

Paul Goff does a lot of business at shows, selling electrical components and his justly famous LED lightbulb upgrades among other things. And his home-based business is still delivering the goods.

Paul said: "Things are a bit different, but I've always worked from home and walked with my parcels to the Post Office every day, and I'm still doing that. Trade orders have dried up a bit, because shops have closed, but the mail order has carried on.

"We've actually had a small boost in the past few weeks, but this might peter out. People are working on their bikes, but there might be a feeling soon of 'why bother working on it if I can't ride it?'

"We've got plenty of stock, but a lot of our stuff comes from abroad and it is taking a little while longer to get here. One of our Chinese suppliers is operating from her bedroom."

Paul's website norbsa02.freeuk.com

lists his stock but doesn't allow online ordering. Email him at norbsa02@aol.com or call 01494 868218 9am-5.30pm with your requirements.

"Nobody was making any money, and they have to trade to survive."

Another trader who you'll see at shows and jumbles and online is Gerard at Cornwall-based Skye Motorcycles. He's usually seen with a huge range of British spares at shows, trekking them hundreds of miles every weekend. Right now, you can order his stock online. "We do most of our trade at shows, so this has been a big problem, but we are still selling new and second-hand parts online and over the phone." After a brief hiatus, where several small suppliers closed down, some are starting to come back on stream, especially the smaller specialists.

"Nobody was making any money, and they have to trade to survive." Visit Skye at

"We've actually had a small boost in the past few weeks"

skye-classic-motorcycles.co.uk

Those with substantial mail order operations have their own challenges to surmount:

“If you turn up, we will wave at you through the window but not sell you anything!”

Ariel, BSA and Triumph parts wizards Draganfly have closed their counter and appear to be operating their mail order business with close to military precision. Their excellent website gives the low-down on how the Suffolk company is keeping going.

“The Government has said that online retail is ‘open and encouraged’ with postal services running as normally as possible, so we will continue to take and dispatch orders as normal. Our shop premises are closed to the public. If you turn up, we will wave at you through the window but not sell you anything!

“Our staff are very important to us, a lot of them are actually family, and many have been with us through thick and thin, as we have been with them. Some have been advised to stay at home due

to existing health issues and some are working at home because they can.

“We have a skeleton crew at the shop, and we are staggering working hours to have as few staff in the shop as possible at any one time. This means it will take longer to answer the phone or emails, it will take longer to dispatch your orders, but it does mean you can call us at 7.30am and we’ll already be at work!”

Deliveries and collections are being made from outside the closed shop doors, so our staff don’t have contact with couriers and vice versa, to reduce any possible exposure. Keep an eye on Draganfly’s website to check the latest situation draganfly.co.uk

“We are still working and taking orders”

Central Wheel Components have closed their shop but are still trading. Warren Harding from CWC said: “We are working on a skeleton staff of 10 instead of the normal 45, but we are still working and taking orders – our tyre division Wheelhouse Tyres is also operational, but only for mail order.”

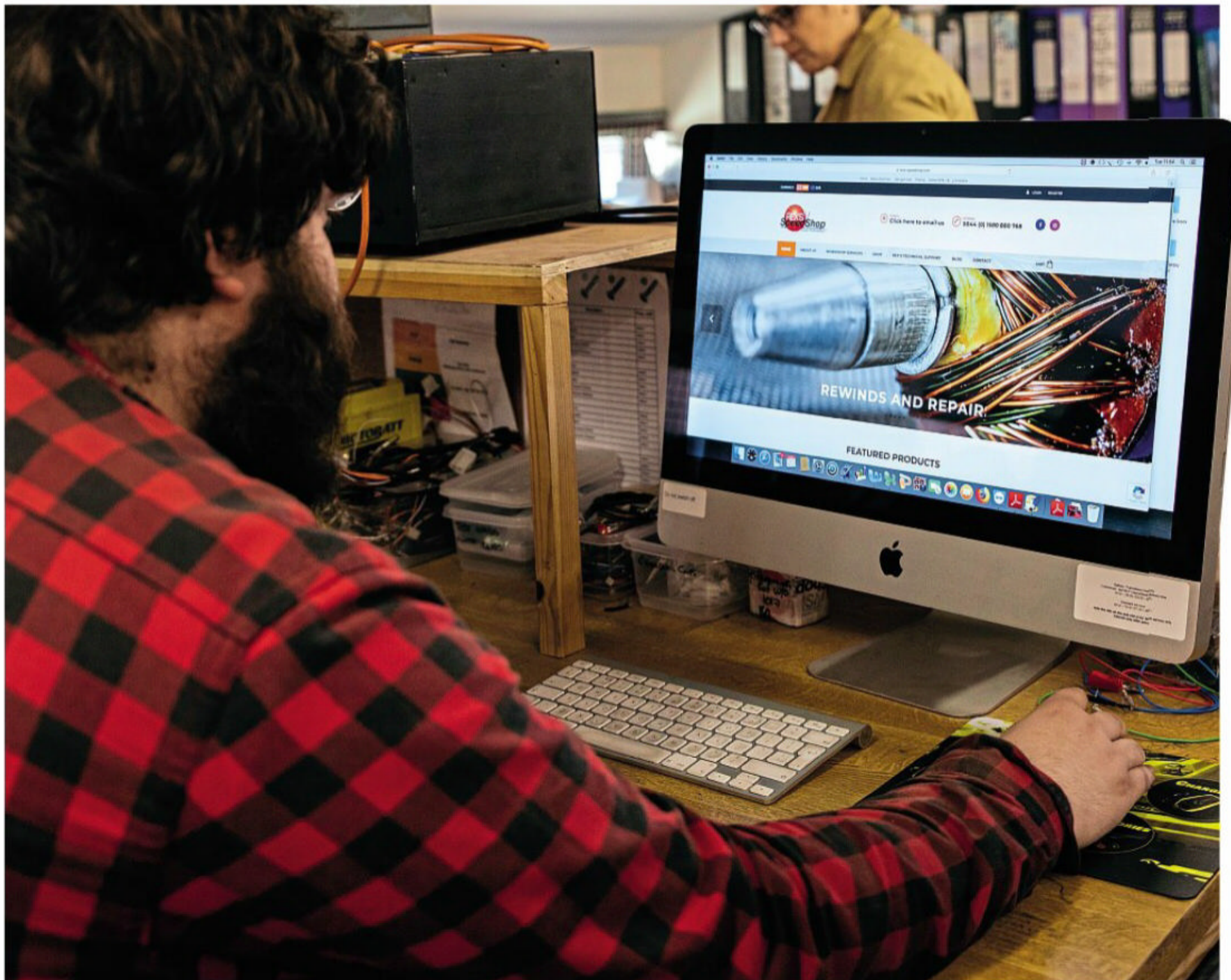
The phones at both CWC and Wheelhouse are still manned, or enquiries can be forwarded to info@central-wheel.co.uk or info@wheelhousetyres.co.uk

“For many of our customers, their bike is their only mode of transport”

South coast suppliers of parts and consumables for a huge range of bikes Wemoto are still operating online.

Daisy from Wemoto said: “Business has been steady. For many of our customers, their bike is their only mode of transport, so we’re glad we can help keep them on the road at this time. There are a number of customers who are putting their bikes away, but there also seem to be a lot of customers who are now working on bike projects at home, so it seems to have evened out.

“We have a huge number of suppliers. Though some of our European ones have closed temporarily and we’re seeing delays with some others, we’re fortunate that we keep quite a bit of stock in our warehouses, so supply isn’t an issue at the moment, and we’re still getting stock ▶



in daily." Visit wemoto.com

"I think we're offering an essential public service"

Monty from Monty's Classics on the Devon and Cornwall border was, as ever, upbeat. The Triumph twin specialist says: "We're doing very well at the moment. We've been flat out for two or three weeks. I expect there will be supply problems later on, but most of our suppliers are small family businesses and they are keeping going. This all depends on how things go of course. We've got good stock. I think we're offering an essential public service, keeping blokes in the shed for hours, keeping them sane and stopping domestic arguments. I think a lot of people are taking the opportunity to do those jobs they've been putting off for a couple of years. I wish everyone in the trade well." Visit montysclassicmotorcycles.com

"There aren't the planes flying to take things overseas"

Norton specialists Norvil have closed their workshop but the mail order business is still shipping parts. Gareth from Norvil said: "Touch wood, we're doing all right. We make a lot of our stuff ourselves, so supply is less of a problem and our suppliers make things in small batches with many of them still trading. We've obviously got a lot less staff working.

"Deliveries are still working in the UK, but shipping abroad is taking longer simply because there aren't the planes flying to take things overseas." Norvil are

at norvilmotorcycle.co.uk

"Because we are supporting the motor trade... we're allowed to stay open"

Hitchcocks, Royal Enfield parts suppliers to the world, have closed their counter but are still trading. Dave from Hitchcocks said: "Because we are supporting the motor trade and keeping people moving, we're allowed to stay open. We're taking telephone and web orders. A few of our staff have been ill and we are running on a skeleton staff, but things are ticking over. There's a lot of guys at home twiddling their thumbs with nothing to do, so we're still selling.

"Some suppliers have shut, but there's quite a lot of stock. The easiest way to buy from us is to do an internet order. If it's a big order and you can supply the part numbers, it would be really helpful." Visit hitchcocksmotorcycles.com

"Deliveries are operating as normal"

The BMW specialist Motorworks are happy to send you some bits for your Beemer so it's ready for the sunny riding days to come. "We are currently operating with reduced staff, but the phones are open, and we are dispatching your orders," say the Motorworks team on their Facebook page.

"If possible, please place your order on our website. We have more than sufficient stock on the shelves to fulfil orders in the coming months and deliveries are operating as normal."

Visit motorworks.co.uk

"We're operating a split shift system to reduce contact"

Japanese specialists David Silver Spares are regulars at big bike shows and have a substantial mail order operation.

Their retail sales counter and the David Silver collection are closed until further notice. Mark at David Silver said: "We're operating a split shift system with half the staff in for the morning and the other half in the afternoon to reduce contact. Online is busy and as long as the couriers are operating, so will we. It's actually quite a busy time, with a lot of people who have been putting off jobs finding they suddenly have the time. A few things have dried up, but all our main suppliers are still good. Contact us by email, phone or via the website davidsilverspares.co.uk

Despite everything, the classic motorcycle world is still operating, albeit in tough circumstances. Keep fettling, keep polishing and get those bikes ready for the road. Be patient with suppliers who are doing their utmost to keep things rolling. Let the phone ring a bit before hanging up, wait for those overloaded websites to load and accept that your courier might take a day or two longer to get those valve springs and oil seals to your door. And later in the year, when you are all riding those sweet running bikes that will be all the better for the wait, you'll know the people who helped keep them running will still be there for you next time you need them. **ORC**



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Norvil Motorcycle's 40th Anniversary 1980 to 2020

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	BIKE	RRP	SALE
040284				
040019				
040634				
040635				
064640				
064639				
064733				
067878SS				
063075				
069219ass				
069713				
033037				
069516				
062473				
069552				
216123				
061978				
061084				
0613965				
063547R				
063318				
70t				
069711				
061978La				

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	BIKE	RRP	SALE
70TCBG	BASKET - CLUTCH-BELT PRIMARY DRIVE - 70 TEETH - WITH BEARING	C ---	£139.05	£129
063075CBG	BODY ASSEMBLY - MAGNETO REPLACEMENT UNIT - TO FIT BOYER	- D --	£97.00	£79
069219ASSCBG	BRACKET - SILENCER - NORVIL PRODUCTION RACER - STAINLESS - PR	C ---	£68.71	£55
061084CBG	CAMSHAFT - STANDARD - FITS 131257 ON - 750 & 850-(1S)-EN40B	C ---	£154.00	£139
069711CBG	DISC - BARE - 10.7" - LIGHTWEIGHT FLOATING - NORVIL	C ---	£135.00	£99
069713CBG	DISC - BARE - 13" - LIGHTWEIGHT - FLOATING - NORVIL	C ---	£154.00	£109
033037CBG	FILTER - AIR - 650SS - TO SUIT CHOPPED MONOBLOCS	- D --	£123.25	£105
064639CBG	GEAR - LAYSHAFT 2ND - 23T - MK2A & MK3 - AHB TYPE - 23 TEETH	C ---	£55.00	£45
040019CBG	GEAR - LAYSHAFT 2ND - 24T - PRE MK2A	C D - S	£64.50	£45
040634CBG	GEAR - LAYSHAFT 3RD - 20T - LESS BUSH	C D - S	£49.50	£45
040284CBG	GEAR - LAYSHAFT 4TH - SMALLER DIAMETER-OLD PATT FOR 24T S.G.	- D - S	£37.58	£30
064640CBG	GEAR - MAINSHAFT 2ND - 18T - MK2A & MK3 LESS BUSH - AHB TYPE	C ---	£55.00	£45
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C = Commando, D = Dominator & Altas, L = Lightweight Twin, S = Single

Please remember to add postage for deliveries and VAT for orders from within the EU. Prices are valid until 31st May 2020

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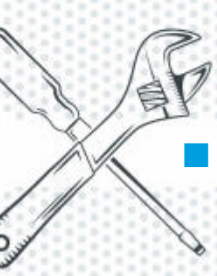
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Fork Overhaul

Part One It's time Steve Cooper gets down and dirty with mucky old telescopic forks

THE TELESCOPIC MOTORCYCLE FORK HAS BEEN around for the thick end of a century now and despite a wide range of possible alternatives it's still the go-to front end for almost every two-wheeler. Without doubt it has its limitations, but they are unquestionably outweighed by its inherent rightness of purpose. If the design was fundamentally flawed race teams on both dirt and tarmac wouldn't be using it.

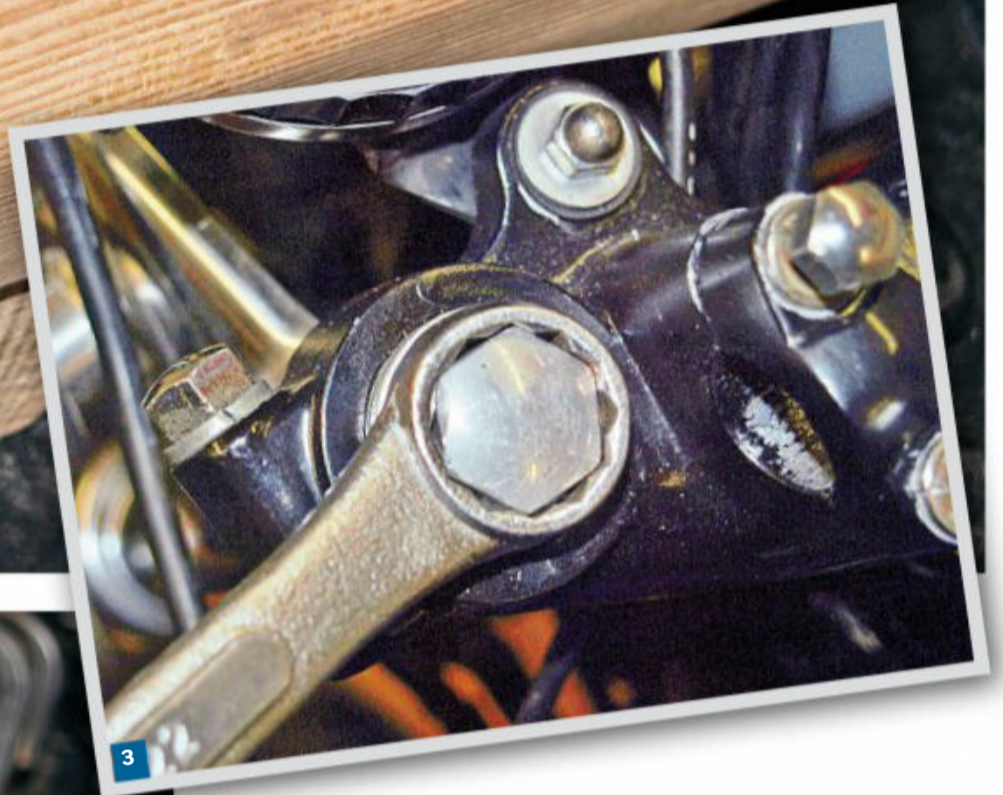
In regular use the best a set of forks can hope for is generally a change of fluid from a benevolent owner which is ok, but arguably only lip service at best. Despite what you might think, telescopic forks will always benefit from an occasional service. Just like any other mechanical device that moves, wear can occur and when it does there's normally some waste material produced. Left unchecked, all manner of detritus ends up stuck to the various moving components and, over time, can affect the way they work and perform.

Detailed here is a full-on strip down of a pair of early 1970s Japanese forks as fitted to a large capacity trail bike, but the techniques, tools and procedures apply to any traditional 'right-way-up' telescopic. There are other alternative methodologies available, but what follows are a series of logical steps using tools that have been proven viable in use. The bike is up on stands, the front wheel and mudguard have been removed.





2



3



4

1. You could struggle with an Allen key or go the easy route. An impact wrench has the ability to undo the retaining bolt in the lower leg in an instant. With the fork still in the yoke and the spring compressed there's no need for any damper mechanism holding tools either.

2. Investing in the right tools makes the job easier. A long series hex tool fits easily and securely inside the Allen bolt.

3. Work smarter, not harder! Use the grip of the top yoke to slacken off the top nut. Generally these are soft alloy so only use a socket or a good fitting ring spanner. Repairs are time-consuming and spare nuts aren't widely available.

4. Now you can loosen off the top yoke pinch bolt. Rather than remove and potentially mislay it, leave the fixing in place and nip it up finger tight once the leg is out.



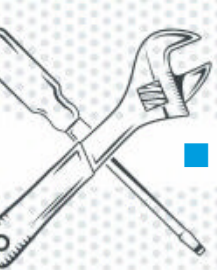
5



6

5. Finally slacken off the bottom yoke pinch bolt and take a grip of the fork leg, which should now be free to turn. Our bike in camera allows the leg to be pulled through the top yoke, but in some instances you may have to remove the alloy nut first.

6. The entire fork leg can now be withdrawn downwards. If it's reluctant to move, very gently tap a flat bladed screwdriver into the pinch slots to expand the yokes and/or break any corrosion bonds.



1. Remove the top nut and inspect the thread for damage and the O ring for integrity; fix things now while it's all apart. A thread file will recover damaged threads and O rings are cheap as chips on eBay.

2. Invert the leg over a catch tray and pump it a few times to eject as much oil as possible. Extract the spring, lay it on some cardboard or clean cloth and allow it to drain.

3. Wipe everything down with clean rag and take stock. This leg has been apart before and the spring installed the wrong way around. The tightest coils should always be at the top to reduce unsprung mass.





4. Remove the Allen bolt, clean and check the threads, then put it safely to one side.

5. This is the reason we're taking the forks apart! Decades of corrosion, wear particles and filthy oil that's also probably high in moisture.

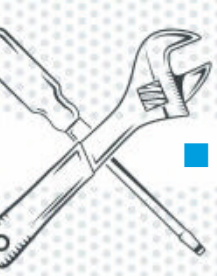
6. The damper rod is similarly marred with crud and is currently captive within the upper leg or stanchion, but only until...

7. ...we remove the retaining circlip with a pair of the appropriate pliers and not two old screwdrivers please! With the leg tilted up, this ensures nothing falls out of the other end.

8. With the circlip removed, the damper rod with the tapered valve still affixed and the lower bush can all be withdrawn, but components are still stuck inside due to the amount of oily residue remaining.

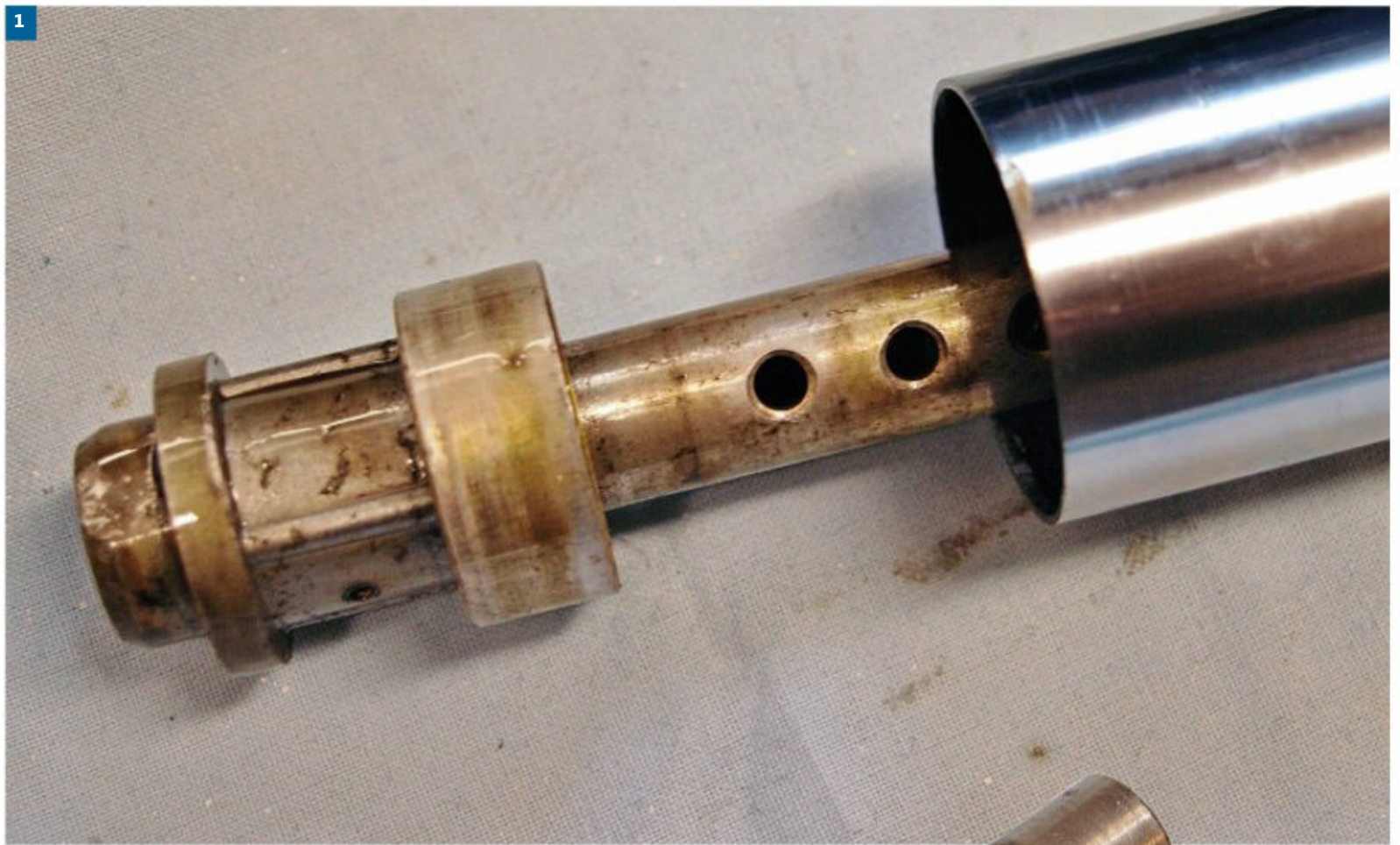
9. Tapping a long, thin rod up inside the stanchion via the damper rod....





1.has the remaining part of the internal damping mechanism released.

2. Back at the lower end the final components can be removed, but care must be taken to ensure both the position and orientation of each piece is noted before cleaning and further stripping.



3. Before wading in with solvent it pays dividends to shine a torch inside the two main components and checking for any heavy deposits. A long, flat blade screwdriver liberated three further plies of crud just like this from one leg alone before being cleaned with solvent!

4 & 5. On the top of the slider the dust cover has been removed and the retaining wire circlip carefully wiggled out, followed by the large flat washer above the fork seal.



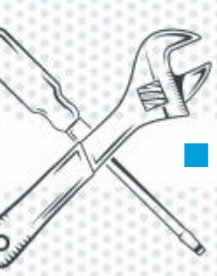
Remove that damn bolt!

Various manufacturers utilise subtly different methods of building telescopic forks, but the MO is generally similar. Generally it's best to remove the damper rod bolt out of the fork leg first. This way the spring is under compression holding the damping components tight. If the fork top nut has a preload adjuster, winding it up to maximum will always help. Most manufacturers listed a workshop service tool for use when retaking forks apart and in extreme circumstances it may well be needed. However, most similar tools can be replicated in a home workshop relatively easily if needed. As perfect example certain Yamahas need a special 17mm male hex on a long metal pole pushed down on to the damper rod to hold it tight while the Allen bolts are loosened. A viable DIY alternative is a pair of 17mm nuts locked against each other on a suitable piece of studding with a cross handle on the upper/outer end. Finally, never underestimate the power of a rattle gun or impact wrench. Whether it's battery or compressed air driven, you'll find they make light work of damper rod bolts that are otherwise easily damaged with heavy-duty Allen keys and brute force.



5. Everyone has their own preferred method of removing fork seals, but I've found a decent length tyre lever works well. Note the piece of squashed 22mm copper pipe under the lever protecting the thin wall of the seal's seat.





If the seal is reluctant to lift up, a hot-air gun can be used to expand the aluminium around it. As a rule of thumb only heat the area up sufficiently for the residual oil in the seal to gently bubble.



And that's the fork seal out!

From here on it's a case of cleaning every single component in sight to remove every last vestige of dirt. If you have a parts washer then great, but otherwise use a solvent-based bike wash or just white spirit/brush cleaner; they all do much the same job. Water-based cleaners are best avoided here as residual moisture post-rinsing may cause issues. Oh, and don't forget to remove the drain screws and clean out any muck sitting behind them. Soaking the parts helps loosen deposits and, if you invest in some suitable sized bungs, both inner and outer legs can be partially filled with solvent and shaken with extreme enthusiasm. A couple of rinses and final hose with brake cleaner will have everything ready for the rebuild, which we'll tackle next time. **CBG**

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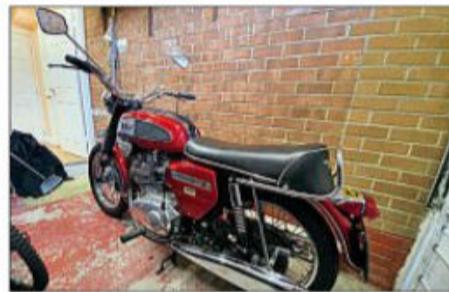
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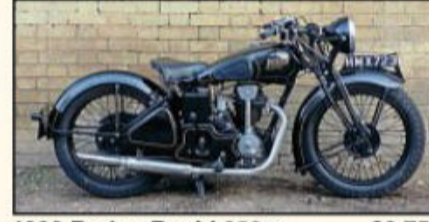
1988 MZ ETZ 125cc..... £1,250



1926 Raleigh 350cc..... £6,500



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1938 Rudge Rapid 250cc..... £8,750



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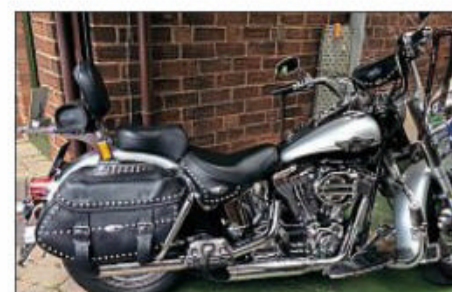
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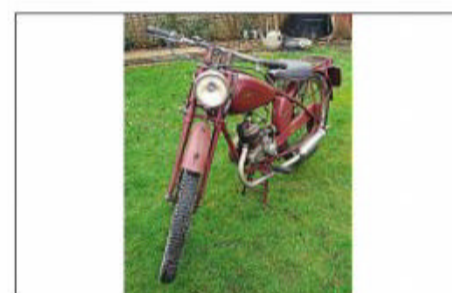
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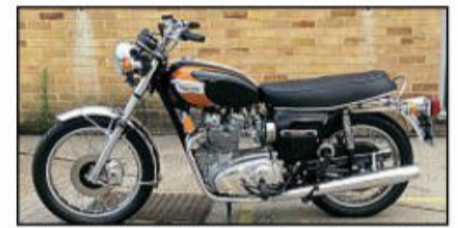
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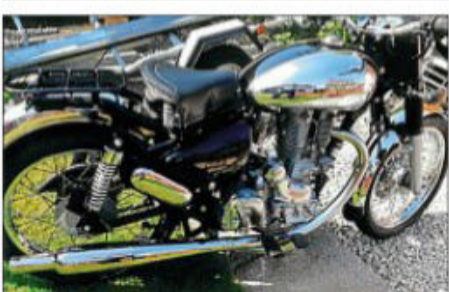
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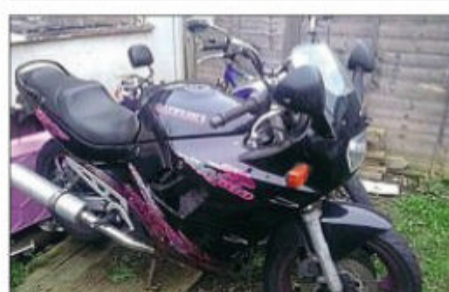
RALEIGH 12 1925, lovely original V-twin, 700cc, complete with leg shields, Cowey speedo, Carbide lights, running condition, £16,000 ono Tel. 07939 133752 London



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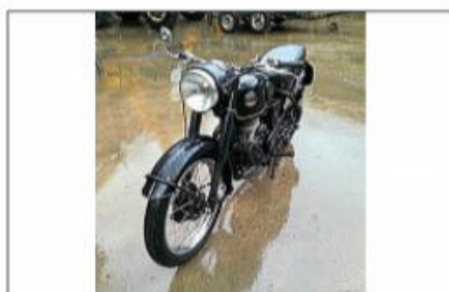
TRIUMPH TIGER 100S, Sept 1967 reg, 68 spec, matching numbers, original unrestored, Sorn since 09, clean tank & carb, original Dunlop rims, good condition, £3900. Email. revsmail.2102@yahoo.com Sussex



TRIUMPH TR25W Trophy, 1970, older restoration, nice condition, good runner, new battery, matching numbers, £2995 swap considered for Daytona 900/1200 cash my way Tel. 07511 619810 Glasgow



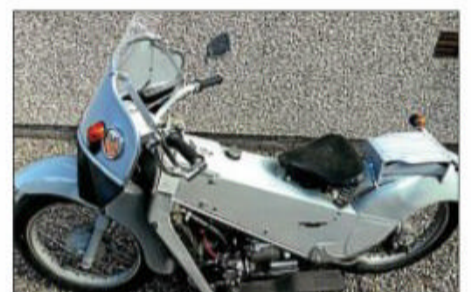
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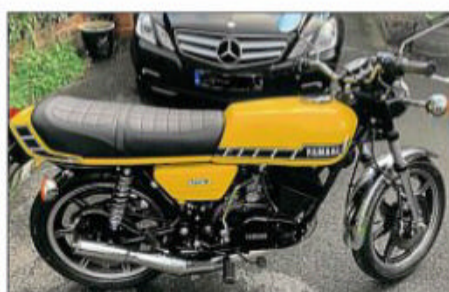
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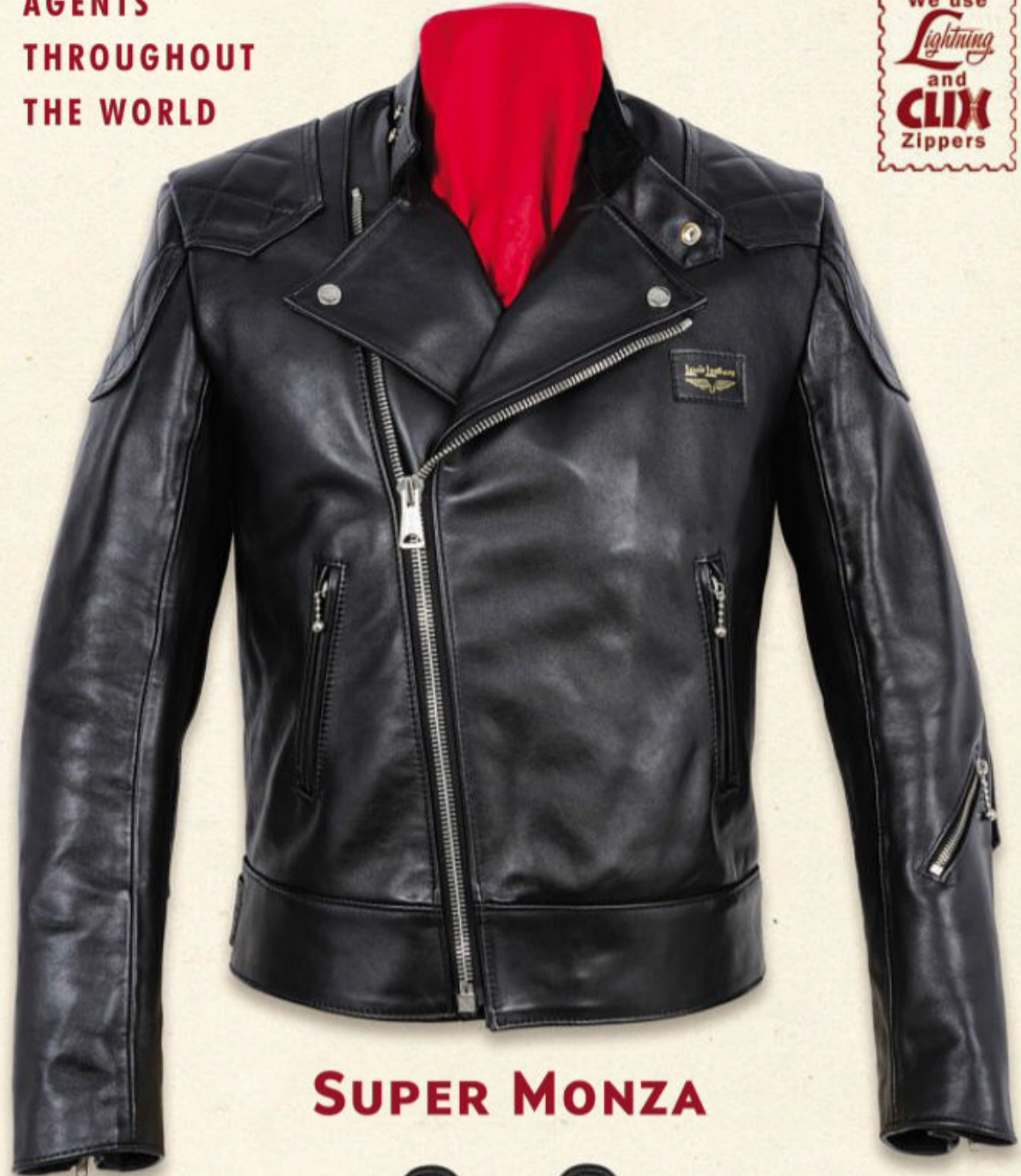


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HONDA CB500K3 1976, Italian import believed to be in 1970s/80s, 13066 miles/km, has mph speedo conversion, recent new tyres, oil & filter, spark plugs CB points, coil, HT leads, tappet adjusted, air filter new brake pads, £4500. Tel. 07754 5265321. Leics.

HONDA FIREBLADE year 1999, last of the carb models, fully rebuilt in as new condition mint, £4000 ono. Tel. 07739 575811. Berkhamsted.

HONDA K4 very well prepared, 350cc, classic racer race frame, alloy rims, special exhaust and ignition, very nice bike, previously registered with CMRC £5500 ono. Tel. 07771 525698. Gwynedd.

HONDA NC35 1998, good condition, on Sorn, phone for details, £4000. Tel. 02392 412271. Hampshire.

JONGHI H54T 1955, two stroke, 250cc, nice original bike, some paper work, £1895. Tel. 01538 753086. Stoke-on-Trent.

MOTO GUZZI Convert, 1975, good standard condition, new seat, good chrome, black paint and tyres, £4300. Tel. 01653 694743; 07711 735713. North Yorkshire.

SUZUKI BANDIT 600cc, 2003, 17,500 miles, 12 months MoT, vgc, well maintained Haynes manual, braided brake pipes, new chain & sprockets, £1600. Tel. 01425 473162. Hampshire.

TRIUMPH 6T 1959, unrestored, original bike, from new matching numbers original reg number in charcoal grey colour, good starter, part exchange welcome, can deliver, £6450. Tel. 07443 642408. West Yorks.

TRIUMPH T120C 1963, nice bike £1000. Tel. 01933 355796. Northants.

TRIUMPH T120R 1971, hardtail chop, selling as not being used, on Sorn will need a service too many parts to mention, all running classic, 4 speed single carb Tiger head, email for pictures had bike since 1987. Tel. 01214 204632. Email. choppermatt120@gmail.com

TRIUMPH TRIDENT T150 Newby belt drive, Pullis speedo rev counter, oil pump, £100. Tel. 07970 854464. Nth Yorks.

VELOCETTE VIPER 1957, 4 owners from new, last owner 45 years, original condition, some SS fastenings, fitted with 2LS front, concentric carbs, 12V conversion, new tank, seat and mudguards, service manual, original buff log book, Sorn, has stood for 2 years, needs new battery and recommissioning, £5700, photos can be supplied, if interested please contact Email. dchlebek@gmail.com Shropshire.

Parts For Sale

AERMACCHI 125 HD engine, with extra spare barrel/head, pistons, conrod, lots cogs etc, Malanca E2C 125, new silencers, top bottom yoke, new CEV chrome headlight shell CEV 04610, used CEV 0273W CW CEV 187 light. Tel. 07814 257373. Devon.

AJS/ARIEL parts 350 AJS head, £50. 500 head, £100, 500 barrels, £100. Ariel Square rear crank, £40. VB crank, £60. Oil pump .30 AJS/M 350 auto/ad unit + chain & cam sprocket, £50. Ariel GB gearbox, £125. AJS GB, £125. Tel. 01524 843902. Lancs.

ALLOY ENGINE plates poss Triton? (can email pictures), £40. Honda CB750/900 DOHC, original s/arm assy, £25. Goldwing book hardback, (P Fallon). Tel. 01772 783774. Lancs.

BSA B31/A7/A10 swing arm type gearbox in really good condition, the taper and key way are in reasonable condition, ring for more details, £300 inc postage. Tel. 07779 742629. Cornwall.

BSA B50SS ENGINE running on methanol, sensible offers. Tel. 01600 714733. Monmouthshire.

FREDK BATES TAP/DIE SET pre 1912, 28 piece in original box, £40. BMW R100RS 1978m swinging complete arm, £70 + p&p. Tel. 07565 559588. West Yorkshire.

HONDA 160mm 2IS hub complete, £30; BMW K series valve shim tool, £30; BMW K series tool kit, £20; Yamaha XS650 brake calipers, £40 pair, collect or + p&p. Tel. 07754 534366. West Yorks.

HONDA CG125 1978, frame, forks mudguards etc, good clean condition, £50. CD175 alternator, good, £30. BSA A65 fibre glass tank, good, £50. 18" wheel QD type, good tyres, £80. Tel. 07934 114301. Monmouthshire.

MATCHLESS 350 G5 bottom end, 1960s, almost complete, collection only £50 no offers. Tel. 02085 501598. Essex.

MOTO GUZZI SPARES a pair of brand new Buzzo silencers, £300. T3 clocks and with housing brand new, £250. Rear carrier rack Le Mans/G5/T3 as new, £90. Original Tarozzi rear sets great condition, £150. Brand new H section exhaust pipe chrome, £120. Right angled speedo gearbox, £30. Tel. 07584 090437. Devon.

NORTON COMMANDO original fastback seat tail unit respayed, front fixings slightly modified, £75 collection only. Tel. 01953 607225. Email. edwingeorgeclarke@hotmail.co.uk.

NORTON COMMANDO 961 service manual, all variants, plus Harris riser bars to fit classic racer, £120. Tel. 07970 854464. North Yorkshire.

ONE PAIR OF new old stock Keihin 725A/B carburettors part numbers 16101-348-004 & 16102-348-004 in mint condition inside and out, these were purchased for a 1974 Honda CB250 K4 but no longer required, should fit other models in the K series but check your part number first, £595 free UK postage. Tel. 01225 768716. Wiltshire.

PAIR ROCKER COVERS to fit Harley-Davidson 1200R Sportster, matt black, 200 miles only £50. One air cleaner cover 200 miles only, £30. One pair original silencers 200 miles only, £150. One pair silencers to fit 1999 Bonneville, good chrome, £150. One Goldie type silencer fits Royal Enfield Bullet, £50 very good chrome, all collect only. Tel. 01280 814156. Buckinghamshire.

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE 1970s barrels and pistons, £200. Thruxton silencers, new, £100. Leather motorcycle jackets, large, £40 each. Various helmets, £15 each. T140 rear light, £30. Various sets of forks, Norton, £30 each. Tel. 07763 644030. Wirral.

TRIUMPH TIGER CUB original petrol tank, solid respayed comes with chrome cap fixing bolts and badge screw, £75 collection only. Tel. 01953 607225. Email. edwingeorgeclarke@hotmail.co.uk

TRIUMPH TRIDENT T150 pushrod set, £27. Alloy pushrod tubes set, £40. Gearbox sprocket 19T, £22 all new. S/hand pushrod chrome tubes, set, £35. Boyer Mk4 ignition kit, new, £55, postage free on all parts. Tel. 01254 231994. Lancs.

YAMAHA YFZ450 barrel and piston, 95m/m, £55. Yamaha XSR700 original exhaust system, £58. Honda VFR800 Haynes manual 02-05, £8. Tel. 01772 783774. Lancs.

Wanted

AJS M33 FRAME wanted, or complete bike. Tel. 07500 114283. Leics.

ANY CLASSIC BIKE wanted good price paid by keen buyer. Tel. John 01513 742466. Ormskirk.

ARIEL ARROW OR Royal Enfield Continental wanted for restoration project, 1960s models. Tel. 07788 768313. Bucks.

BRITISH BIKE RESTORATION project wanted, anything considered, any size or condition, more of a tinkerer than a rider now, open to offers, pay accordingly, will travel. Tel. 07538 696157. Leics.

BROCHURES AND SALES CATALOGUES wanted for pre-war Motorcycles, Norton, Triumph, BSA, Indian, Harley, Vincent, Velocette and other makes. Tel. 01457 872788. Yorks.

BSA BANTAM wanted any model, must be complete and original, cash paid. Tel. 07866 919488. Hereford.

BSA SUNBEAM 175 scooter, 1959, wanted complete engine or parts for two stroke BSA Sunbeam scooter anything considered. Tel. 02476 618667. Warks.

CLASSIC BIKE wanted BSA or similar, good price paid. Tel. James 01704 331519. Ormskirk.

CLASSIC BRITISH BIKE wanted, 2 stroke or 4 stroke, complete bikes or projects, collect, cash paid on collection. Tel. 07443 642408. West Yorks.

CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE wanted anything considered and in any condition. Tel. 07858 132682. Notts.

HONDA TWIN or single pre-1990 wanted for restoration project, any model 50cc to 500cc older the better, Black Bomber or XL250 would suit, have funds and will travel. Tel. 07538 696157. Leics.

HONDA XR75 1976 exhaust system wanted, school boy scrambler. Tel. 01229 463040. Cumbria.

LOOKING FOR my dads 1956 Gold Stars, frame numbers 4943, 5130, 5235, 5251 engine nos 2019, 2032, 2214, 2220, if you have any of these please email Alain: recycledreading@gmail.com

LOOKING FOR Suzuki GSX400T 1984, was blue now says black, W24 4WYA, Somerset area, good reward for information leading to me finding it. Tel. 07526 708767. Dorset.

LOOKING FOR MY old Honda CB250M, NBA 493M, does anyone know where it is now? Tel. Pete 07905 866972. Greater Manchester.

LOOKING FOR NORTON 1947, 350cc Plunger Manx No. B10 1146* XM105 supplied to Alec Bennett, Southampton, originally registered EOW 375 in Southampton, last known in Kent 1971, son trying to find dads bike. Email Alain: recycledreading@gmail.com

MANX SEAT WANTED 1953/4, original seat in useable condition, even if tatty. Also 1953/4 Inter parts wanted, especially original dual seat, tinware and photos of Inter's in 1954 Clubman's. Please email. recycledreading@gmail.com

SIDECAR WANTED anything considered, modern, vintage or even pre-war launch type, work not objected to will consider just a chassis, will travel. Tel. 07956 296418. Derbyshire.

LOOKING FOR AJS 1947, 500cc, M18, registration JLM 470. Tel. 02085 501598 or 07747 020725. Email. mikewoodley4@aol.com

SUZUKI T500R parts wanted, 1971 left side panel, rear grab rail, side stand, handlebars, rev counter. Tel. Mike 07511 688088. Birmingham.

TRIUMPH TIGER 900 wanted body work is not important, wheels, frame and engine must be good, wanted for project. Tel. Terry 07850 831078. Hampshire.

VELOCETTE, ARIEL or Panther wanted either oily rag or restoration project, any model considered, older the better Ariel Fieldmaster would be great, will travel. Tel. 07956 296418. Derbyshire.

WANTED ENGINE or parts for 1936 cyc-auto, Wallington Butt design with magneto mounted on front of engine or Villiers engine as fitted to 1936/37 model. Tel. 01322 333853. Kent. Email. peter-townsend1@sky.com

WANTED SINGLE OR TWIN 1930s in any condition, cash and collect, genuine retired engineer wanted to restore and rideout. Tel. 07788 453318. East Yorkshire.

WANTED: VELOCETTE Viper/Venom prefix 12 gearbox. Tel. 01507 529405; 07508 481724.

YAMAHA YDS5 wanted, private enthusiast seeking either a complete bike or any parts available, why? Tel. Richard 07769 715916. Lincs.

Miscellaneous

BOOKS: Motorcycles and How to Manage Them, circa 1960, as new. £15. The book of the Triumph Twins, circa 1969, as new. £15. Motorcycle Care & Maintenance, David Frost, circa 1963, pages yellowed but clean, otherwise as new, £10. Tel. Ron 02086 995307.

EVEROAK GRAND PRIX open face helmet (white) complete with peak, size medium, very good condition, undamaged, no scratches, never sustained impact, complete with original box, plus Halcyon goggles, fair condition and good leather gloves, £125 or would sell separately. Tel. Ron 02086 995307. London.

MAGAZINES: The Classic MotorCycle, January 1953, March 2020; 48 Classic Bike Guide, 39 magazines from January 2001 - January 2020; Motor Cycle Sport magazines May 1968, September 1990 50pence each. Tel. 01255 815208. Essex.

MOTOR BIKE JACKET Weise Avenger, black, good quality, warm jacket with detachable inner lining, size medium/large, hardly worn, vgc, £79. Tel. Ron 02086 995307. London.

VESPA HELMET label reads new Maxmode Demijet TOBS6685, 1985, size 55 made in Italy, manufactured 07/2000 complete with Vespa badge, £65 p&p £7 UK only. Tel. 07756 567248. Dorset.

YAMAHA three sales brochures for RD125, RS125, RS100 with Eddy Grimstead, plastic wallet for above. Tel. 01582 601467. Beds.

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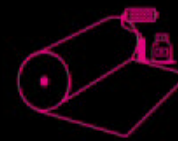
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Who's who ||

EDITOR || Matt Hull
editor@classicbikeguide.com

PUBLISHER || Tim Hartley
thartley@mortons.co.uk

ART EDITOR || Kelvin Clements

DESIGNER || Jake Sidebotham

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT || Jane Skayman

PRODUCTION EDITOR || Sarah Wilkinson

GROUP ADVERTISING MANAGER || Sue Keily

ADVERTISING ||

Leon Currie 01507 529465
lcurrie@mortons.co.uk

Kieron Deekens 01507 529413
kdeekens@mortons.co.uk

ARCHIVE ENQUIRIES || Jane Skayman
01507 529423 jskayman@mortons.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER || Paul Deacon

CIRCULATION MANAGER || Steven O'Hara

MARKETING MANAGER || Charlotte Park

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR || Dan Savage

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR || Nigel Hole

EDITORIAL ADDRESS ||

Mortons Media Group, Media Centre, Morton Way,
Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR

WEBSITE ||

www.classicbikeguide.com

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FRANK WESTWORTH

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Locked in? Locked out? Locked down?
Life is filled with surprises

“Negativity is self-perpetuating and self-defeating. If you know that you’re never going to start that Velocette Thruxton... then you never will.”

MY FAVOURITE PUB OF ALL TIME, THE entirely notable Bull & Dog at Coton – and if you’re unfamiliar with it, that is your loss – used to host a Friday lock-in for local ‘businessmen’, about half of whom were actually women, and maybe a third were active motorcycle riders. Not sure whether there were any actual bikers, but a chap cannot have everything.

Those were joyous – if very long-ago – encounters, packed with hope, dreams, insane speculation and – as the day wore on – outright fantasy. Local taxis did good trade afterwards, and I’d leave my Norton around the back of the pub, confident that it would be perfectly safe. Which of course it was.

As you will have noticed, unless you enjoy a truly and impressively narrow view of the world, we are all currently ‘locked down’, which is not entirely the same as a lock-in, but hey – let’s be optimistic. Because the other thing is just too tedious. Negativity is self-perpetuating and self-defeating. If you know that you’re never going to start that Velocette Thruxton... then you never will. I speak from experience. I start every ride, every rebuild, every project in complete confidence that I will both complete it successfully and that I’ll enjoy the experience. Everyone laughs at me.

And maybe half the time they’re right to do so. Repeated failure becomes comic after a while. Nowadays I even manage a knowing and wry smile when I announce that ‘Sure, it’s easy to set the ignition timing on a Matchless.’ Which of course it is, and which is not to say that I’ll accomplish it without ripping out my remaining tufts of hair, consuming life-threatening quantities of Staropramen and swearing sufficient to make the cat blush.

Being realistic is often a better idea than idiot optimism. Why announce that I’ve found a cure for my endless cheerful incompetence, if in fact I have not? I’ve been reading a lot of

that kind of gibberish recently. Why should I announce endlessly on my Facebook page that I’m looking forward to a great series of rides in the next few weeks? Of course I know that it’s unlikely, but it’s an incentive – on several levels.

I will – I promise myself out loud and in public – take my CSR for a blast around the lanes as soon as I’ve got it running properly! Immediately a chorus of doomsayers reveals that I am irresponsible and will almost certainly be responsible for untimely deaths of millions. This is not true and entirely misses the point. I want to incentivise myself to do something, and I want to make people happy by sharing a comedic word or two about the inevitable fact that it will take me so long to get the CSR running properly and suitable for riding that maybe – and only maybe – it’ll be done in time for the Stafford Show.

That would be the April 2021 Stafford Show. I do know what I’m doing, and I do know my own limitations, too. In case you were wondering... if I were a betting man I might seek odds on my local bike shop collecting the hideous old Matchless in their van and timing it properly so I can ride it to the October 2021 Stafford Show. But I’m not, so I won’t.

In difficult times – which is most of them, for most of us, mostly – optimism is its own reward. Optimism is the first cousin of belief – if I believe I can time the CSR, then I will, and if I can’t ... well, I shall have a hoot of a time savouring the idiocy of my failure. And I’ll share that, in these pages if Matt The Editor will let me, in *RealClassic* where I have a little more space, and on Facebook too.

No one, not a single one of us, knows how long our time on this planet is going to be. Our duty – and not only to ourselves – is to make the most of it. To savour it. To enjoy it (wherever possible). Who knows, maybe someday I will start that Velo Thruxton. And wouldn’t that be a fine ambition? **CBC**

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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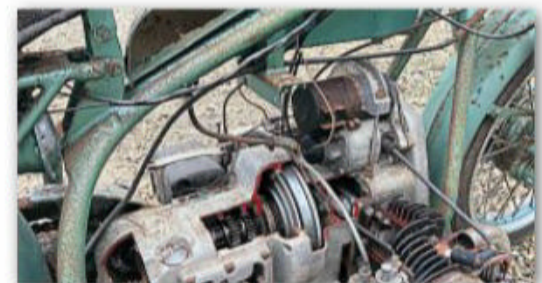
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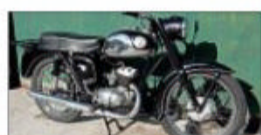
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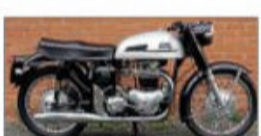
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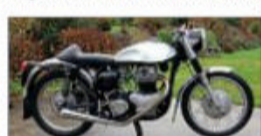
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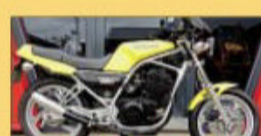
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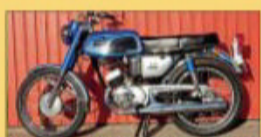
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