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The Italian  
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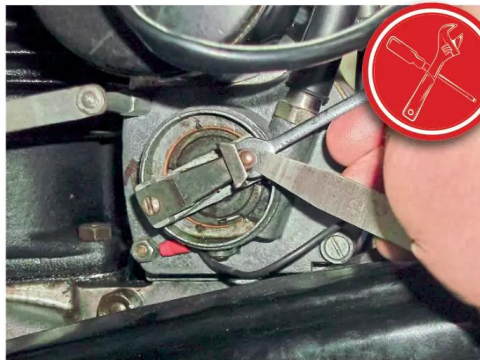
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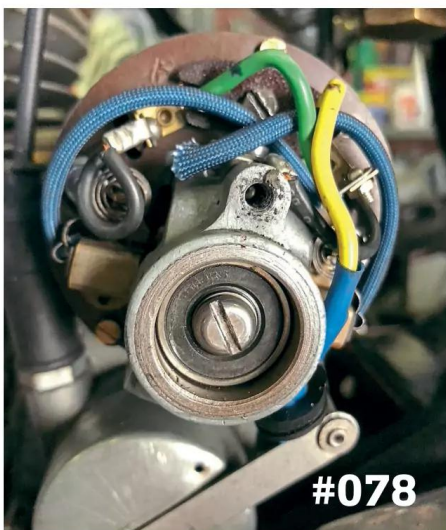
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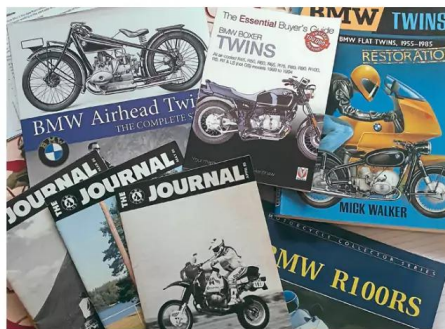
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## Worse things happen at sea you know...

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO KEEP POSITIVE ABOUT this year by wondering how all our relatives at the end of the Second World War would have loved to have been given a couple of months off. Loved ones killed, children sent off to live with people you've never met, in a place you've never been, houses blown to bits and no food or money. I bet they didn't whinge they couldn't go to their local bike meet, or that they had to wear a mask. And boy, wouldn't they have loved to have some time to just go for a ride?

So in my eternal optimism, I've – bought another bike. Oh yes, and it is a cracker – another BMW, a 1978 R100RS. Well, an S, but with the RS fairing fitted. It came from a lovely family that had owned it since 1983 and it had been laid up since 1997, so the plan is to do it up and get back up to Yorkshire to show them once it's done. I've even joined the BMW club! You can read more about it on page 84, but I really feel I've found my 'keeper'; the bike that ticks all my boxes.

But this frivolous spending means several other bikes have to go – no easy

task. And to make matters worse, I've had to move my workshop. Boy, where the hell do we get all this 'stuff' from? And why do we keep it?? And how did I fit it in there?? It's led me to all sorts of discoveries, like the amount of doubled-up tools, and 'things' that I never use. My old job used to involve testing products, so I have a dozen polishes, cleaners, chain lubes, penetrating sprays and greases; I'll never use them all, have given away as much as I can; but who wants an opened can or pot? I'd use more if I ever cleaned my bikes...

Elsewhere, Neville has been putting together a 'dolls head' gearbox for something and asked if I had any 'rear seven inch Norton brake shoes' recently. He's up to something.

Meanwhile Maria has been planning a new project, a 1988 Honda Bros 650. Never released in this country, many came over as grey imports in the 1990s. It's not really *Classic Bike Guide* fodder, but it is a 650cc V-twin, it's 32 years old and in need of a full rebuild, so I expect I'll bore you with it occasionally.

Finally, we've thrown together a spray

booth. I need to sort a fan design out, but at least I can get some of the many Norton parts rubbed down, primed and sprayed. Though I've painted quite a bit, it has always been at a good friend's booth, where the gun is set up and he mixes all the paint. I am doing it all myself now and boy it takes time! The last part I sprayed had seven coats before I was happy with all the settings – and most problems were my preparation and rushing things. So next time you're quoted by a professional painter and wince? Believe me, they're worth it!

Who knows what the next 12 months hold in store for us; but let's hope there's time for some workshop jollies, plenty of riding and talking endless nonsense about old bikes. So here's to a great 2021 for all, thank you for reading the mag and be good!

**Matt Hull**  
 editor@classicbikeguide.com



So there's a BSA "Project" in the shed or garage, in fact it has been there a long time... You know how most of your plans to get it up and running never get finished, because you struggle to work out what is actually needed, where to get good reliable parts that fit properly and how to find out the tips and tricks that make the job easier.

It's an embarrassment every time you see it and it hurts to know you're missing out on the fun and freedom of riding a bike you've fixed.

Well what I suggest (what I did!), is join BSA Owners' Club and tap into the wealth of support and technical advice available and all the encouragement from other members.

This simple approach means that you can realistically plan to get back on the bike again in the Spring and enjoy a Summer of idyllic rides around the lanes, on your own or with good friends – we're known as The Happy People!

If this is something you may be open to, just follow this website link to join us now:

[www.bsaownersclub.co.uk](http://www.bsaownersclub.co.uk) & click the "Download a Membership Form" box.

To help you get started, why not email me the No. 1 problem you face and I'll point you in the right direction. Bill.

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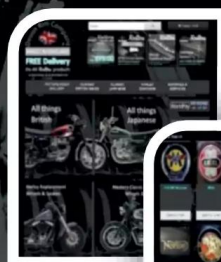
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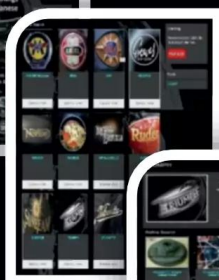
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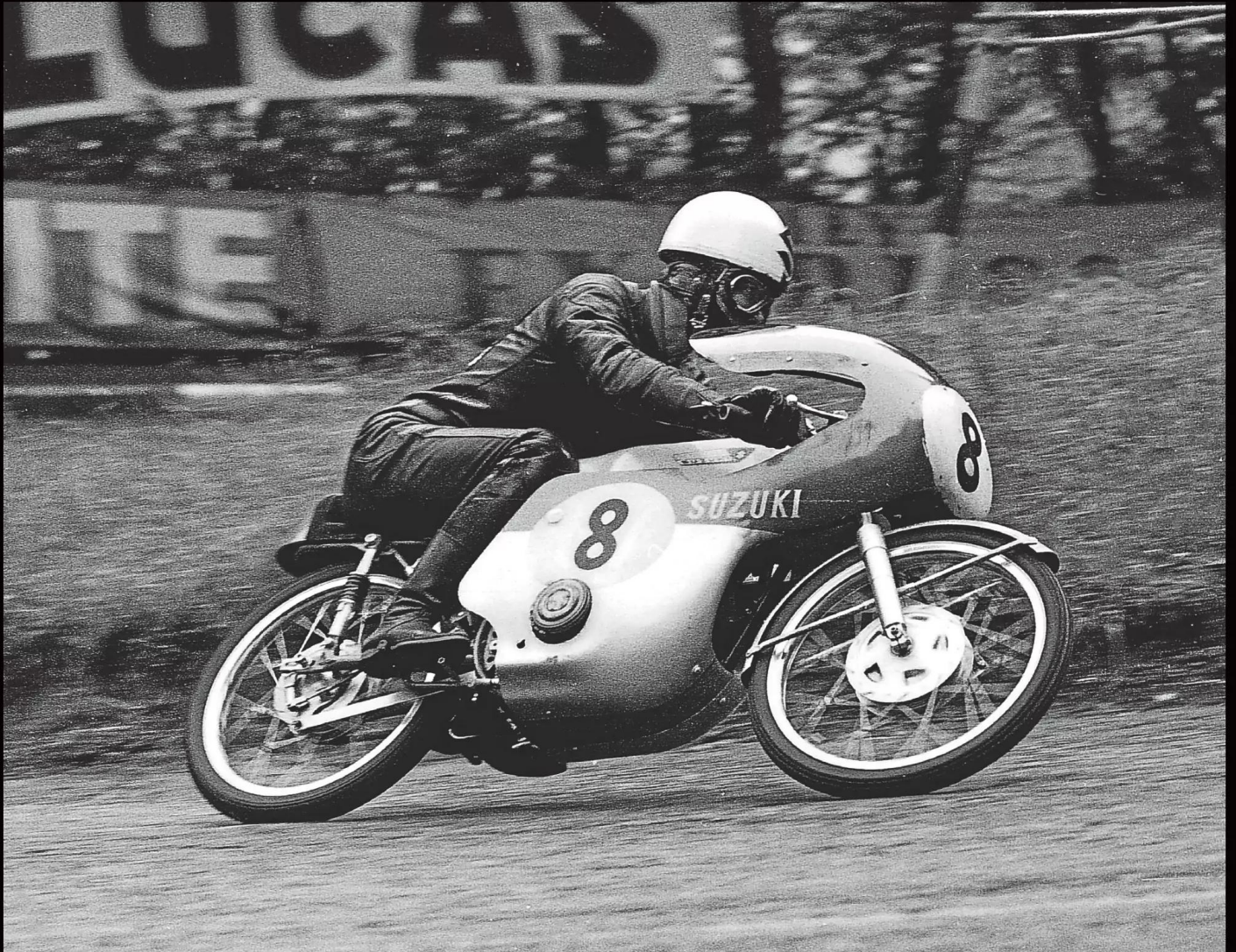
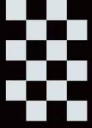
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## ■ NIFTY FIFTIES

Think of 50cc bikes as 'just' a 16-year-old's steed at your peril – these tiddlers have seen some serious racing action over the years.

The 1963 IOM TT saw the first and only overall win by a Japanese rider/bike combination when Mitsuo Itoh aboard a 50cc Suzuki averaged 78.81. In the same race, Bill Ivy rode the 'Sheene Special' which was designed and constructed the previous winter by Frank Sheene, a lifelong road racer who regularly competed across the country accompanied by his young son Barry. The Sheene Special finished an excellent 7<sup>th</sup> overall at an average of 61.12mph and powered by a Spanish Ducson that offered 9bhp at 11,000rpm; the bike tipped the scales at just 38.5kg.





Above: The first woman solo to compete on the IOM was Beryl Swain aboard an Italian Itom 50 at the first running of the ultra-light weight class in 1962. Crossing the line in 22nd position was a great achievement, especially after losing top gear on lap two.

Right: In 1961 the FIM ran an eight-race series for 50cc machines called the Coupe d' Europe, this was won by German Ernst Degner and would be recognised as a new world championship for the following season. The fastest machines in this period were achieving 85mph from 9bhp. Swiss rider Stefan Dorflinger took the final 50cc world championship in 1983 (replaced by 80cc in 1984) by which time his Krauser offered 21bhp and exceeded 125mph.

In 1977 a 50cc Kreidler-powered streamliner named Black Arrowed was piloted by ex-World Champion Henk Van Kessel to an average of 134mph over a flying kilometre.

Above left: For the 1967 season Suzuki had high hopes for their RK67 50-2, a 50cc parallel twin that revved to 17,500rpm topping out at 105mph: all via a 10-speed gearbox. Three machines entered the championship which they finished first, second and third.

Below left: Considered the greatest 50cc pilot of all time, the diminutive Spaniard Angel Nieto won the first of his 13 world titles aboard a Derbi in 1969. Weighing in at just 88lbs the liquid-cooled, two-stroke offered 11bhp at 12,000rpm via a five-speed gearbox. **CBG**



## LAVERDA JOTA BUYING GUIDE

# The don

Forget Ducati 900SS, Honda CB750 and Moto Guzzi Le Mans – come the mid-Seventies you needed a Laverda Jota to be top dog. And beginning in Italy, the Jota was really born in England

WORDS BY OLI HULME PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY CHAPMAN

**I**T WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SUMMER OF 1980. I was at an agricultural show in Devon, because that's what teenagers did in Devon for weekend entertainment in 1980. You went to an agricultural show, looked at tractors, and then retired to the bar where the licensing regulations were purely advisory.

Inexplicably there was a motorcycle dealership with a stand. Not just any dealership either, as the bikes they brought along were a bit special. There was a Benelli 750 Sei, a Ducati Pantah and a bright orange Laverda Jota. And the dealer did not mind people sitting on them, which was another surprise as at most of the dealers I knew of, just looking at a bike closely was tantamount to jumping on board and riding off.

I tried the Benelli for size and I decided it was just, well, silly. The Pantah, on the other hand, fitted me perfectly. And then I sat on the Laverda, for a very long time indeed. It was mesmerising. It was huge, too. It felt amazing but also a bit terrifying. Even teenage enthusiasm wasn't enough to convince me that this motorcycle wasn't an angry and uncontrollable animal, and that if I actually rode it, it would try to kill me.

Fast forward 40 years and I'm up close and personal with another Laverda Jota at Somerset Classic Motorcycles, and this time I've got the keys. Originally from Italy, then shipped to Herefordshire for Jota-ising, and then Belgium, and back to the UK, this Mk.II Jota was as impressive as ever.

There is something very special about the way it's been put together. There are sturdy in-house made cycle parts and top-quality components. Electrics from Bosch, twin front discs from Brembo, Marzocchi shocks and Nippon Denso instruments. The engine is huge, with big fins and sandcast casings, a pair of camshafts and a bank of three 32mm Dell 'Orto carbs. There's not a lot of slim elegance

about it. This is a heavyweight champion, not some lithe middleweight, but it's Ali, rather than Tyson. And the quality of the build stands out.

For the rider of an older British bike there were familiarities with this 1977 model, including a left-foot gear shift and a hefty but manageable clutch. The presence of the thing is what stands out. I'm a lot bigger than I was in 1980, and the Laverda fits me a lot better now.

The adjustable Jota ace bars make for a comfortable riding position. This is a surprise, as I'd expected it to feel a lot more of a handful. Not that it wasn't. Engage first gear, slip the clutch and the massive amount of torque from the 180-degree triple takes over.

Legend had it that the Jota's crank, with two outside pistons rising and falling against a single central piston made the Jota vibratory. On this Jota, there was nothing of the kind, which might have had something to do with the rubber-mounted foot pegs, or simply the way it has been looked after. The machine had a fine, though non-standard, red paint job. Whoever put this particular machine together really knew what they were doing. Starting a Jota usually requires choke and a closed throttle. Get too much air in and the engine will resent the lack of go-juice. Give it too much throttle and the Dell 'Orto's will enthusiastically squirt fuel in, flooding everything. On this one there was not a moment's hesitation. ▶







**“Legend had it that the Jota’s crank, with two outside pistons rising and falling against a single central piston made the Jota vibratory. On this Jota, there was nothing of the kind”**

There is a tall first gear, which means everything starts off in a grumbly fashion until I get to 3000rpm and the grumbling turns into a snarl; things then start to happen very quickly. There is a change up, then another and things blur into the background.

The important thing is to concentrate on the stretch of tarmac ahead, keeping an eye open for bumps and preparing to hit the bends. To my surprise the Jota knows exactly where it is supposed to go. Riding it becomes instinctive. Keep it in third – all that is really needed on the country lane route – and think your way through everything from then on. After a slightly wobbly start, the motorcycle and I come to an understanding. If it trusts me, I can trust it. It does not have the “hang on tight and crack it open” feel of a big Jap four. Rather, you need to concentrate, while at the same time let it feel as if you know what you are doing – even if, like me, there was a tiny, but nagging feeling I was faking it.

Some riders like to move about a lot in the saddle, throwing things this way and that. For me, a more classic, keep the knees tight into the tank, ‘shut up and hang on’ style seems more appropriate. Off the sweeping curves of the former A-road, things are a little heavier in the nadgery. Doubtless on better roads with better bends, clambering all over this marvellous motorcycle to use every inch of the remarkable high-speed handling and every ounce of its power would have made it even more impressive. Personally, I was more easily impressed by the sheer quality of the thing.

It is a bit heavy to heave about from a standstill weighing in at 550lb, as I discovered while shoving it back and forth to take pictures, and I certainly would not want to commute on it. Anyone capable of chucking one around city streets has bigger cojones than me, that’s certain.

But after this regrettably brief encounter, I did feel that the Jota and I had come to something of an understanding. I respected it, and it was prepared to put up with my initial nervousness. Some motorcycles fail to live up to their reputation. The Jota’s reputation

is if anything, understated. An heroic motorcycle, and up there with Black Shadows and Gold Stars. If you ever get the chance, ride one. The only regret is likely to be felt by your bank account.

**LAVERDA’S FIRST STEPS INTO LEGEND**

Laverda had a reputation for engineering excellence long before the arrival of their big triples. Laverda started turning metal into machines in 1873 when Pietro Laverda began making farming implements, wine-making machines and bell-tower clocks. The first motorcycles were made in 1948 – these were watch-like 75cc machines with castings made in Francesco Laverda’s kitchen, with the help of the splendidly named engineer Luciano Zen. More of a hobby than a serious business proposition, Laverda kept making a few bikes alongside farm equipment and parts for jets and helicopters until the late 1960s. Francesco’s sons, Piero and Massimo, worked with Luciano to develop a 650, then a 750 parallel twin and a prototype SOHC triple which never made it to production.

**THE TRIPLE ARRIVES**

The SOHC triple became the basis for the 981cc 3C, an oversquare DOHC triple with the single cam chain running between the second and third cylinders and a 180 degree crank, the two outside pistons rising and falling together, creating an off beat throb at low revs, which disappeared the faster you went. It was a world away from the only other mass market triple on the



market, the OHV Triumph Trident/BSA Rocket 3.

The first 3C, revealed in Milan in 1971, had a sturdy double cradle frame with substantial bracing and Laverda's own SLS front drum brake. Suspension was from Ceriani, with the rear shocks near vertical and the rear end looking very similar to the SF750.

There was a Bosch electronic ignition system, which was quickly changed for a better-quality Nippon Denso unit, and the clocks also came from Nippon Denso and could be seen on big Hondas. This marked Laverda apart from other Italian manufacturers, who stuck with locally made instrumentation despite its dubious quality. The paint was well applied too, in another not terribly Italian move, and even the chrome would stick to the metal, for a while at least.

The 3C could easily top 125mph. An updated model, the 3CL had Laverda's own cast wheels, the L in 3CL standing for lega, Italian for alloy. There were three Brembo discs and a tidied up rear end, featuring a tail fairing. Even in stock form, though, the 3CL was the

bike to beat, with a tested top speed of 133mph.

In the UK, Slater Brothers had already established a reputation for top-notch engineering, building Egli-framed Vincents under licence. When the 3C arrived, Roger Slater got to work on it, fitting higher compression 10:1 pistons and racing cams. Development was not limited to the engine, and fork yokes from the endurance racing SFC750 were used. The bike had higher foot pegs, a single seat, a racing chain and a very noisy exhaust system that increased performance by 8bhp.

Massimo Laverda agreed to supply a factory-built version as the 3CE, exclusively for sale in the UK. Laverda sent the bikes to the UK without silencers or an exhaust box, and they were fitted with the Slater Brothers exhausts. Calling them silencers was pushing it, a bit. The result was christened the Jota, after a Spanish dance in three-four time.

Making around 90hp, it was the first production motorcycle timed at more than 140mph. A Slater Brothers Jota was entered into the Avon Roadrunner

***“The Jota’s reputation is if anything, understated. A heroic motorcycle, and up there with Black Shadows and Gold Stars. If you ever get the chance, ride one. The only regret is likely to be felt by your bank account”***



***“The news of the Jota legend spread. The well-heeled bought them. Young riders sold everything and took on huge HP deals just to be able to say they owned the fastest bike on the road.”***





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Production races with Peter Davies as rider, winning the championship four times between 1976 and 1980.

The news of the Jota legend spread. The well-heeled bought them. Young riders sold everything and took on huge HP deals just to be able to say they owned the fastest bike on the road. The Americans heard about the Jota and created their own, converting the gear shift to left foot and fitting a Harris exhaust system.

A bigger but softer Laverda 1200 arrived in 1978, partly for the US market where restrictions on the performance because of a quieter exhaust were made up for by adding 200cc. The sportier version of the 1200 was named the Jota America. All the triples adopted the same frame with more forward-leaning rear shocks and Marzocchi forks.

Engine reliability problems surfaced in 1979 when Laverda briefly used caged ball rather than roller bearings on the crankshaft to reduce engine noise. The specification of the bearings was incorrect, and they would break up after just a few thousand miles, causing massive damage to the engine. Laverda quickly changed back to the original bearings. In 1980 a batch of a new design of valve springs turned out to be prone to breaking. More positively, a new, more powerful alternator was fitted, and a hydraulic clutch was adopted too, after several years of criticism of the heaviness of the cable operation.

By 1980, the gloss had come off the Jota a little. When it was introduced in 1976, the Jota had everything. It was the biggest European sports bike you could buy. The fastest road legal motorcycle in the world, capable of more than 140mph. Riders of Jotas were gods and occasionally goddesses among men. Four years down the line the Japanese had managed to match the performance of the Jota and on paper at least, Honda's CBX1000 was as fast. And the offerings from the land of the rising sun were a lot cheaper. The 140mph Jota had 4mph over the Suzuki GS1000; but it came at a price of about £250 a mile-per-hour.

In 1981 it was the end of the line for the first Jota. Laverda decided that the 180-degree crank with its

off-beat firing pulses and alleged vibration needed some attention, and in 1982 the factory switched to a new 120-degree crankshaft. For 1982 the factory offered a Jota 120 styled like the original, but then for 1983 added a nose fairing which rather ruined the lines. This was followed by the replacement of the Jota with the refined and user-friendly RGS, which made heavy use of body panels, and the trimmed down, naked-ish, sports bike, the RGA; until the company stopped making bikes in 1986. These were still great motorcycles, but simply did not have the heroic brutality of the 180. Just as the first Guzzi Le Mans is so much classier than the later models, so the new triples lacked their predecessor's animal aggression. Fairings? Seat humps? Rider comfort? They were, almost, civilised. And who wants that?

#### ANDY'S STARSHIP ENTERPRISE

In 1986, Andy Hodge had a Triumph T120V and, having just split up with his girlfriend, was feeling a little miserable. So, he did what any 24-year-old chap would do in these circumstances. He went out and bought a Laverda Jota 180. It cost him £2000, which he couldn't really afford on his engineer's wages, but he did it anyway.

"It was a big brash powerful motorcycle which was just what I needed. It was like the Starship Enterprise compared to my Bonneville. I was 5ft 9in at the time and couldn't get my feet flat on the floor. The power and the noise were incredible. It's got a unique sound, that 180-degree engine, all gruff and raw and satisfying. It was fast too and could outrun Z900s and Z1000s. I know you could rev it to 10,000rpm if you were racing, but the redline was really about 7-8,000.

Fuel consumption was reasonable. Or at least I can't recall it worrying me. The handling was okay, but that was all. I'd previously had a Triumph T150 Trident in a Featherbed frame which was far superior. I know that people rode Jotas on Avon Roadrunners in production races, but mine had Metzellers which were excellent. I remember that it had a tiny bit of a



high-speed weave on bends, and it didn't like white lines very much.

"It was reliable, with none of the electrical problems that affected a lot of Italian bikes, though I did have one problem on a ride to Bavaria. Because we were riding through France, I had to have the headlight on all the time as that was the law. After a couple of days, the battery went flat, and we had to bump it. I fitted a 20w Halogen pilot light and that solved it. I think the 1980 Jota needed a slightly more powerful alternator.

After a year-and-a-half of ownership Andy realised the Jota was making a lot of noise from the top end.

"I took it to Ian Smaile in Bristol, who knew everything about Italian bikes. Ian said, 'I don't like the sound of that'."

Ian felt that the Jota had done a lot more miles than it said on the clocks and before Andy got his hands on it the oil changes had been neglected. Ian was tasked with sorting the engine out, and the deeper he got inside, the worse things got.

"The Jota has these cast-iron 'skulls' which form the combustion chambers and two of them had cracked from the sparkplug hole to the edge. The cams were wearing badly in the head too. The bill came to around £900, which was a small fortune, and at the time the mortgage on my flat was going up and up. So, I had to sell the Jota to pay Ian and the mortgage. I got £2200 for it.

"Since then I've had a lot of bikes, including another triple, a 2003 Triumph Speed Triple. The Triumph was a better bike all round, but I'd have swapped it for another Jota in a heartbeat. When that lottery win comes in, it'll be top of the list."

## RUNNING A JOTA

Keeping a Jota on the road does require you to look after it. This is not a motorcycle that will slough off neglect. Wipe it clean and check it over after every ride. You'll need to change the oil every 1500 miles, for a start. Unlike on a big Jap, there's no easy access

## 1977 LAVERDA 3CE JOTA

**ENGINE:** DOHC 180-degree triple **BORE AND STROKE:** 75 x 74mm **POWER:** 90bhp **CAPACITY:** 981cc **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 10:1 **CARBURETTORS:** 3 x Dell'Orto 32mm PHF **TRANSMISSION:** Five gears, chain primary drive wet multiplate clutch **ELECTRICS:** 210W 12V Bosch alternator **SUSPENSION:** 38mm Marzocchi telescopic forks, twin Marzocchi shocks **BRAKES:** 3 x 11in (280mm) Brembo discs **TYRES:** 100/90V18 front, 120/90V18 rear **WHEELBASE:** 1470mm (57.9in) **WEIGHT:** 234kg (516lb) Dry

oil filter. You need to clean the oil screen in the sump, and to get to it you must remove the exhaust headers. Which will probably require the whole exhaust system to be removed.

The cam chain and triplex primary chain are both adjustable from outside the engine. But if you overtighten the cam chain adjuster, it can snap and drop into the crankcase with unpleasant consequences. The valves use Honda shims, and you must take the camshafts out to adjust them. Setting up three Italian carbs is always going to be a challenge. While the finish is better than most Italian bikes of the period a Jota still needs looking after. A pair of crash bars might be unattractive but given the unavailability of crankcase covers they might be a useful investment, just in case.

Laverda 180-degree triples are much more rewarding in both the way they command the road and they way that they sound, than any modern motorcycle. The Jota is more involving than most and the handling is heavy and slow at low speeds. But at even moderate velocity that 'man and machine in perfect harmony' thing kicks in.

Less mechanically fragile than a Ducati, less likely to send you to a chiropractor than a Guzzi Le Mans, the Jota is solidly built, desirable, and tough. The prices are continuing to rise – especially of the 180 degree crank models. They are extremely collectable, with more and more hidden away in heated and carpeted garages. But locking away this king of the road almost seems a shame. Make that triple howl. **CBG**

**THANKS TO SOMERSET CLASSIC MOTORCYCLES** and to the Jota's owner for entrusting this machine to our tender care. If you want to buy it, and have £12,495 burning a hole in your pocket, get down there and snap it up. Visit [somersetclassicmotorcycles.co.uk](http://somersetclassicmotorcycles.co.uk)

**"Unlike on a big Jap, there's no easy access oil filter. You need to clean the oil screen in the sump, and to get to it you must remove the exhaust headers. Which will probably require the whole exhaust system to be removed."**





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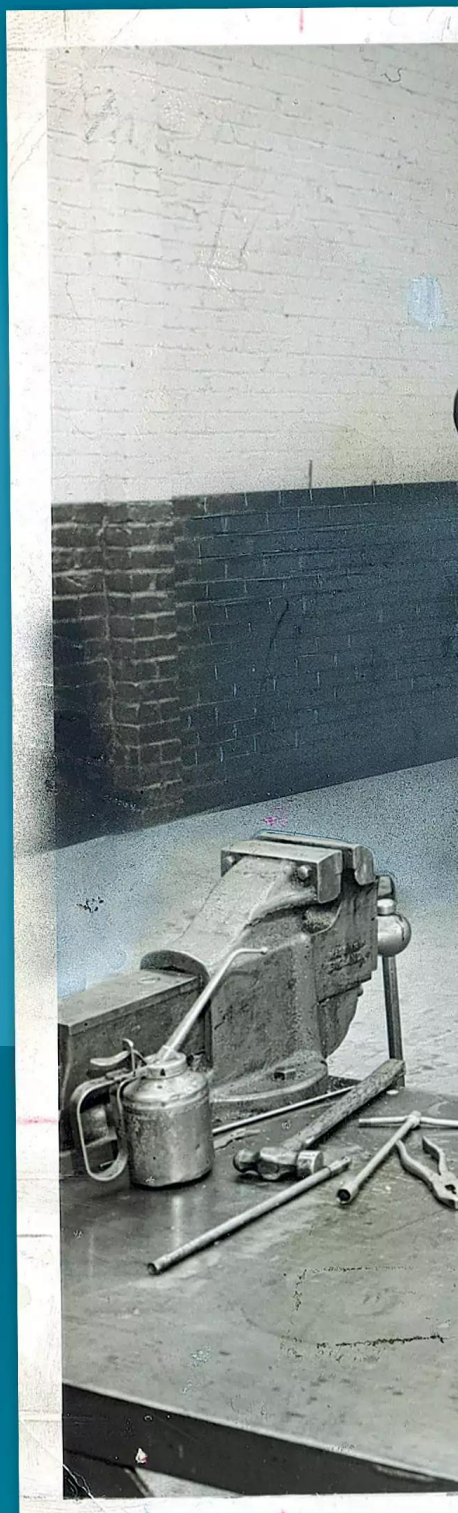
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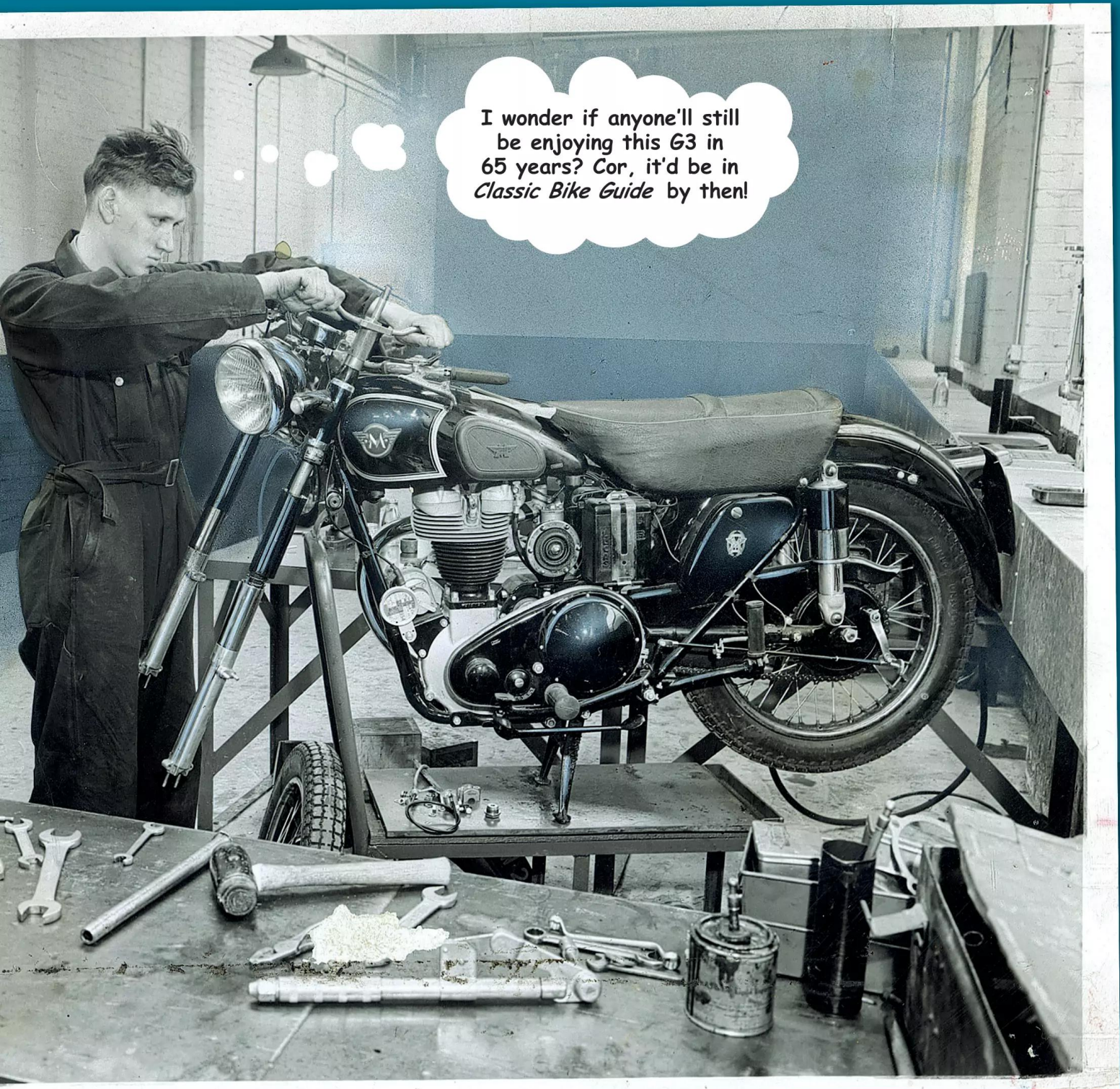
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Above: A G3L receives attention in AMC's Woolwich service and repair shop, 1954.



I wonder if anyone'll still be enjoying this G3 in 65 years? Cor, it'd be in *Classic Bike Guide* by then!



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While there are a number of companies that seem to specialise in every aspect of our two wheeled world, we have to remember that there are also a large number of companies that specialise in some very specific areas. Not only are these companies likely to have an expansive knowledge of their chosen subject, they're also far more likely to stock the seemingly rare and unobtainable parts that can't be found at the more generic dealers and suppliers

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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## NMM REFUSED COVID GRANT, SELLS BIKES

**THE NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE MUSEUM** has sold off some of its classic motorcycles as it tries to raise the money it needs to keep operating.

The sale follows the refusal of a grant from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund, a move described as a "bitter blow" by the museum. The fund was established by Government to "provide funding support to organisations across the heritage ecosystem that were financially sustainable before Covid-19".

The National Motorcycle Museum receives no external funding, relying on the support of visitors to the museum, and on the income from the attached conference business and two sister hotels, to stay open.

In rejecting the application, The Heritage Lottery Fund said that it "did not meet the criteria for the programme, and the board has decided not to award a grant through the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage".

The museum has now had

to look at other ways to find the £500,000 a year it needs to survive.

The machines auctioned by Bonhams in mid-December were from the museum's reserve collection, many of which were duplicates of bikes already on show, though some were rare competition models and one-off prototypes. Lots included a Hesketh Vampire, a twin engined Royal Enfield dragster and a Brough Superior SS100 that has been in the collection since 1979.

Plans are in place to reopen the museum on a limited number of days in the new year, regulations permitting. You can support the museum by buying tickets for a new winter raffle with the first prize being a brand new/old stock 1979 Triumph Bonneville T140D.

A donation page has been set up with money donated used to help the museum remain open until normal trading resumes. Visit [www.nationalmotorcyclemuseum.co.uk](http://www.nationalmotorcyclemuseum.co.uk) to help out.

Support the NMM and you could win a Bonneville



## ROB DAVIES

Regular contributor to *Classic Bike Guide*, Rob Davies, has passed away after being diagnosed in April with pancreatic cancer.

Rob was from the Birmingham area and proud of it, regularly writing about the canal networks, as well as Birmingham's great industrial past.

His favourite subject for *CBG* was people's restorations, which he loved following up – few journalists had the patience Rob did to persist with the length of time it

took some to finish their bikes.

As well as being an accomplished book publisher, Rob had recently started making videos, talking to bike owners and collectors, and this had opened a new world and a new audience to our world, with his friendly banter and knowledge.

Always keen to tell me what was right or wrong with the mag, Rob will be sorely missed and *CBG* would like to extend our thoughts and best wishes to his wife, Jane and the rest of his family.

## TT CANCELLED

**THE 2021 ISLE** of Man TT has been cancelled due to ongoing uncertainty surrounding the development of the Covid-19 pandemic. The 2020 TT was also cancelled due to the virus.

Though vaccines are nearing mass production and distribution, no timeline for when this would be available was known when the Manx Government made the decision to cancel.

Manx enterprise minister

Laurence Skelly said that the TT would return but asked those who had booked accommodation to be patient over refunds. Work was under way to allow bookings to be rolled over to a future date, while operators would be offered loans so they could provide refunds.

A decision regarding the 2021 Classic TT and the Manx Grand Prix, which takes place in August, has yet to be made.

## CLASSIC SHOW MOVES TO SUMMER

**THE BRISTOL CLASSIC Motorcycle Show** is switching to a new summer date for this year. Usually held in February, at the Royal Bath & West Showground in Somerset, the 2021 event will be at the same venue but switch weekends to July 24/25.

The continued uncertainty over the pandemic during the winter, and the immediate future of events with indoor content sparked the move by organisers Mortons Media.

Large parts of the Bath and West Showground are also to be used as a mass

vaccination centre from December until April. As a result, the only way the show could go ahead is to run it later in the year.

The Somerset VMCC Autojumble at the showground, which was scheduled for February, has also been cancelled.



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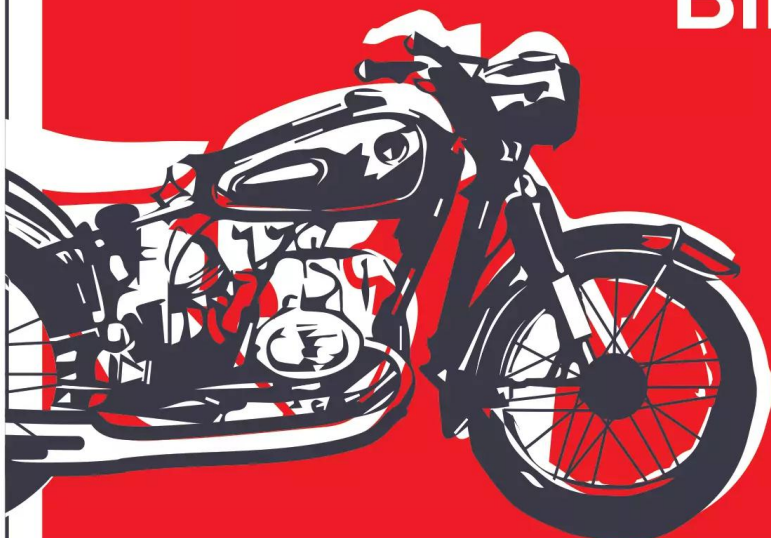
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# Letters

## I'd pick the Kawasaki every time



What a pleasure to read Oli Hulme's description of the Kawasaki Z750B Twin in the November issue, comparing it with the Honda CB750K. I bought mine new in October 1976 and thoroughly enjoyed it. It went really well everywhere, was brilliant two-up and loaded with camping gear, coming into its own on a nearly 3000 mile trip around the south of France in a wet 1977 August.

After my previous Commando 850, I found at first a mild buzz through the handlebars at high rpm as the only vibration and that was certainly much less than experienced on the previous BSA, Triumph and Norton twins. However, as the bike was able to sustain high cruising speeds all day and being battered by the wind got a bit tiring, I fitted an Oxford Cockpit handlebar-mounted fairing. Not only did that completely solve the problem, it also eliminated the handlebar buzz! Looking back I can see that bar-end weights would probably have done the same.

Reading some of the caustic comments in a few road tests of the day I couldn't believe they were riding the same bike. Surprisingly also the real on-the-road performance was as good as my brother's Z650, while the bike was more roomy and comfortable and didn't have the high-speed weave that my brother (who had two of them) said the 650 could occasionally get into. Funny how the Z650, excellent though is, is so much more highly thought of than the Z750 Twin, which from my experience I'd choose every time.

I noted that when Oli mentioned the better-than-he-expected braking, he described the weight as being 559lb (253kg). That is actually the weight of the Honda, the equivalent weight of the Kawasaki is 506lb (230kg), 53lb less and the bike doesn't feel heavy to handle or ride. Also, although he decided that he would choose the Kawasaki rather than the Honda for himself, he said that he suspected the Honda would be much easier to live with. I'm scratching my head on that one, because mine never went wrong, didn't use oil, averaged 50mpg touring and would go anywhere, any time. Can't see why



the Honda would be better in those respects and the torquey mid-range of the Kwak with lighter weight makes it a very relaxing and comfortable bike to ride long distances.

I recently acquired from the US a 1978 KZ750B3 similar to the one in the report. It will be on the road next year restored to UK specification with the lower handlebar and longer rear mudguard. Something to

really look forward to, I always regretted selling OOH338R in 1980. It's still out there somewhere on SORN. Who's got it?

**Colin Leighfield.**

*Matt: Thanks for your thoughts on the Z750B, Colin. It's impossible to better the personal experiences for a real-world review. And can't wait to see the B3 you're working on.*

## SALT vs slugs

As an answer to Matt's problem of visitors in his kitchen (CBG editorial, Dec 2020); just ordinary salt. In case you didn't know, slugs hate it and it kills them. If you can find where they are coming from block the path. If not just spread it on the kitchen floor and sweep it up later. (You may get some dried up bodies!)

If you want to attract them then Guinness or Newcastle Brown does the job.

Put it in a container they can get into and leave it near their path. Only problem with that is you then have to get rid of a slimy, stinking mess!

I hate the buggers too! LOL

**Brian**

*Matt: I've tried this Brian and thank you! This world of old bikes is a wealth of worldly information!*

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# Pip's bike in my collection

I could not believe it when I turned over to the Pip Harris article (CBG, December) and read the initial part, as I am the proud owner of the very bike (in my collection of 75 Nortons, seven of which are combos including a number of early combinations like a Brooklands combo of 1923, 1926 Maudes trophy bike of Phil Pike, 1930 model 24 with Norton's own model F super sports sidecar (which my son left his wedding reception in) etc, etc.



I digress; the Pip Harris combo has extra-long brake and clutch levers, the petrol tank has a special created hole in the side of it, whereby you can quickly put a spark plug socket directly onto the spark plug (no doubt a time saver). There is a cooling gauze area in the primary case. The strengthening

shark's tooth on the petrol tank was also incorporated into the extra-large oil tank, making it a very interesting bike indeed.

**Ian Loram**

*Matt: Thanks to Ian for letting us know one of Pip's machines still exist! We hope to see Ian soon and feature some of his incredible bikes.*



## Starter gremlins

I have a 1978 Moto Guzzi 1000SP. I have had it for many years and it has given me no problem with starting, until recently, but I cannot find any fault.

Off the bike the starter and starter solenoid work correctly. On the bike they refuse, even though the relay works and cables are intact. I press the starter button, the relay clicks but nothing else happens. If I disconnect the cable from the relay to the solenoid and attach a bulb it lights up perfectly.

The Motobatt battery is not the issue. It is not new but holds a good charge and has sufficient oomph to work the starter on the bench. I have even tested it all with an identical battery from my Le Mans 2, but no change. I am no electrical wizard. I understand the basics I think but this has mystified me... hence this cry for help.

**Phil Dimond**

*Hutch says: Three things spring immediately to mind, both will affect operation when there is load on the starter but not when it is not trying to turn the engine, i.e. no torque required.*



*Is the starter motor well earthed? Try with a jump lead from the body of the starter to the earth on the battery.*

*Replace the heavy lead to the starter as they can rot internally and build high resistance – again try with a jump lead to test.*

*The internal insulation on the starter windings are breaking down under load – you'll never measure this statically just replace or have the motor re-wound*

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## Products



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I'm not going to pretend the world was better before sat navs – as a courier I could get lost in my own leathers. But I don't like them. They just seem obstinate. Yet use your phone and Google maps seems great, is free, knows what's going on with traffic and is a terrific invention, but who wants their phone exposed to the elements and light fingers on the handlebars?

The Beeline is perfect for bikes as it's a

simple display for your phone. It is a small, circular device, shows you just the basics you need to know – which direction to head and how far you are from when you next need to turn. It is waterproof and is simple to pop on your handlebars with no permanent fixings. I use mine on my bicycle as well as my bikes – it's two seconds to switch.

Beeline works from an app on your phone, which once you've set your route (which can be as simple or complex as you choose)

can be popped away safely in your pocket or pannier, where they can communicate via Bluetooth.

Simply put, Beeline is a display of the basic information you need to get where you want. It is unnoticeable on the bike, and once you get used to the display and what it means, is simplicity itself to follow. It got me to Hull recently; I'd never been there and it was raining, so I really appreciated not having to look at an overly complicated sat nav. A great device.

## Royal Enfield Bullet - The complete story by Peter Henshaw

■ £25

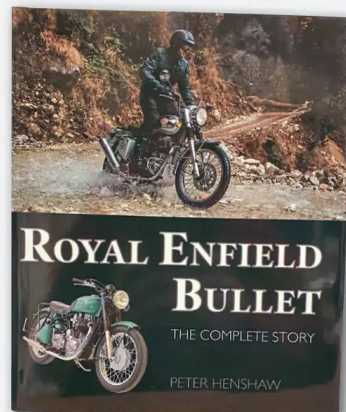
■ [Crowood.com](http://Crowood.com)

Too late for Christmas, but this is a good book for those who are interested in the venerable Bullet. It heads back to the origins and follows the famous single through to last year, which ironically, spelled the end of production.

Henshaw knows his Enfields and has worked closely with Gordon May, the Royal Enfield historian and expert. There are also some nice

chapters at the end about those who have travelled on Bullets and those who have modified them. There's also the usual advice on how to buy one.

In many classic snobs' eyes, the Enfield Bullet is 'just' a cheap mode of transport. But their go-anywhere abilities, their DIY-friendly nature and the sheer amount of time they have been made makes them a true classic and worthy of a little more understanding of their story. A good book, worth the money.





# Clarke Devil 5000PTC fan heater

■ £96  
 ■ [machinemart.co.uk](http://machinemart.co.uk)

The time is here to get those heaters out – but if you're like me, they're old, dangerous and cost a fortune to run. This Clarke heater doesn't make any claims to be cheaper to run, but it is safer, more efficient and faster to get up to temperature.

Instead of heating up metal elements, this fan heater uses ceramic pads. This means a better life-span and quick heat-up time. It works well for smaller areas like a garage, or to boost the heat locally, if you're not moving much when working. There is a smaller, 2000kW model for just £41 or a larger, 9000kW model – but that costs £168. A quick, safe way to heat your work area up.



# Norton Blaze strip discs

■ £10 for two  
 ■ [Coventry Grinders](http://CoventryGrinders.com)

These are brilliant! At first I winced at the price for two discs, but one did a whole tank with multiple layers of old paint, oil tank, toolbox and one mudguard. They fit most standard angle grinders (115mm – 4½in) and are a thin cutting disc with this hard, sponge material that looks like coral. The great thing is they strip the paint without stripping the metal – hardly any sparks come off. All you have to be careful of is getting near edges as this will strip the 'coral' off the backing disc and wreck it.

I bought these from eBay so you can get them from other places, but beware – I tried to save a few quid on a nondescript brand and they fell apart. It was free delivery and Coventry grinders had them to me the next day. One of those discoveries you won't forget.

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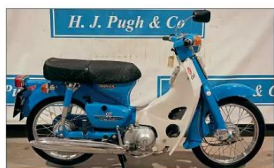
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BUYING GUIDE TO:

# Honda CL125

Snobbery has us all salivating over big bikes - but we are missing out on the fun offered by the likes of Honda's 125s.





#### WHAT IS IT?

A watch-like miniature street scrambler

#### GOOD POINTS?

The equipment and joyous riding experience

#### BAD POINTS?

Body parts availability, possibly fragile if used very hard

#### COST?

Basket case:  
£1000

Tatty Runner:  
£2-2500

Show condition:  
£4000 plus

WORDS BY OLI HULME

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON CRITCHELL

**T**HERE'S A PHOTOGRAPH IN EXISTENCE OF the gates of the BSA factory in Armoury Road in the late 1960s. Riding through the factory is a helmetless test rider, on what looks like a 650 Thunderbolt, and a tired Ford D Series lorry is exiting the site. Parked by the side of the road are a Mini, a Hillman Minx and four motorcycles. There is a venerable old BSA B31, and an unidentifiable Villiers engined commuter. And there are two Hondas.

Given the damage Honda were doing to BSA's business by recklessly building superior small two-wheelers, it's surprising that anyone would be so provocative as to park their machines, like tiny Trojan horses, right outside the Small Heath citadel of British motorcycles.

BSA management were not overly concerned about these tiny four-strokes at the time. In December 1965, Edward Turner had said that the sale of small Japanese motorcycles was good for BSA, as it would attract new riders who would graduate to larger machines. This might have been a little frustrating for those turning out Bantams with prewar DKW engines as competition. ▶



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#### A GROOVY LITTLE MOTORBIKE

Those little Hondas were, simply, better. Better made, better designed, more sophisticated in every way. There were camshafts on 125s, and electric starts. Who would want a Francis-Barnett Merlin with the added excitement of dewhiskering your spark plug by the side of the road, when those Japanese chaps would sell you an exciting OHC 125cc twin for about the same money?

While in the UK little bikes were for commuters and old people, bigger bikes were for families and all-out performance machines were desired by the callow youth, even if they could not afford them. In America things were different. These new, reliable and smart Honda tiddlers were just what you were looking for, especially if a car was out of reach of your pocket. The Honda had an impact not just on motorcycling but on popular culture. The Beach Boys had a hit with 'Little Honda', and a band was manufactured, with future star Glen Campbell as lead singer. They were called the Hondells and released an album of songs called Go Little Honda.

Honda had started making 125cc four-stroke twins at the end of the 1950s. The C92 Benly and its sporting brother the CB92 Sports appeared and immediately created a flurry of interest among those looking for something small, new and modern. The Benly's look was heavy on the big mudguards and bodywork, while Sport had a squarer profile. Both handled well thanks to a stiff pressed steel frame and excellent brakes, which made up for the limited travel from the leading link pressed steel forks, bouncy miniature rear shocks and 16in wheels with less than grippy tyres.

The Sport had an extra crankshaft bearing and revved to an astonishing 10,500rpm, turning out 15bhp at the back wheel, about the same as a BSA C15

250. It went like stink, the tiny engine outperforming many a 250cc British bike.

The Sport remained on the books until 1964 when it was replaced by new model, the CB93. The twin had high production costs and minimal profits, but its job was not just to make money – it was there to develop Honda's reputation as a bike builder. With Honda making all-conquering race bikes and these little marvels of roadsters, the die was cast, and the company's reputation was becoming firmly established.

In 1966 Honda's success on the track had reached its peak but with new rules about the number of cylinders a race bike could have, they stopped making race bikes. The race team's task was over. It was time to start building the next generation of road bikes.

The replacement for the CB92 was the CB93, and that in turn became the CB125SS, the first Honda to use an engine capacity in its name. The new twin had a pressed steel upper frame and a tubular rear sub-frame. The styling followed the lines of Honda's bigger twins, using a large chrome-panelled petrol tank feeding fuel into two carbs. The CB125SS had shrouded forks and shocks and an updated version of the Benly motor. There was also a CD125 commuter/tourer.

In 1967 Honda offered seven other versions of the twin in various markets, one of the biggest sellers being the SS125, which was a much better-looking offering than the CB125SS and one of the neatest little Hondas you can come across. It had a pressed steel spine frame which was heavily based on Honda's other small bikes, using a design which lasted into the late 1970s on the SS50 sports moped. Also in the range was the utterly charming CL125, which was a street scrambler version of the SS, and this featured higher pipes, a slightly raised rear end and a bash plate.

The SS/CL engine had an updated version of the CB93 power plant, with the same bore and stroke, but a few less BHP. The conventional slide Keihin carb was replaced by a strange item, a combination CV/slide unit unique to the SS/CL. The cam chain was moved to the left-hand end of the camshaft and looped around the access to the left-hand spark plug. ➔

#### SPECIFICATION

**MANUFACTURED:** 1967-1969 **ENGINE:** Air-cooled ohc twin **BORE / STROKE:** 43.9mm x 40.9mm  
**CAPACITY:** 124cc **COMPRESSION:** 9.4:1 **POWER:** 13bhp @ 10,000rpm **LUBRICATION:** wet sump  
**IGNITION:** Battery and coil **CARBURETTOR:** Single Keihin **TRANSMISSION:** Chain **GEARBOX:**  
 Four-speed foot change **FRAME:** pressed steel spine **FRONT SUSPENSION:** Telescopic forks  
**REAR SUSPENSION:** Swinging arm, twin shocks **FRONT BRAKE:** 5in sls drum **REAR BRAKE:** 5in  
 sls drum **TYRES:** 2.75x17 front 2.75x18 rear **DRY WEIGHT:** 98kg **TOP SPEED:** 80mph

***“The twin had high production costs and minimal profits, but its job was not just to make money - it was there to develop Honda’s reputation as a bike builder.”***





The side-mounted cam engine was much lighter than the previous offering, and despite the block now appearing to be slightly off centre it did not look out of balance. Valves were adjustable by unscrewing caps at the front and rear of the cambox, and the engine was bolted into rubber mounts and suspended from a bracket on the bottom of the frame top tube.

The shrouded suspension of the CB was replaced by rubber gaiters on the front and naked shocks at the back of both bikes. A new slimline petrol tank in matt silver brought things up to date, with Honda replacing their signature chrome-panelled tank with a more up-to-date paint finish on the SS and CL, while the pressed steel frame was finished in a striking shade of red, or occasionally, blue.

The CL weighed just 98kg. The CLs were not sold in the UK but were hugely popular in Japan and in the US where they were also bought as fun vehicles, rather than for day-to-day transport.

These last sloper twins only lasted on the market for two years, when they were replaced by a new CB/CL125 with a sleeved down version of the motor used on the CD/CB175 we saw in the UK, in a cradle frame, with a five speed gearbox. These 125s survived until the late 1970s when the last model looked like the CB200 twin. Chunkier than the original SS/CL, these upright twins were not as smart to look at. The last CL Twin was a CL135 for the Japanese home market and had a rev-counter and twin carburettors. The big problem for Honda was that building a 125cc twin cost not a lot less than a 200 or 250 twin. Singles, on the other hand, were cheaper to build and the

CL125 name was later used for mild-dirt versions of machines based around the CB125S overhead cam single cylinder engine. The CL125 chapter in Europe drew to a close in 1974 when Honda started making “proper” XL125 trail bikes.

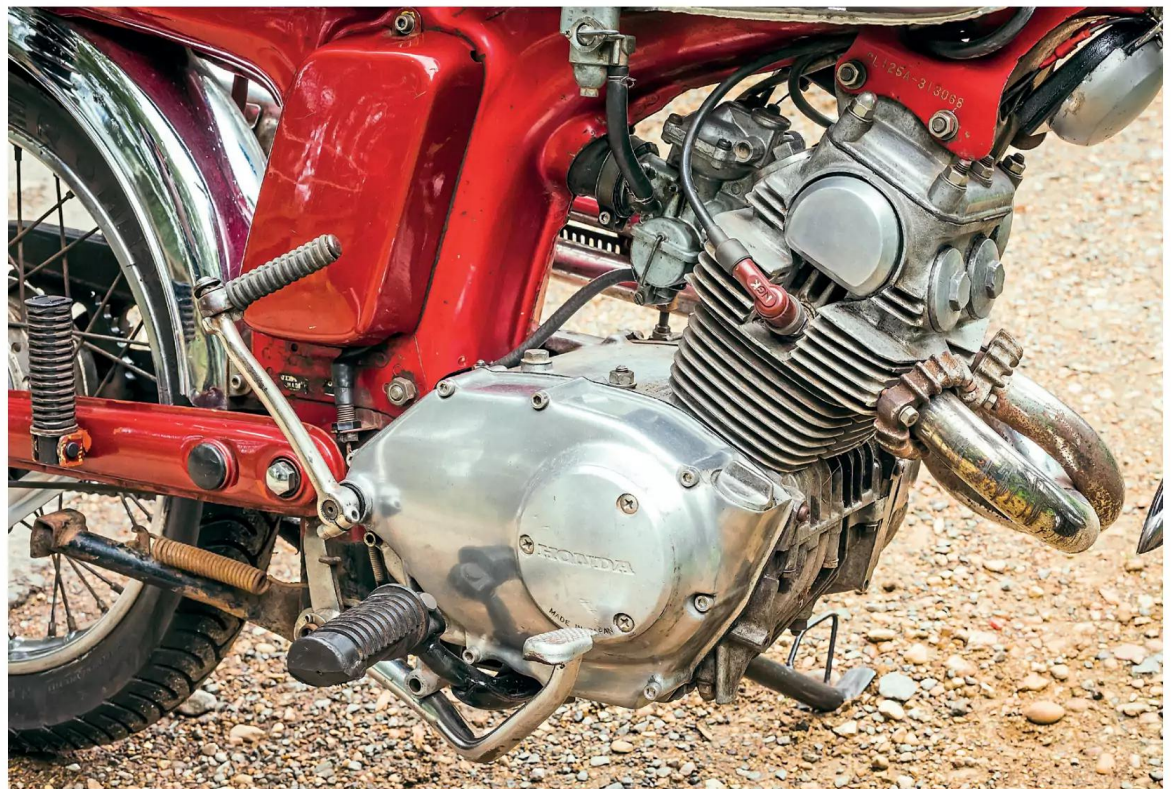
It wasn't entirely the end of the road for Honda's love affair with the tiny twin, as Honda launched a sporty new CB125T in 1979, which by happy accident, as far as Honda were concerned, was ideally placed to pick up sales in the UK when learner riders were restricted to 125cc machines in 1983.

### “MORE FUN THAN A BARREL OF MONKEYS” - LITTLE HONDA, THE BEACH BOYS

For such a small motorcycle, it was remarkable how the CL125 stood out in Oxford Classic Honda's showroom. It was just so darn pretty and it just begged to be taken for a ride.

The dimensions are clever too. It looks like a three-quarter sized motorcycle. On its 17in wheels the drum front and rear brakes are 5in diameter full width hubs. It's got a modern and typically Honda four-speed gearbox. There is just one carb, which saves trying to get two of the tiny little fuel sippers balanced, atop that compact alloy twin cylinder four-stroke engine.

It's got a high-level exhaust encased in a heatshield which, one imagines, is a bonus for the new owner of this CL. Those shields rust easily and are jolly hard to find. The equipment, the lights, indicators and switches, is top notch, and the only real omission of note is the lack of a rev counter. On a revvy little bike with a 10k redline, that would come in handy. The CL,



unlike the SS, came without an electric start. But the engine is so easy to start and fires up first kick that this omission is hardly a deal-breaker. It should have had a steel bash plate under the engine, but this was missing on the test bike.

Rather than picking it up and giving it a cuddle, as seemed appropriate, I thought I'd better take it for a ride. I'll be honest, I did look a bit silly perched on this three-quarter sized motorcycle. People were smaller in the late Sixties, so it would have suited them better, and would have been ideal for the diminutive teenager it was designed for. If you are larger you might look a bit odd, but who cares with a ride as fun as this. Nonetheless it pulled away nicely, with barely a buzz seeping through from the engine.

I imagine that pulling a pillion too would have been more of a challenge, and the pillion would have needed flexible knees as the pillion pegs are mounted straight onto the swing arm. Only having a four-speed transmission was a bit of a shame as a revvy little creature like the CL really needs five, or maybe even six to make its 13bhp properly usable. As it weighs next to nothing, it's a hoot. You can chuck it about all over the place, and the slightly higher suspension

#### AT THE TIME

- Bright original equipment tail-lamp.
- Kerb weight 231.5lb.
- Original comfortable Honda dual seat.
- 1.8 gal fuel tank.
- Twin rear View Mirrors.
- Easy-to-read speedometer.
- Sturdy oil-damped telescopic forks.

of the CL means there is little chance of grounding anything. Trying to do anything seriously off-road would be a challenge, but it's perfect for dirt tracks and grassy lanes. It would be great for beaches too, if you could but find one motorcycle allowed on and had the opportunity to clear salt-laden sand off afterwards.

There are always going to be issues with any old motorcycle, and on the CL they are going to be spare availability and robustness. Even though the SS/CL



**“A tank badge will cost more than a clutch centre. A replacement NOS carb? \$300, plus shipping and duty from Taiwan. Rotten and rusty old mudguards? You won’t see change out of \$100, plus shipping, plus duty”**

were only in production for a couple of years, a lot of the parts are interchangeable with other models and David Silver in particular keeps a good stock of bits, with plenty of those important items that wear out, like rubbers, bearing and springs listed along with engine spares and wiring looms.

Honda over engineered their small engines, so as long as there have been regular oil changes all should be good. But some parts can wear out, including items like kick-start or gearshift shafts and gear levers that have spline fittings, and are going to be harder to find. In common with any 1960s Japanese motorcycle, bodywork panels and other items that are easy to lose or are exposed to the elements are in short supply. A tank badge will cost more than a clutch centre. A replacement NOS carb? \$300, plus shipping and duty from Taiwan. Rotten and rusty old mudguards? You won’t see change out of \$100, plus shipping, plus duty.

Finding an exhaust system for a CL will be nigh-on impossible and if you do find one then you’ll require a thick wallet and the patience of a saint as it crawls across the Atlantic or Pacific. Indeed, actually buying the bits to restore a cosmetically challenged CL or

SS will take much longer than the actual restoration work. Better to buy one with good bodywork but a worn engine than the other way round. The advantage of an imported CL over a British market bike is that the import won’t have covered many miles.

Taking a good look at the CL, you can see where Mash, Mutt and AJS have got the inspiration for their current 125 singles. Classic late 1960s styling like this is unlikely to go out of fashion anytime soon. The original, though, is best. The CL125 is a delightful little terrier of a machine. It’s not terribly rapid, but it’s a joy to ride and as cute as a cute thing. The two cylinders and 360-degree crank mean it makes a distinctive sound and produces reasonable amounts of low-end torque. It presents no challenges with starting or handling and could be tucked away in a corner waiting eagerly to be taken for a ride or strapped to the back of a camper and be the coolest holiday transport ever. Finding a small classic motorcycle with a bigger grin factor than the CL125 would be a heck of a challenge. **CBG**

**Thanks to Oxford Classic Honda for the loan of their CL125**

#### **MECHANICAL SPECIFICATION OF HONDA CB125SS MODEL YEAR 1967:**

**ENGINE TYPE:** Single overhead cam twin cylinder two valve. **BORE AND STROKE:** 44mm x 41mm **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 9:4:1 **CARBURATION:** twin Keihin 22mm slide type **WEIGHT:** 110kg **DIMENSIONS:** 1975mm x 745mm x 990mm **DISPLACEMENT:** 124cc **POWER:** 15bhp @ 11000rpm **TORQUE:** 1.05kgm @ 9000rpm **TYRE SIZES:** Front 2.50 x 18/rear 2.75 x 18

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# AJS Model 16S

Oli has gone above and beyond for this month's buying guide - he's actually bought one! Here is his real account of buying and living with an AJS Model 16S single...

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE SERENDIPITOUS MOMENTS. MY mate Johnny had posted a picture online of his latest acquisition, a 1954 BSA M21 with an old Watsonian chair attached. As he already owned several desirable classic motorcycles, I needed to know how he managed to keep coming across them.

He revealed a few closely guarded secrets... and then he mentioned that he had heard of a 1956 Matchless G3 that was for sale, complete with the famed Jampot rear suspension. Now, I had fancied a Heavyweight AMC single for ages, and this seemed right up my street.

Arrangements were made to come and view the bike, which turned out to be not a Matchless G3, but an AJS 16MS (S for sprung), which is pretty much the same thing.

## WHAT IS A 16MS?

THE MID-1950S AMC single is, as a collection of parts, as simple a modern motorcycle as it gets. The M16 and the Matchless G3 are to a large extent the same bikes with different badges on them. There are

19in wheels, full width hubs, Teledraulic forks and a smart headlamp nacelle. The 1956 model had an SR1 Lucas magneto with automatic advance retard which makes life easier for the novice and means the bike will run without a battery. The mag is mounted in front of the cylinder block. There is a tall cast iron cylinder with big pushrod tubes and an alloy head.

Behind the cylinder there is a dynamo, driven by a chain from the crankshaft behind the primary drive, and there's a four-spring clutch. A separate four-speed Burman gearbox transfers the power to the back wheel. The frame is a cradle with a bolted on rear subframe, which holds the famous Jampot shock absorbers. The electrical system is six volts, with positive earth. And that's about it. If you were asked to create a list of the things a motorcycle needs to be a motorcycle - say wheels, engine, frame, etc - the 16MS/G3 fits the bill.





***“Some of the wiring was a bit confusing, with the same grey wires used for connecting many things, but the actual wiring job was very well done.”***

#### **WHAT IS IT?**

The quintessential post war British single



#### **GOOD POINTS?**

It's solid, easy to live with and reasonably priced



#### **WHAT'S NOT?**

It's not exactly fast or glamorous

#### **HOW MUCH?**

Basket Case: £1500

Oily Rag Runner: £2,000-£3,000

Show condition: £3,800-£4,000

## LOOKING A GIFT AJS IN THE MOUTH

THE AJS THAT was on offer had been restored back in the early 1980s, when leftover new-old-stock parts for the then un-regarded AMC singles were still, if not plentiful, resting in reasonable quantities and wrapped in greased paper waiting to be used.

The tank had been brush-painted, there was plenty of rust on the silencer and the dynamo had lost its magnetism. It had, it appeared, covered less than 2000 miles since restoration. Some of the wiring was a bit confusing, with the same grey wires used for connecting many things, but the actual wiring job was very well done. The original badges and transfers graced the tank, panels and mudguards, and everything was as it should be. It all looked good, as long as the price was right, and as long as it ran.

The reason the dynamo had stopped working was down to a long lay-up. The AJS had been ridden occasionally after restoration until 1989 and then, when the tax ran out that year, it was parked up and left. The long period of inactivity had led to the magnets inside the dynamo losing their magnetism. The original restorer had sadly died recently, and his son was disposing of his collection, with the old 16MS the last to go. The original registration number had been sold and a new number issued, which was a bit of a shame, but on the other hand it meant the price I had to pay for the AJS was going to be lower.

On the residue of 1980s petrol it started after a couple of kicks, indicating that the Lucas SR1 magneto was probably up to the job, and the oil could be seen circulating through the return pipe. It wouldn't run on anything but full choke – that was put down to the main jets on the monobloc carb being clogged up with gunge after three decades of rest. A current from a battery charger showed that, apart from the dynamo, all the electrics were working. A reasonable price was negotiated, and a few days later my AJS 16MS turned up at my house in the back of a van.

There were a few things to resolve. First, I needed to sort out the fuelling. The cork-sealed push/pull fuel tap on the right-hand side leaked badly, and if I filled the right-hand side of the tank, petrol dribbled

constantly out of the carb. The leaky tap was, in all probability, down to a dodgy cork while the dripping carb indicated a float valve issue. I also needed to work out how to get the tap off to overhaul it, and I would need to find some new corks and some fresh petrol pipe as the old stuff was rock hard.

Normally, I would just go to a bike show or autojumble with the old tap, match things up and pick up what I needed, but 2020 hasn't been like that. I had to buy things sight unseen from the internet. I wasn't keen on taking the tap off at this stage, as most of all I wanted to see if I could get the thing to run, so I found a cheap workaround; buying an inline fuel tap designed for a lawnmower to stop the dribbles. I ordered a length of 3/16 inch Viton fuel pipe from an Amazon seller. Then I dismantled the carb to clean it, and it really wasn't that bad. Certainly, there was a lot of brown varnish coating things, but this was easy enough to remove with a little elbow grease.

Stripping out the float valve showed that the previous owner had fitted a plastic float needle, of the kind briefly used on Amal Concentrics in the 1970s. In this case the needle had been too long for the monobloc and it appeared it had been crudely trimmed with a razor blade, making its ability to stop fuel flow when the float chamber was full, optimistic at best. Of course, when the bike was restored in the 1980s, we didn't have internet sellers and Amal spares might not have been quite as easy to get hold of as they are today, which explains this bodge. A few minutes on the Burlen Amal website secured the required O-rings, washers, gasket, filter and a Viton-tipped brass float needle.

The carb was reassembled, bolted back on and... the new float needle had stopped things dripping, so it was ready to start up. The AJS ran, briefly, and I was able to raise the choke slide by degrees, but it was clearly going to take a little while to get used to using the choke lever. This was a new one to me, as both my other Brits function without choke at all and rely on the tickler. Starting procedure was going to be another steep learning curve. ▶



***“I started it and it doff-doff-doffed happily away. The happiness was short lived because the new 3/16 inch ‘Viton’ fuel pipe crumbled to pieces, being clearly neither Viton, nor indeed usable.”***





## Living with an AMC single

### STARTING:

TO START THE AJS from cold, you put it on the centre stand, tickle the carb, and give it full choke. Then engage the decompressor and kick it over three or four times to get fuel and oil circulating. Disengage the decompressor, bring it to top dead centre (TDC), re-engage the decompressor, push the piston just past TDC. Then bring the kickstart back to the top, let go the decompressor and give it a good solid swing. The AJS manual says that if it won't start after a couple of kicks, you've got a problem.

Fortunately, it did. One thing that did momentarily faze me was stopping the engine on a bike with no ignition switch. Until I realised you just pulled the decompressor again. Starting it when warm is another matter entirely.

### GETTING LEGAL:

A PAUSE OF a few weeks then took place as I had to deal with some paperwork. The logbook had the new registration number on it, but for reasons best known to the DVLA, I couldn't declare it SORN.

It took several phone calls to Swansea to find out that a second logbook was in the process of being issued that was different to the one I'd been given. It was taking more time than usual because of Covid-19, and the various code numbers had all been changed. They couldn't tell me what the new numbers were or how long it would take to register it properly. On

the fourth call a lovely lady suggested an alternative course of action. If I insured it and took the green slip that I did have to a Post Office, they would record it as tax and MoT-exempt over the counter and all would be well. My insurance company was duly called, and after paying £8.13 for the increased premium and £25 for the admin costs, the Post Office was visited, and tax was obtained. I was road legal.

Then I had to change the registration number on the bike, which wasn't as easy as you might think. The AJS has a traditional number plate/taillight combo in black and white. Finding a supply of the right sized letters was tricky and I ended up with a set the size for a front pedestrian slicer number plate which are too small, and another set for a car, which are too big. Again, the curse of COVID-19 had caused problems: Most shows and jumbles have at least one supplier of the right sized digits.

### PREPPING FOR THE ROAD:

WITH THE NEW registration numbers applied, I started it and it doff-doff-doffed happily away.

The happiness was short lived because the new 3/16 inch 'Viton' fuel pipe crumbled to pieces, being clearly neither Viton, nor indeed usable. I quickly plugged the dripping tap and replaced the pipe with a length of good 6mm pipe left over from my Yamaha, with suitable pipe clamps.



Then I popped the crumbly pipe and all its bits into an envelope for returning to sender, along with a stiff letter of complaint.

Now to change the oil. I know there are lots of oil opinions, and I could have lost weeks researching the right one and been none the wiser, so rather than doing that, I checked the 1956 owners' manual, which said I needed SAE30 monograde in the winter, and I popped over to Kev at Dog Motorcycles for four litres of Silkolene Chatsworth SAE30. I also handed Kev £20 for a new 6v battery, which seemed enormously reasonable.

Draining the oil should be easy. There's a magnetic sump plug in the bottom of the crankcase to drain that, and when pulled I was pleased to note it had not a speck of metal stuck to it.

Then I needed to drain the oil tank. I unscrewed the tank drainplug. Nothing came out, which was worrying. I poked a screwdriver into the drain hole, there was a glooping noise and the old oil came trickling out. The screwdriver appeared to have an inch of black treacle on the end. A long rod was inserted in through the filler cap, and more sludge was revealed.

Over the years of sitting idly, the oily gloop had separated out of the oil and settled to the bottom of the tank, and I thanked my lucky stars I hadn't done more than start it up for a minute or so.

#### CLEANING UP THE LUBRICATION:

TO CLEAN OUT the oil tank, first I had to remove the seat. This is done by undoing two bolts on the back (someone had used metric items, quelle horreur), and slacken the two nuts holding the rear subframe at the front of the seat and lift it off. Then you remove the cover at the front of the tank, undo the two inlet/outlet rubber pipes, undo three bolts, disconnect the breather, and lift it off. I was really starting to like the AJS. Everything was well made, and easy to work on.

I blocked the inlet/outlet pipes with a couple of Well Nuts I had left over from my Ducati (I never throw anything away), half-filled the oil tank with waste petrol, sloshed it around, left it to sit, sloshed it around a bit more, drained it, and repeated several times. The treacle level dropped, and then I used a bit of fresh gunk degreaser to get the residue out, and I used my pressure washer to get rid of the gunk and any last traces of oil. Then I took the tank indoors to dry on a radiator.

It was refitted, I refilled the tank and reattached the seat (fiddlier than when taking it off). I topped up the gearbox with more monograde oil, as per the AJS manual, and topped off the primary chain case by unscrewing the inspection cap and topping it up to the bottom of the inspection hole. A little 2020 air was added to the 1980s stuff still in the tyres, and everything given the once over. It was time to try it for size. ▶

**1:** Charging nicely

**2:** A leaky carb and a leaky fuel tap

**3:** A selection of Amal goodies

**4:** A new capacitor has been sourced for the magneto. Fortunately it's not the type of magneto that requires a full strip down to work on it

# Riding the Model 16

I'VE BEEN ATTRACTED TO THE AMC SINGLES FOR A while now. They just seem right. Big enough for my portly form, while good and solid. They're quite low, too. Compared with my BSA Starfire the AJS is absurdly under stressed and is not as complex as my Bonneville, either. It fits me better than my BSA does with a riding position that is extremely conventional, and there's nothing wrong with that. It works.

It's always an interesting moment, preparing to ride a new, old bike. Are the levels okay? Does the oil circulate? Is it fuel tight? Expecting it to be oil tight is a big ask. On the AJS the steering head movement was good, and the lights all worked, even if it was a total loss electrical system. It was time to try it out properly. A couple of kicks later it fired-up, and we took to the road.

'Do the brakes work' was an obvious starting – or stopping – point, and the AJS seemed well-enough equipped in that department, as long as you gave everyone plenty of clearance, which suits me anyway.

Interestingly, despite being much heavier than my highly strung and revvy BSA, it covered ground just as

well. It might not accelerate as quickly, but ultimately it was faster, and just so deliciously torquey. You can easily pull away in third. The Burman gearbox was hardly slick, and it's a one-up, three-down shift. The clutch is light, and I did need to give it time before engaging the next gear to avoid the worst of the graunching noises.

Once rolling it felt happy on the road and even though I wasn't exactly pushing the ancient tyres to the limit of their adhesion, it did go around corners. It wasn't heavy to haul around, and the Teledraulic forks and Jampot shocks soaked up everything. I do wonder whether, after years of local authority neglect, perhaps the roads round my way are more suited to a 1950s motorcycle than a modern one. I put about 15 miles on it and headed home, pulling in for a splash of fresh fuel. That was when I discovered that starting it from hot was a bit of a challenge. While it would restart if I just stopped for a minute or so, after that I would be thrashing away fruitlessly for a long time. It might be something to do with the spark plug or, more likely, I need to refine my starting technique.

I've taken to carrying a spare spark plug and spanner everywhere as a new or clean plug sometimes solves this reluctance to fire. Research suggests it might be the primary fuel mixture. Or perhaps the capacitor in the magneto has conked out. Or perhaps it needs a better heat insulator between carb and cylinder head. Or perhaps 'they all do that sir'. Such excitement to come.





# The self-repairing motorcycle

THE DYNAMO STILL didn't work, and I'd been advised a process known as 'flashing' is supposed to remagnetise it, which involves the passing of a 6v current through the dead magnets. This can be done in situ, but it is important to disconnect the ammeter if you want it to survive the passing of the current through the wiring system.

Alternatively, you can remove the dynamo and do it on a bench. This would involve removing the primary chaincase to get the whole plot disconnected. I was planning to try to flash it in place, rather than taking it off. If it didn't work, the dynamo would have to come off to be renovated and cleaned out properly anyway. Then a curious thing happened. As a second ride finished in a gathering winter gloom, I turned the lights on. And then, suddenly, the ammeter needle started to move. It was charging the battery after all. Turning the lights off indicated a healthy trickle charge. Connecting a voltmeter showed a healthy 7.5 volt current charging things. With the lights on

fully, the needle was still in the charge zone. Did this motorcycle just fix itself, I pondered? Didn't Stephen King write about a demonic car that did that?

On the insistence of my lovely wife, I have been told to replace the 35-year-old Len Shin tyres. Is Len Cheng Shin's slightly dodgy cockney brother? To try and solve the poor hot starting I'll only visit places at the top of hills until the magneto parts arrive.

## LAZY DAYS AHEAD

The AJS feels great. It feels as if you could ride it all day and cover huge distances, if not terribly quickly. It's smooth, lazy and comfy, and it's a delight to find that it fits my personal bill perfectly. I suppose I should do some work on the appearance, but to be honest I quite like it the way it is. At time of writing I still haven't cleaned the storage dust off, and I'm not sure I will. Polishing is not on the agenda. AJS advertised the 1956 16MS as: "A pleasure to own... a joy to ride." So far, I concur. So far, so good. **CBG**

## SPECIFICATION

**ENGINE:** 347cc air-cooled ohv single **BORE x STROKE:** 69mm x 93mm **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 7.5:1 **TOP SPEED:** 80mph **POWER:** 18 bhp **FUEL CAPACITY:** 13 litres **FUEL CONSUMPTION:** 91 mpg **TRANSMISSION:** 4 Speed, chain final drive **STARTER:** Kick **BRAKES:** 5in **TYRES:** (Front) 3.25 x 19 (Rear) Tyre 3.50 x 19 **FRONT SUSPENSION:** Telescopic forks **REAR SUSPENSION:** Twin Jampot shock absorbers **LENGTH:** 2159mm (85in) **WIDTH:** 710 mm (28in) **HEIGHT:** 1040 mm (41in) **SEAT HEIGHT:** 810mm (32in) **WHEELBASE:** 1372mm (54in) **WEIGHT:** 173kg (381lb)

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New

# RETRO



## Lexmoto Vendetta

WORDS BY OLI HULME

**D**O YOU OWN A CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE? GREAT, aren't they? You'd ride them all the time, if you could. But sometimes, well, it's just not practical. Perhaps it's raining and your electrical system is troublesome. Or the farmers have been out spreading the contents of their fields over the roads. Or the nights are getting darker, and that six-volt headlight bulb isn't exactly illuminating. The magneto is playing up, and the clutch needs a tweak. And those city streets are a bit slippery too and the five inch 50-year-old drum brake isn't really up to it. And you just want to nip down the shops, or to the pub, and know the bike will start when you've got kitted up and when you want to go home, possibly after a 15 mile detour just for fun.

Lots of people solve this dilemma by buying a modern retro bike to do the job in such circumstances. But at £6k-plus a pop, the big ones swallow up a lot of money. And they tend to be heavy, and expensive

to run, and take up a lot of space. So some riders go down a different route; keeping a cheap, modern 125 or 250 tucked away in the corner of the garage, loyally ready to spring into action at a moment's notice.

When I saw the Lexmoto Vendetta for the first time, my interest was piqued. Lexmoto sells massive quantities of 125s and scooters built to a chosen spec. Their 125s regularly spank Honda and the like in the sales chart and when you think the Venom 125 costs less than half the price of an equivalent Honda or Yamaha, this is hardly surprising.

They're also a cut above your average Chinese 125 in the quality stakes, suffering only in being so cheap that they get bought by young buyers with little mechanical skill and less money, which does tend to affect reliability. You cannot – surprise, surprise – hammer a 125 into the ground at full throttle with next to no maintenance for 20,000 miles and expect it to shrug it off.



## ALL THE GEAR

I'd spotted a Vendetta at a show and thought it jolly intriguing. It has a proper full-size motorcycle engine, for a start. A 250cc V-twin, no less, that bears significant similarities to the Yamaha XV250 mill.

There's one cam and two valves per long-stroke cylinder and the stainless-steel exhaust specified by Lexmoto in the UK has a rather fruity sound.

There's street scrambler styling, which adds a little flair while removing the expectation that the bike will be a high performing mount. There are slightly knobby dual-purpose tyres far more suited to the road than the dirt, there are tiny mudguards, a thin but comfy seat, braced bars and an air of sparseness; this is apart from what seems to be an overly large tank. This might have something to do with finding somewhere to hide all the gizmos motorcycle manufacturers need to add these days, such as fuel injection modules and ABS electronics. Lexmoto couldn't hide them behind the side panels, 'cos that's where the monoshock goes, or under the seat, because that's too slender.

There's a bash plate and a headlight grille and conventional forks with decent gaiters. It would be great to find out who makes those, and persuade them to make gaiters for British classics, instead of the easy split garbage we get foisted upon us. The forks are not adjustable, but the monoshock is, and it's easy to get to the adjusters. There's a neat little multi-use instrument console, a single, small round clock. The needle shows your revs, and a digital display shows your speed, gear position and how much fuel you have left. Unlike many fuel gauges, the one on the Vendetta goes up and down as the petrol sloshes about. In bright sunlight the speedo can be hard to distinguish. There are LED running lights, and a USB charging socket to keep your phone or sat nav charged up. The switchgear is, well, switchgear. The important thing is everything works.



## ON THE ROAD

The Vendetta isn't terribly fast at the top end, but the low-down gearing gives everything a brisk take off.

This looks and feels like a motorcycle for city streets or back roads, with just enough poke to keep up with the traffic on A-roads. It will flip about nicely on twisty bits, cope with dirt tracks and the odd field and it's moderately torquey, even though it puts out just under 17bhp. The bike will happily run at 60mph, but after that it starts to run out of steam – 75 was my limit, but who needs more? A lighter, more supple rider, with their chin on the tank, might have taken it past 80. There's a rev limiter that kicks in at 9000rpm anyway, which should add to the bike's longevity.

It's a little buzzy at full throttle and that throttle is primitive for a modern fuel injected system. It's not terribly sensitive and essentially feels on and off. For anyone used to an Amal monobloc, however, it feels incredibly smooth and progressive. If you are used to modern road tyres you might find the Lexmoto offerings a bit squirmy in wet weather. If, however you remember trying out a trail bike in the 1970s or 80s, then compared with an old chunky set of Yokohamas or Dunlop Trials Universals, they're more than sticky enough.

They're chubby too, and the rear tyre is just 15 inches. Meanwhile the riding position is excellent, and the thing is plenty light enough at 151kg to ride for considerable miles without wearing you out. The gearshift is up to Japanese standards, and the clutch is very light indeed. The brakes are good, with independent ABS on each wheel and decent-sized discs. I wouldn't try to overtake anything that wasn't appreciably slower on the open road just in case you found yourself running out of steam at an inappropriate moment, but slipping through medium traffic on such a machine is very amusing. Covering 50 miles on the Vendetta was easily done, and I handed the keys back with some reluctance.

## WHY A VENDETTA?

Who is the Vendetta for? It's not a sporty chip shop racer for a teenager who has just passed their test. They'll want way more performance than the 17bhp the Vendetta offers.

It's for the older rider looking for an easy-to-live-with alternative, or perhaps the less speed-obsessed younger rider who has just passed their A2 test and wants something with a little style. You won't find it getting you into much trouble, but it's got just about enough poke to get you out of it if you do. I'd be much ▶

***“Their 125s regularly spank Honda and the like in the sales chart and when you think the Venom 125 costs less than half the price of an equivalent Honda or Yamaha, this is hardly surprising”***



# New RETRO

happier to see an offspring on one of these than on a 125, as it seems much safer. On paper this is just what many experienced bikers ask for. It's light, it's safe, it starts on the button and it feels like a real motorcycle.

Performance is superior to pretty much any British 250 and most 350s, and living with it would be less troublesome. A 1980s Japanese 250 would wipe the floor with it, but keeping one running would be far more problematic than a nice new Lexmoto, with its two-year warranty and decent spares back up. You can thrash it about and afterwards do little more than turn a spray bottle of cleaner on it, wipe it down and park it in a corner. Adjusting the chain and keeping an eye on oil levels is the limit of the regular care needed.

It's a bike for everyone. If I had a family member interested in getting on two wheels, I'd snap one up, and end up riding it myself. And I reckon at the end of the first year keys for the Vendetta would have been the first I'd reach for if I was in a hurry, and would cover far more miles than anything else in the shed.

## FINISH AND QUALITY

One thing Lexmoto is trying to get past is the idea that Chinese bikes are unreliable. Certainly, a decade-and-a-half ago it seemed like every chancer who had ever seen a motorbike was bringing in container loads of poorly built mopeds that fell apart on a daily basis.

Quality on the Lexmoto these days is far better than it was. The chrome, where it hasn't been replaced by stainless steel, stays on. The paint is more than a micron thick, the batteries don't die, the lacquer on the aluminium brackets doesn't flake and fall off. As a new model, it'll take a couple of years for the impact of British potholes and road salt on a Vendetta's bodywork to become clear, of course, but this machine was showing no sign of any deterioration after a few thousand miles in the less-than-tender hands of road testers.



## WHAT IS IT?

A budget priced new miniature V-twin



## GOOD POINTS?

The price and the finish



## BAD POINTS?

It could do with a few more horses

## SPECIFICATION: LEXMOTO VENDETTA 250

**ENGINE:** 249cc air-cooled OHC V-Twin **BORE X STROKE:** 49mm x 66mm **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 10:1 **TOP SPEED:** 80mph **POWER:** 16.8 hp @ 8500 **MAX TORQUE:** 17nm @ 5500 **FUEL CAPACITY:** 13 litres **FUEL CONSUMPTION:** 88mpg **TRANSMISSION:** Five speed, chain final drive **STARTER:** Electric **BRAKES:** ABS equipped discs **TYRES:** (Front) 100/80-17 (Rear) Tyre 130/90-15 **FRONT SUSPENSION:** Telescopic forks **REAR SUSPENSION:** Adjustable monoshock **LENGTH:** 2040mm (80in) **WIDTH:** 760mm (30in) **HEIGHT:** 1040mm (41in) **SEAT HEIGHT:** 800mm (31in) **WHEELBASE:** 1430 mm (56in) **WEIGHT:** 151kg (333lb)

## HOW MUCH?

The Vendetta is the cheapest new 250 on the market at £2900 – that's £500 less than the Mash 250 Black Seven single or the forthcoming Herald Brat 250. Lexmoto offers a finance package that, after paying a miserly £100 deposit, will cost £57.99 a month. Break that down and that works out at about £2 a day, which on a motorcycle that will cover over 80 miles to a gallon, makes it cheaper to run than taking a bus to work – or less than the cost of a Starbucks latte. **CBG**

***“You won't find it getting you into much trouble, but it's got just about enough poke to get you out of it if you do”***



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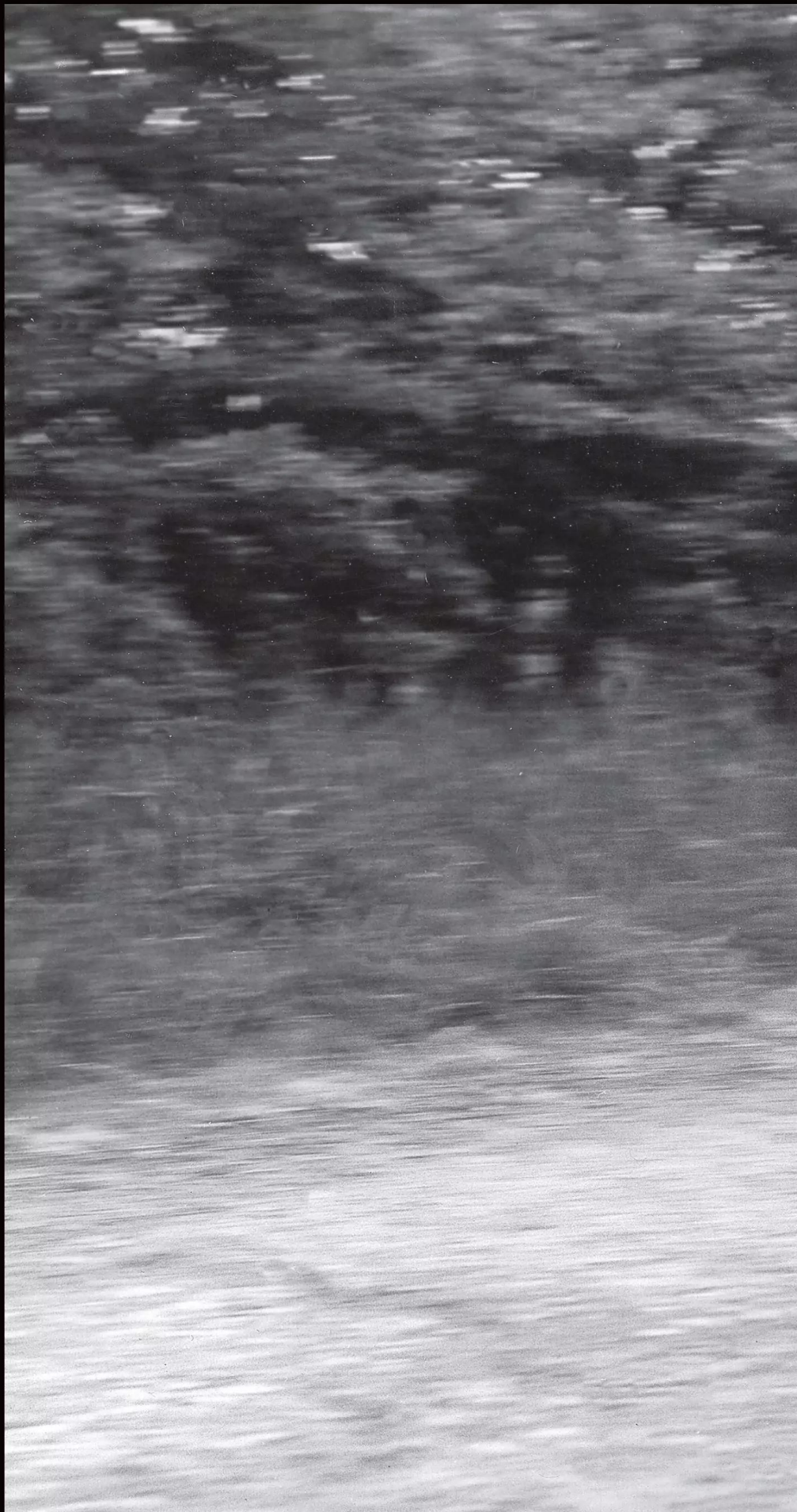
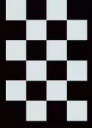
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## ■ THE A TEAM

Mr George Brough, testing 'Old Bill' in one of its many, many incarnations as Brough Superior test mule. To me, it's not the bike, nor the man, it is George's smile. That's the smile of a man who is trying something, has fixed something, or modified something - and it works. It's a sense of achievement and pleasure that if you don't work on your own machine, you can never truly experience. Give it a go. **CBG**









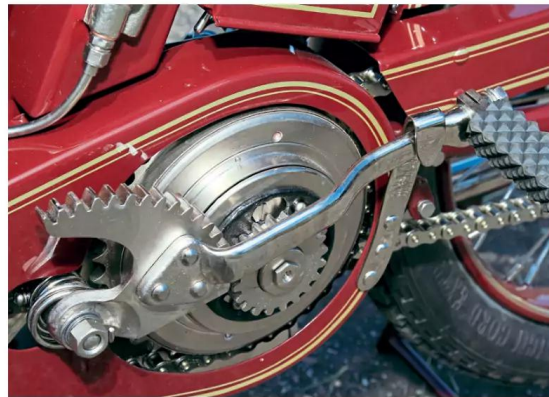
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*'You can't rush  
perfection'*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY ONNO 'BERSERK' WIERINGA - MADNESSPHOTOGRAPHY.NL



PAI'S  
MULTI-VANE 8-1920



**A** FEW YEARS AGO A MAN FROM IRELAND phoned Tony Leenes. Tony, known as Mr Indian of Holland, has an Indian museum in the town of Lemmer, but also sells vintage Indians, parts and restores old Indians. The Irishman asked: “Will you please do a restoration on my motorcycle?” To which Tony replied with: “what is that ‘please’ for?” The answer was that he had received the same answer from pretty much all renowned Indian restorers all over the world... namely a firm ‘no!’

The reason being that all said that ‘that thing’ was too bad and far too incomplete. Disappointed, the man continued his search for somebody who could do a restoration job, until a friend told him about Tony. “I know a man in the Netherlands that I once visited to see his Indian museum. That was in Lemmer, and this man does restorations. If he can’t do it, throw the whole thing in the old iron bin...” That, in short, is the story of how Larry ended up at Tony’s.

After the first contact was made, the good man with the very appropriate name Larry Power wanted to know what it would cost to do the job, and he wanted to send Tony a few photos. But, like so many

**“Well, I really walked around the pile of parts for a long time and said to Larry: “I sure can imagine that those other restorers all have refused this project. Basically, it’s impossible.” Larry drew a face like an earwig and you could hear him think, ‘Damn!’”**

other restorers, Tony had also learned his lesson over the years and said to Larry: “No, I don’t need to see photos, I want to see the motorcycle, the parts, in real life. “Yes, but then I’ll be two days travelling and still don’t know if you want to do it!” Tony’s answer was a simple: “Take it or leave it.” To which Larry responded: “Is there still a chance you can do it then?” Tony: “No restoration is too big for me.” Something Tony later thought differently about. “Yes, afterwards it turned out I did have a somewhat too big a mouth,” and continued with dry humour, “...as usual ...”

Larry came to Lemmer with his 1919 Indian Powerplus, a 1000cc side-valve... well, at least what was left of it. The model was Indian’s first side-valve and was sold between 1916 and 1924. Larry’s project turned out to be more than incomplete. What bits were there were in a terrible state. What was missing among other things turned out to be a whole list, such as the right-hand fuel tank; the magneto ignition; alternator; all controls were gone or rotten; the exhaust system; rear light; manifold; the carburetor turned out to be in very poor condition; kickstarter; dashboard; suspension system of the saddle; tool box



and battery box were not included; the handlebars were knackered; there were no handlebar controls and all the small parts, bits and pieces were missing.

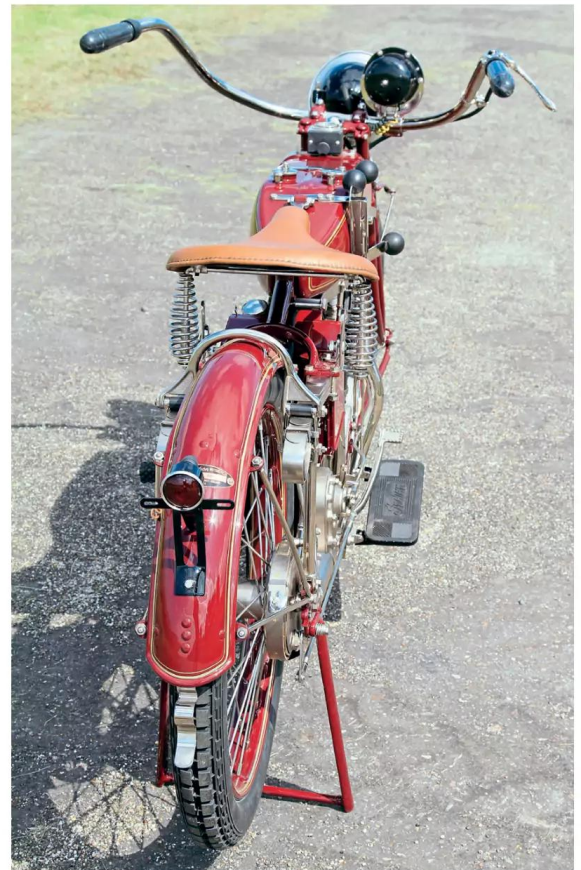
“Well, I really walked around the pile of parts for a long time and said to Larry: ‘I sure can imagine that those other restorers all have refused this project. Basically, it’s impossible’. Larry drew a face like an earwig and you could hear him think: ‘Damn! I drove all the way for nothing?’ Tony added: “Then I pulled him out of the dark with the words, ‘If you have the time and the money – I’ll do the job.’”

The Powerplus is the predecessor of the famous Indian Chief. It got its name because the new engine had so much power, around 18hp. In the days before the Powerplus, only inlet-over-exhaust ‘F-head’ engines were built by designer Oscar Hedstrom who, when he left Indian, was succeeded by his assistant Charles Gustavson, who designed the Powerplus engine. The side-valve turned out to be cheaper to produce, had more power and, moreover, fitted into the existing Indian V-Twin frames and rolling chassis.

Very special is the enormous amount of levers, pedals and knobs that can be seen. As usual, the



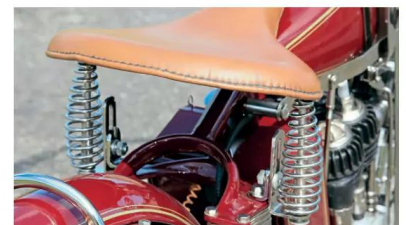
**Larry, with the old photos from three years back in his hand, looked again at the Indian and sighed: "These are the photos of my Powerplus when I brought her to you three years ago. You did an amazing job, I am very happy, thank you very much!"**

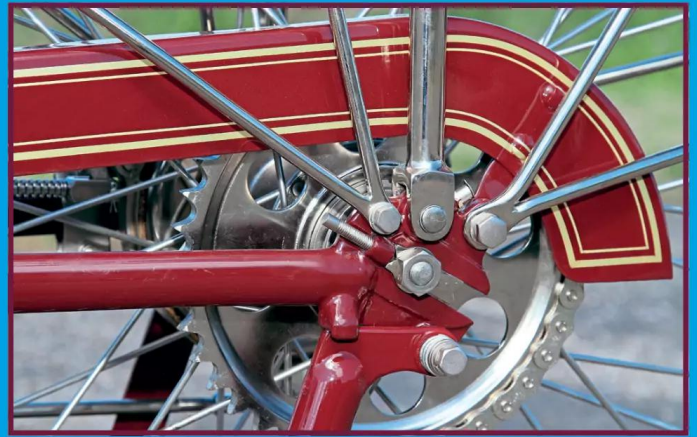


Powerplus, just like the other Indians, used a left hand-operated throttle and the right was used for the ignition. Of the three levers on the right-hand side of the tank, one is for operating the valve lifter, one for shifting and the other is for the hand clutch, which was very ingeniously connected to the foot clutch, operated with the left foot.

The motorcycle was beautiful, proved to be reliable and, moreover, very fast, and Indian seized the opportunity to name the Powerplus in advertisements as 'The most powerful and economical engine ever fitted to a motorcycle'. At the time of the First World War, the US Army quickly realised that Indian supplied quality and ordered 50,000 motorcycles in the Army version. Indian devoted all its attention and production capacities to this order in the period 1917-1919, but lost sight of the attention for the citizen. Dealers simply did not have enough to sell.

Indian helped win the First World War with the Powerplus, but lost the battle against Harley-Davidson, which also made motorcycles for the army, about 20,000 pieces, but in the meantime continued to produce civilian models. The Powerplus was made





until around 1922 but, according to stories, remained available until late 1923 / early 1924, after which the Chief became the successor.

Back to Lemmer, where an impatient Larry came to collect his Powerplus after three years of waiting. Three years after the first contact, and there was a brand new Powerplus. "You can't rush perfection," said Tony. Maybe that's why Tony himself still doesn't look perfect, eh? (understatement!) Anyway, in those three years, the entire engine turned from a poor pile of misery into a Powerplus that looks better than when it came out of the Springfield plant in 1919... over 100 years ago.

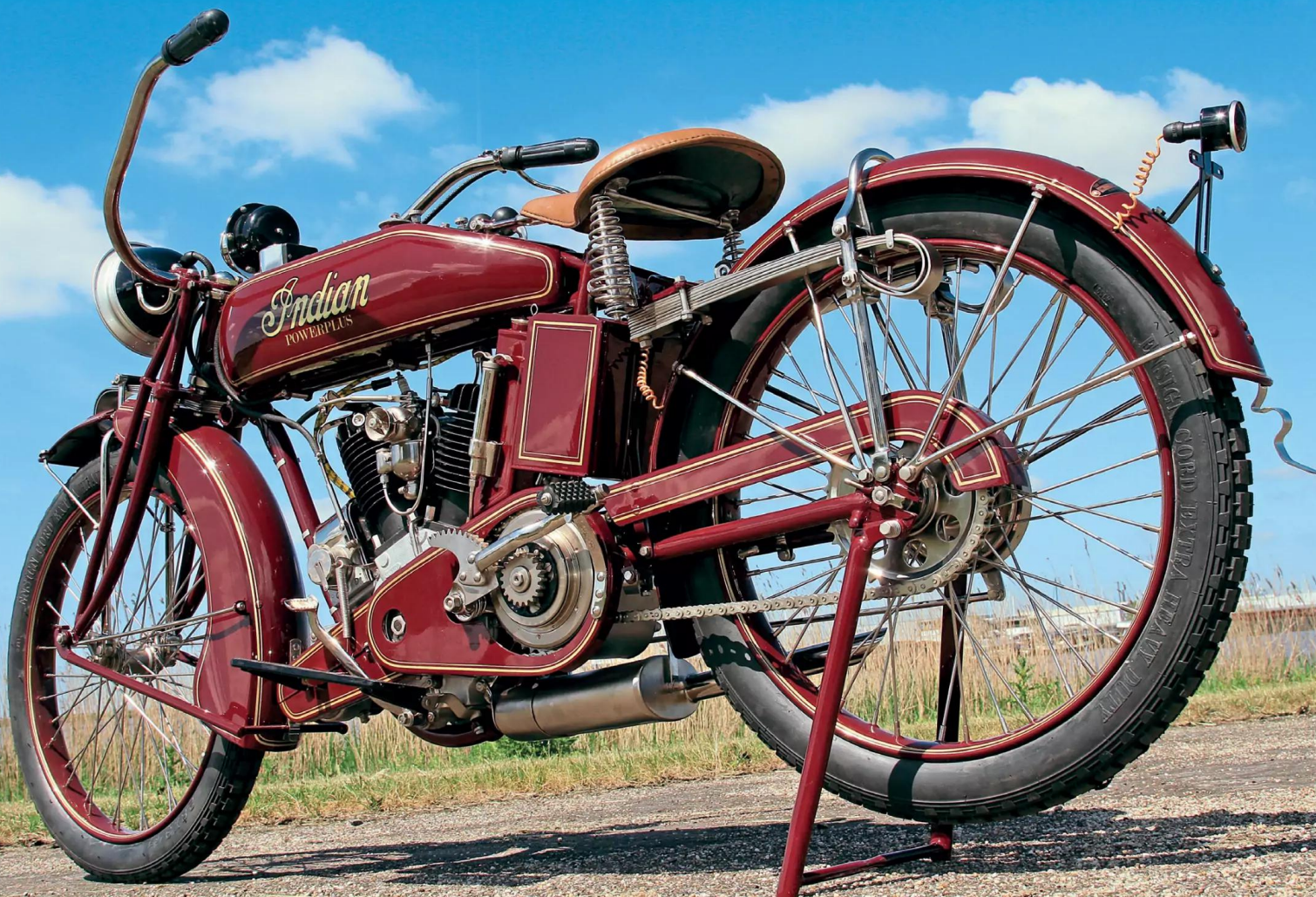
"It was a quest around the world to find all the parts. The restoration also meant that parts as good as decayed, most of them, had to be made as new parts again. It is incredible that the Indian is like new

again, a true 'resurrection.'" Larry, with the old photos from three years back in his hand, looked again at the Indian and sighed: "These are the photos of my Powerplus when I brought her to you three years ago. You did an amazing job, I am very happy, thank you very much!" **CBG**

With many thanks to model Tessa!

### 1919 INDIAN POWERPLUS

**MANUFACTURER:** Hendee Manufacturing Company, Springfield, MA, USA **PRODUCTION:** From 1916 to around the end of 1922 (the Powerplus was then succeeded by the Chief) **FRAME:** Cradle spring **ENGINE:** Four-stroke 1000cc Flathead 42° V twin **CARBURETOR:** Schebler **GEARBOX:** Three-speed with manual gears, hand and foot clutch **PRIMARY AND FINAL TRANSMISSION:** Chain **FRONT FORK:** Trailing-link fork with leaf springs **SWINGARM:** With struts linked to leaf springs, the so-called 'cradle spring frame' **BRAKES:** Front; none. Rear; drum brake, a so-called 'internal expanding drum' **WEIGHT:** 200kg



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# Go ped 19 - isolating moments

This year's lockdown affected many people in many different ways. Grant Ford decided to build another Go ped from bits... and may have gone a little bonkers in the process...

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY GRANT FORD

**T**HE FIRST DAY OF MARCH DAWNED with clear skies as I left the south coast, aiming to beat the inevitable traffic chaos that central London would undoubtedly bring. Destination, Kensington to meet fellow biker and thoroughly good egg Howard; plus one semi-complete Honda PF50 Novio with several large boxes of 'rusty gold' from the 1970s. A frame from an Amigo moped, spare engine plus a plethora of parts that had all met with an angle grinder or mig welder in a distant past.

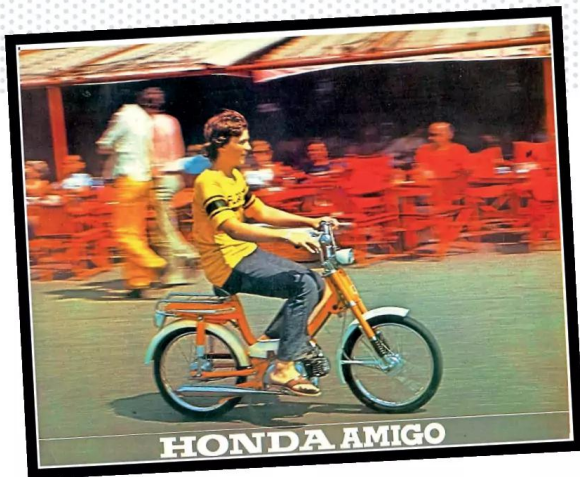
Anyway, I spent most of my time admiring Howard's 1980s CB900 custom, especially the open-ended pipes that most of the nation's capital appreciated when he fired her up for my pleasure.

The story behind all these items (that I would pay too much for) revolved around a unique hybrid. Long before Piaggio offered its MP3 or Honda produced the PCX, Howard's son began to construct a duel-powered moped. The standard 50cc engine was upgraded to 12-volt, powering a large hub motor in the front wheel. In theory, a brilliant idea; certainly, a fair amount of

trial and error plus extreme modifications resulted in boxes of broken bits. With the project shelved in 2010 the parts endured a decade in Howard's lockup before I arrived full of enthusiasm and an empty truck; not looking to continue the project, just aiming to salvage an original machine from the carnage.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

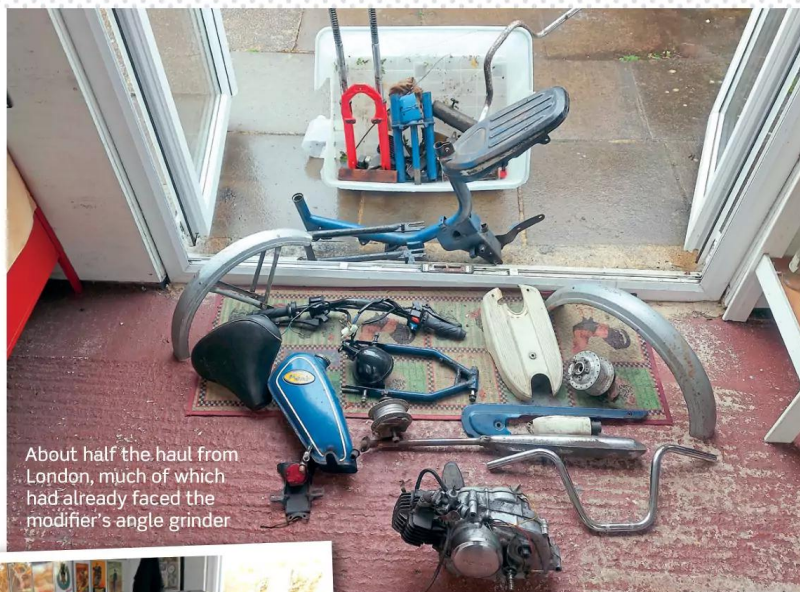
Returning home, my haul was scattered around the shed. Unfortunately, it soon became apparent that my initial plan to restore to original was unlikely, but luckily,



The way Honda imagined the Amigo



The lockdown challenge was to transform the perfect shopper into a 1960s clubman's racer



About half the haul from London, much of which had already faced the modifier's angle grinder



Amigo frame and the first task was to remove unwanted metal plus modify the rear panel and seat post



Centre stand repair kit



Able to stand on its own feet

**“Long before Piaggio offered its MP3 or Honda produced the PCX, Howard’s son began to construct a duel-powered moped. The standard 50cc engine was upgraded to 12-volt, powering a large hub motor in the front wheel. In theory, a brilliant idea”**

I already possessed a running PC50 engine that could do a job.

Of the two engines collected, one turned over with minimal enthusiasm while the 12-volt modified unit appeared to offer little piston movement. Two frames, visually similar and both solid, the first a Novio with V5 and the other an Amigo-R without paperwork.

The remaining parts included two fuel tanks, handlebars, levers and mudguards etc. The PF range of Honda mopeds (Novio, Amigo and Graduate) were constructed in Belgium; unlike the Japanese produced PC50s, the European version travelled on 17in rims. A pressed steel frame and 19in wheels used on the PC are two of many differences but they both share the bulletproof (if rather slow) ohv engine. The promise of 2bhp doesn't inspire many thoughts of performance but my PC motor, a most lively example with slightly higher

compression, can guarantee an eye-watering 28mph.

Within days the Covid19 situation had worsened, no longer just an overseas issue, with warnings to stay at home increasing. Anticipating the travel ban could eventually involve deliveries, getting my hubs to Suffolk and into the hands of 'wheel-builder' Neil at Walton Works became a priority. With Mopedland supplying spokes and Takasago rims, it was one critical job to remove from my list.

As the country's self-imposed quarantine came into effect, most of my days were spent contemplating the Amigo frame; developing an idea to create a 1960s 'clubman's display' machine, utilising or funded by everything collected on my day out in the smoke. Evidently we were at war with this virus and at times like this a 'make do and mend' mentality was prudent. With new parts limited and

most businesses closed, a wander round the 'scrappy' was most definitely out, plus spending on bike bits would be frowned upon by 'she who must be obeyed'... and for once I couldn't argue.

In recognition of the effect Coronavirus was having on our everyday lives, this very individual bike build would enjoy the title Go ped19. Having survived a heart bypass last November, the previous winter was a time of (boredom) recuperation, unable to enjoy even the shortest ride out; then, just as normality returned, months of cooking programmes and Murder She Wrote repeats were sure to send me over the edge.

Could this creation retain my sanity, provide freedom from mundane chores on her list and be completed for under £500? That was the plan. So, with just the radio for company and little fear of being caught talking to myself, the first job involved some 'back to bare' treatment for the old frame.▶



Above: Welding skills needed brushing off



Tank securing tube and bracing plates



Three generous coats of 2K black



Rims and spokes supplied by Mopedland and built by Neil at Walton Works



### IN THE FRAME

Unwanted brackets and fittings were chopped away in a minor effort to save weight; this was to counteract a top tube to be installed later, and with few 'horses' every ounce counted.

Old head race bearings littered the work bench as they had long since collapsed and grasped their opportunity for freedom when the forks came away. Before selling off the family silver on a well-known auction site I took stock of parts from my Kensington stash, separating items that may be useful later; initially, just a few irrelevant bits went up for sale.

Measuring up the rear panel proved positive, as a café racer style seat which appealed and enjoyed a similar size was available at UK-based Alchemy Parts online.

Modifications involved cutting away the original seat tube plus two sections either side of the rear rack, reducing the width; then the seat would secure from beneath, good value at £30. Moped centrestands are universally knackered and potentially lethal, mainly due to decades of rotund chaps peddling their way to groin strain, and this frame was one of the worst.

Elongated 10mm holes plus a worn pin results in an accident waiting to happen. To counteract this, at some point a lump of steel was welded to the stand, this wedged against the engine for support; a thoughtful bodge. My easy fix included one 11mm steel bar (£8 online); a multitool disc sliced a channel at one end to accommodate an 'E' clip, while the other end took the lives of four new 2mm drill bits providing a hole for the split pin.

Both frame and stand holes were drilled to 11.5mm before a 3mm plate was secured onto the rear of the stand, this contacts with the frame base offering stable peddling. Inch and a half mild steel tubing was chosen from Tubeworld and arrived at a cost of £9; this became the support for a conventional fuel tank.

Most Honda mopeds of this vintage either placed the tanks behind the rider or on the down tube. For the top tube to fit exactly the first Sunday of lockdown was dedicated entirely to measuring and cutting, slowly achieving a snug fit before tacking into place. My welding has never been much to shout about; normally my mate Alan is on hand to save the day.



Several hours lost removing hand painted silver from the covers before polishing



Smooth head bearings installed

Below: The adjustable bars from Alchemy Parts proved perfect, well made and great value at just £27

Right: As screw-fit badges were used on this tank, my only option involved filler. Then flattening, then filler and so on



**“A multitool disc sliced a channel at one end to accommodate an ‘E’ clip while the other end took the lives of four new 2mm drill bits providing a hole for the split pin.”**

### FLASHDANCE

Thanks to the virus, this time welding became a solo effort and therefore a new mask was sought (the old one was rather burnt), so I chose a ‘self-darkening’ visor in the hope I could at least start the process in the correct position. It was only a few quid more to purchase the version with a ‘bikini-clad fire-breathing’ witch on either side... but not convinced that would aid my ability to attach two bits of steel, a plain red option was selected.

Unfortunately, the solitary nature of this build had to be broken at some stage, as a lack of practise meant my ‘selfies’ are rubbish. Her indoors volunteered, mainly to poke fun at my welding attire and trying to secure the top tube

while someone screams ‘what a feelin’ took the fun out of one task I was trying to master. By this time warnings of shortages were upon us, with deliveries becoming restricted to essentials; luckily, beer and brandy were still available, but toilet paper had become treasured.

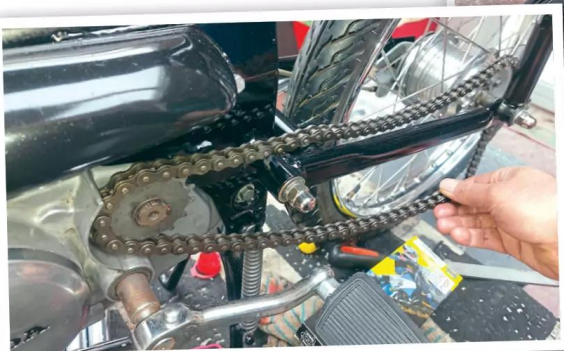
Having trawled the www for a fuel tank, a lack of options proved rather limiting, certainly there was no chance of getting

one made to spec, either in time or budget. The nearest size option appeared to be the Honda CD 50 Benly units, slightly shorter and taller than I desired but needs must, and they were available. Loads for sale across Asia, but again the delivery time couldn’t be guaranteed, so a company in Glasgow supplied one – it needed some mods plus a replacement tap but would do the job and could be replaced at a later



Right: For the perfect racing number board that oval shape can be found in the kitchen; just don’t get caught...

Below: It soon became apparent the chain splitter will be put to work removing some 15 excess links





**“While the mostly alloy construction lent itself to the polishing mop; resulting in two (most pleasant) days spent up to my ears in Autosol!”**



Above: Beryl Swain at the Isle of Man TT in 1962, banned the following year as authorities consider it too dangerous for a woman

Top: Test pilot (youngest daughter) dons vintage hat with woolly jumper, as did TT rider Beryl

date. Now at least the fittings for the tank could be welded into place, which moved the project a step closer to paint.

Week two of 'lock down' concluded, evidently the Easter Bunny and Tooth Fairy were now considered essential workers, but I was more concerned if parts would arrive before the summer's end. Luckily, half a litre of black two-pack paint remained from a previous project which was enough to complete the frame, and several months had passed since a pair of sports biased Champion tyres came my way; they were cheap and I knew would come in handy.

Fabricating continued as easter arrived, the world was getting more bizarre by the day. Classic shows across the nation were cancelled, Boris was in hospital while folk were being fined for having barbeques on Brighton beach. Meanwhile, my ability to cut my own 'Barnet' proved sketchy.

A pair of thin steel plates now braced the front bars, they attached with ease, mainly due to my slowing the speed the wire comes from the welding torch. A mount tube was tacked beneath the top bar and for the first time an overall impression was possible; to be honest, I was not impressed as the tank, complete with multicoloured stripes and badges, looked too much. The graphics were lacquered over, so a repaint (not in the plan) seemed the only option.

### THE PRESENTATION

The chosen engine was removed from a PC50 field bike around a year ago, purchased with a Puch Maxi, both appeared to have spent the years following the millennium attached to Bognor pier.

The underside of the frame had corroded away but the motor fired-up with little coaxing and once I checked it over mechanically, a swift clean followed before going into storage. Smoothing out both inlet and exhaust ports plus all-new ignition are some of the few options to aid performance. Visuals followed, with the barrel enjoying fresh black gloss while the mostly alloy construction lent itself to the polishing mop; resulting in two (most pleasant) days spent up to my ears in Autosol, crooning along with Smooth FM.

Without a kill switch or keys, once running the only way to bring the piston to a halt was via the decompressor, but rather than wire in a new handlebar cable, a modified rubber handle attached to the engine lever was sufficient. The chain had deposited ancient grease in most orifices and would be replaced along with the front sprocket, which suffered from 'curly-teeth'. Good Friday arrived bright and warm and for some reason around mid-afternoon my brave pills kicked in and the urge to paint was overwhelming.



Very happy with the finished product



Many coats of primer had been applied over the previous week and 'flatted' smooth to the touch while suffering no adverse reaction to the flexible seam sealer. With thoughts of having nothing to do over easter, plus the stars aligned with a 'pink moon', my dander was truly up as a two-thirds paint: one-third hardener combination was concocted using the re-cycled deep gloss black. For future reference, the total mix of 450ml was sufficient for three substantial coats to a PF50 frame, swing arm and forks: but annoyingly not enough to include a centrestand.

In the real world, a chap called Ben had worn out his stair carpet by climbing the equivalent of Everest in full mountain gear. In the shed a further test fit for the seat and tank confirmed my creation had not fallen too far from the ugly tree but would appear more interesting once the engine and forks were secured into place.

Brimming with success, another litre of colour was ordered and as the fourth week of 'stay at home' began, a message from Neil at Walton Works lifted my spirits; in just 24 hours he had constructed both wheels and they were ready to return. Other parts though failed to arrive, the handlebars from Basildon ended up coming via China, so in the

current climate I cancelled those; a smart decision when my seat provider Alchemy came up with some bespoke adjustable bars which were sent out 'tout suite'. In the days that followed, there was nothing worth watching on TV apart from re-runs of Carry on Screaming, which confirmed everyone's current hairstyle should be called the 'Oddbod'.

Meanwhile, some chap on the radio had taken to removing his own teeth because dentists were closed. Among my stash of biking 'must haves' was a bag of fresh caged bearings for the headstock (no idea where they came from), but this allowed the forks to be re-installed with freshly greased springs. The tank again proved an issue, as by filling both sides where the 'Honda' badge attached, getting the perfect shape proved elusive; chasing perfection often made the situation worse and several dozen skims later, well it was almost there. A month post-lockdown was marked with a delivery bonanza, not just the rather clever handlebars from Alchemy but also the rebuilt wheels via Walton Works and Mopedland.

Now, that to-do list doubled in one moment, and the first job required old-style wheel bearings, packed in grease with a 'take your time' philosophy. Following the parts book diagram axle

spacers, washers and nuts were fitted in the correct order and the front wheel with fresh rubber was ready to install within the hour; the rear was a different story.

Not for the first time, I managed to catch the inner tube while fitting the new tyre and was later forced to call upon the Park Tool Super Patch Kit. How things have changed since the days of chopper bikes and crap fashion; just sandpaper the tube, peel a patch and attach. With the front wheel in, my able assistant was forced to briefly lift the rear of the frame so the centre stand could be attached and the Go ped stood tall... although it still would not win any beauty contests.

#### LAST LAP

Boris returned to number 10 along with talk of motorsport recommencing minus the crowds, meanwhile my interest in Candy Crush or decade-old episodes of Emmerdale remained negligible, but confidence was boosted when the handlebars bolted into place with the original grips, levers and cables before all their functions were confirmed.

Studying images of vintage clubman's racers, I noted they regularly featured an oval number board on the front, most striking included Harvey Williams with his BSA Bantam airborne during the 1952 ▶



TT complete with fag clamped between his lips. The board was topped with a small perspex screen that offered zero protection and I concluded my creation needed such a thing. An old garage sign offered potential, but being square required altering and to gain that oval appearance; the answer lay in the kitchen.

Maybe it was the quarantine situation that made her use such strong language, but I can't see anything wrong with cutting around the slow cooker lid to gain the perfect number board; topped with a 3mm perspex A4 sheet acquired via the internet. The tank enjoyed the correct shape, so a rich and plentiful covering of gloss black was applied. As pointed out by pro-painter Neil at Walton Works, having reduced the pressure in the gun I still managed to overcook it; the next day was spent flattening out a curtain size run. The exhaust is very 'home-brew', having been fabricated from a couple of old PC50 downpipes cut off where they widen, just prior to the silencer and offers a 'fruity' tone for no outlay.

One thought I didn't argue with myself about was the need to hide the fuel line, and to achieve this I first required a can-do attitude and mini hacksaw. Where the tank (now polished) secures the on/off tap its threaded section was too long meaning the braided fuel line must travel uphill to the frame. By halving the threaded section, the line sat against the underside of the tank and entered the frame just below the

seat. An 11mm drill bit allowed for a grommet to stop any chaffing and the line follows the frame tube to an exit hole drilled on the right of the carb; to my delight it worked with no leaks.

Week five began with the realisation my redneck mullet was now obscuring a bald patch. I cared 'not a jot' as fresh oil went in, all 700ml, to splash lubricate the little four-stroke's internals, then with swing arm attached the aftermarket shocks (that came part of the package) were easily secured with new dome bolts. Having been built up with freshly packed bearings the rear wheel was secured before a 415H chain I had previously purchased from Mopedland got the snip; offering around 15 links more than required.

With all adjustments made, a spanner check followed of anything likely to cause carnage before a substantial push on one pedal to just turn the engine over a few times. I knew there was a healthy spark, so it was no surprise once fuel reached the motor she fired-up; a touch more volume than anticipated, no doubt sweet music to the neighbours. As with most aspects of this build, everything was reduced in size, including the Honda wing decals; supplied by 'chunkymonkey' online for just a few quid. Finally, at ground level it became apparent just how petite this project had turned out, forcing the decision to find a test rider who was gullible enough to be first aboard – also light enough to allow for the performance potential to be exploited.



After much persuasion, my youngest daughter was roped in, this also allowed for social distancing rules to apply. Our empty road was bathed in early morning sunlight, the dawn chorus supplied by the open exhaust and having never ridden a motorised bike our brave pilot wobbled off into the distance. Complete with 1950s TT rider Beryl Swain cork helmet and woolly jumper I must confess to being impressed at my offspring's ability to ride incredibly slowly without falling off.

While the Go ped 19 will win few plaudits for beauty (as ugly as the virus itself) or in fact performance, this Honda offered a focus during six dark weeks, forcing some 'outside the box' thinking and came in just over budget.

Up with the lark every day, the shed became the centre of my universe, a project confirming that well-used adage 'size doesn't matter'. Well not to me anyway, my biggest dilemma, what am I going to do tomorrow? **CBG**

# The Monthly Motorbike



MONTHLY NEWS

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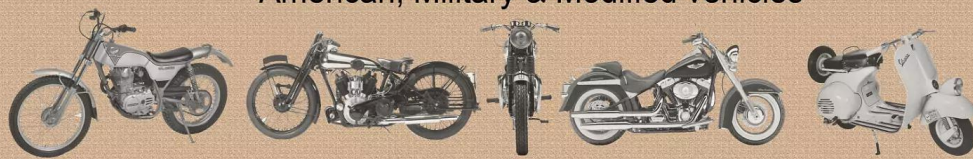
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# Music, motorbikes and the odd Matchless twin

John Kane talks us through his history of bikes and why he's ended up with his current BSA B33 chopper

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN KANE

**T**HE FIRST AMC TWIN I RODE WAS A NON-roadworthy Matchless 500 on Southport beach with a friend when we were just 15 years old. It was the early 1970s and at that time there was a selection of young men in Southport, Merseyside, who would push their motorbikes and scooters down to the beach and ride them for miles.

On the beach there were no licence, MoT or insurance laws. Our particular push to the beach would take us through Birkdale, past a pub where a

boy would make rude gestures at us; that boy was Lee Mack, now a famous comedian. The other claim to fame on that push was we went past Ginger McCain's stables, home to Red Rum, where we would often see the famous racehorse training on the beach.

Southport beach at that time used to also have legitimate organised beach races, where a mixture of modified old Brit iron, snaking side cars and motocross bikes would battle their way round an oval track. Riding on the beach on the neglected Matchless could be fast on the hard sand down by the sea or bumpy and slower further from the water's edge. But you had to be prepared to come off now and then when you hit a pothole in the sand. Surprisingly that £10 Matchless 500 was indestructible, especially considering we did not know how to maintain it.

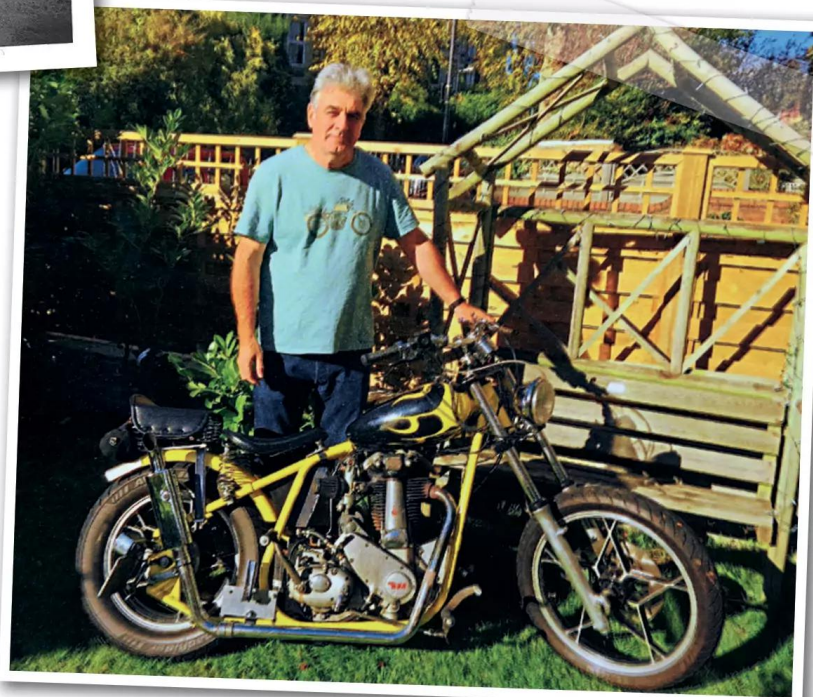
Two road legal BSAs later we reach 1977; I have moved to Cardiff University and the world of music is



***“If I did get it going, I would not be chasing the Los Angeles sun, but would be chased by the South Wales rain on my way to a less glamorous Newport”***

changing; we have had pub rock, including the great Dr Feelgood, and we are moving into punk. I liked punk and its ethos of getting away from over blown groups in gigantic venues, but could not bring myself to cut off my long hair. I also liked choppers at this time, even though they are then being exhibited with a lot of gold plating.

The chance came to trade my cafe racer BSA A10 for a friend's non-running AJS 600 Twin chopper. If I did get it going, I would not be chasing the Los Angeles sun, but would be chased by the South Wales rain. The chopper, let's use the term loosely, had extended chrome girder forks, a Triumph front wheel and brake, a chrome cruise footrest bar, a custom pair of exhaust pipes and a pair of conrods supporting the petrol tank. After a trip to Pride and Clarke's in London, it now sported a small headlight and a 'tuck and roll' seat. An exchange magneto from the then-original autojumble in Bolton soon had the motor running.



The maiden voyage on the AJS, after an all-nighter building it in the kitchen, was to the Red House pub on the then-derelect industrial Cardiff Bay. This journey was a rapid learning curve in why chopper owners with extended forks 'rake' their frames, to restore the proper ground clearance.

As my AJS was un-raked, the front sat far too high and it fell into corners and ran wide. Nerves were required to bank over and make sure you went where you wanted, rather than where the bike wanted to go. I did like the bobbing of the girders though, and they absorbed bumps beautifully. I am still a fan of girders.

A few weeks of riding and I was ready to return from Cardiff to Southport for the Christmas break. This trip was to show up my ignorance of AMC Twins. As well as springing leaks from the petrol tank, unbeknown to me, on the return to Cardiff I also sprang a leak from the dynamo/crankcase joint through not having in place the long screw that pulls the dynamo tight against the crankcase. With one leg of my jeans full of leaked petrol, I put on the rear brake, only for the back tyre to lose grip and skid the bike into the path of oncoming traffic on the other side of the road! Luckily we did not have an accident – the oil from the dynamo / crankcase joint leak had run along the timing case onto the gearbox and from there onto the rear wheel. This did teach me to definitely refer to a motorbike manual before building a bike in future.

The AJS was sold to enable me to concentrate on my studies, but was followed by a BSA B33 with a bright yellow frame, which was a non-runner from a friend's shed. Having got this running and MoT'd, I kept it for seven years. I loved that motorbike and despite forays into more glamorous machines – a Weslake eight-valve Triton and a Thunderbird Tribsa – the B33 (with one engine and gearbox rebuild) kept going, day-in, day-out. It took me to the Isle of Man twice, to Penzance and to Winchester several times to see my brother. It was also my daily transport around London for several years.

It had alloy mudguards, no toolbox and was as light as I could get it, but it would still run out of puff on the then-seemingly unrestricted speed limit North Circular. It would go along comfortably at 55mph and sometimes 60. That was an improvement as when I first got it, it would partially seize at this speed as the previous owner had left out the oil thrower that should have been in the engine on the crank, to throw oil up under the piston.

I stupidly sold the B33 to buy an A65 and last saw it in Wandsworth. I gave chase crying "that's my bike – come back!" UTA584, I know you're out there.



Thirty-odd years later via arigid M20, Norton 99, Ariel 500 single, a Tribsa and two Venoms, I bought a 1961 Matchless G12 with a sound engine and gearbox. This was my re-entry into British motorbikes after a spell of BMW R60 and R75 ownership.

The Matchless all worked apart from an oval front brake and over worn 'self-aligning' steering head recesses for the steering head bearings in the frame headstock. A couple of turned inserts to relocate the bearings sorted this out. The Matchless made a great noise with its megaphone silencers.

While roaring around Bristol (moved again, this time with family), I started to lust after my dream motorbikes, one of which was the AMC 650CSR – all that aluminium and chrome, with no frills, alloy mudguards spaced some way from the wheels by lovely proportioned gloss black stays, slim seat and siamesed exhaust. All designed by the factory like a desert sled. No deep-valanced mudguards here.

When a little money came my way and the chance to buy a non-runner came up I took a chance and bought it. This Matchless G12 CSR 650 has seen better days, but a lot of parts had been collected to go with it, including a reconditioned magneto and new mudguards and stays. The chrome on the exhaust and Dunlop rims was good. The owner said he'd had it running. I took a chance



***“I started to lust after my dream motorbikes, one of which was the AMC 650CSR. All that aluminium and chrome, with no frills, alloy mudguards spaced some way from the wheels by lovely proportioned gloss black stays, slim seat and siamesed exhaust”***

I may have to rebuild the engine, it was the right price, so I bought it.

The carb was in such a bad state it was worn beyond a very expensive repair so I bought a new one. The main bearings felt okay. So with new fork bushes, a new magneto drive sprocket and new tappet adjusting bolts, I managed to get it up out of the basement “with a little help from my friends” and “fire it up”, as Joe Cocker would say.

It's a lovely looker now its together, but also has an oval front brake and worn steering head bearings! I've had it on the road over the summer

but it's making an unhealthy knocking noise from the motor when revved hard and is running hot, plus the gear lever has an over long throw. If anyone knows why, could they let me know?

So it's back into the basement for a strip down.

While reacquainting myself with my blast from the past AMC twin, I started to equally lust after a rigid BSA B33 chopper I'd seen on one of those social media sale sites. I was about to go into hospital for a knee replacement and the Pearson electric start this B33 came with could potentially come in handy.

This bright yellow old school vintage chopper, despite my experience, intrigued me. I knew my old rigid framed BSA M20 (again regrettably sold) used





to handle really well and my old rigid Ariel. Also the forward controls on the B33 chopper may help while I recover from my operation. I bought the B33 as, despite its beauty in my eyes, it did not sell over the winter. I did ride it with its unsprung tuck and roll seat and ape hangers, but as suspected it was too much of a bone shaker for me.

As intended when I first saw it, I built forward and rear seat brackets for it, and rear footrest brackets, then attached a sprung 'tractor' seat and sprung pillion seat and custom rear footrests. Once I had done this, plus extended the rear mudguard, fitted a silencer and some low handlebars, I was happy.

The B33 has a Suzuki GS550 front end and rear wheel and the front disc is very effective, but the forks are too stiff for the lightness of the bike, so one day I will get round to changing the fork oil to a thinner oil; in the meantime it's good on smooth roads but a bit harsh and jarring at the front end on urban bumpy

roads. On that 'one day' I will also cure the leaky gearbox and primary chain case.

For now, as long as I accept the beloved B33 has limited ground clearance, I am happy to commute to work from Bristol to Weston-super-Mare every now and again and run around the Forest of Dean and bikers' favourite, Tintern Abbey, on it.

The B33 was originally built, I understand, by quite a famous chopper builder called Yamy and has been well engineered. It has been accepted by my local BSA and AMC owners' clubs and local VMCC without any rude comments. I think because of the build quality. The flame petrol tank patina is going a little far and beginning to peel. It has been as reliable as promised. The battery needs to be fully charged for the electric start to work, but it kicks easily.

So how does it feel? On first riding my B33 I was back in my element in terms of the great sound B33s make and the great torque sensation a B33 delivers. Chuff chuff chuff... like some steam punk mix between a steam engine and a mechanical beast.

Does it drive like some darting squirrel zig zagging across the road with speedy changes of direction? – No. Like rumbling thunder rolling across the sky? – No. Do I need a simile to describe a great bike? – No.

It's fast, it's loud, it goes, it stops and in my mind it handles like a dream; racing into my glorious sunset, black clouds gathering on the horizon.

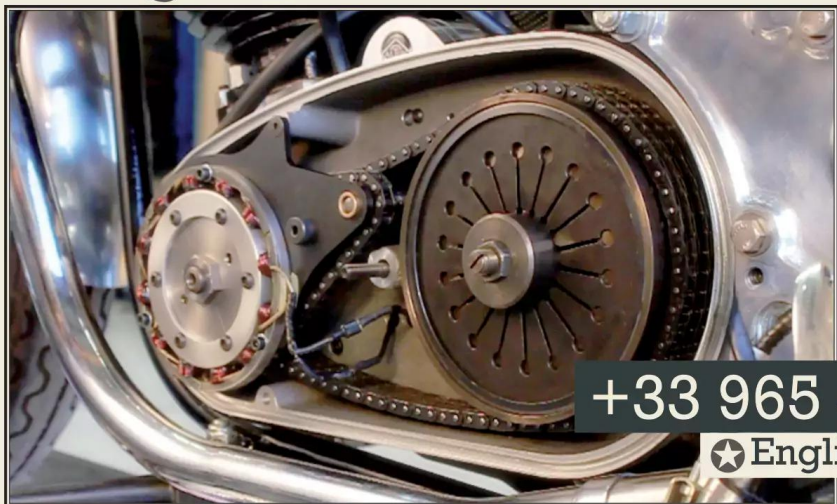
My friend from the 1970s, Henry, who took the AJS chopper photos (who I bumped into in Bristol 30 years later), may be able to leave me around the twisties these days on his rigid 350 BSA Gold Star, but I don't mind, because in my mind I am running free and wild "looking for adventure and whatever comes my way". Reverting to my youth for a couple of hours, but hopefully a little more mechanically empathetic these days, in the slightly altered words of the musician Chris Spedding: "Motorbiking doing 55 so glad to be alive!" **CBC**



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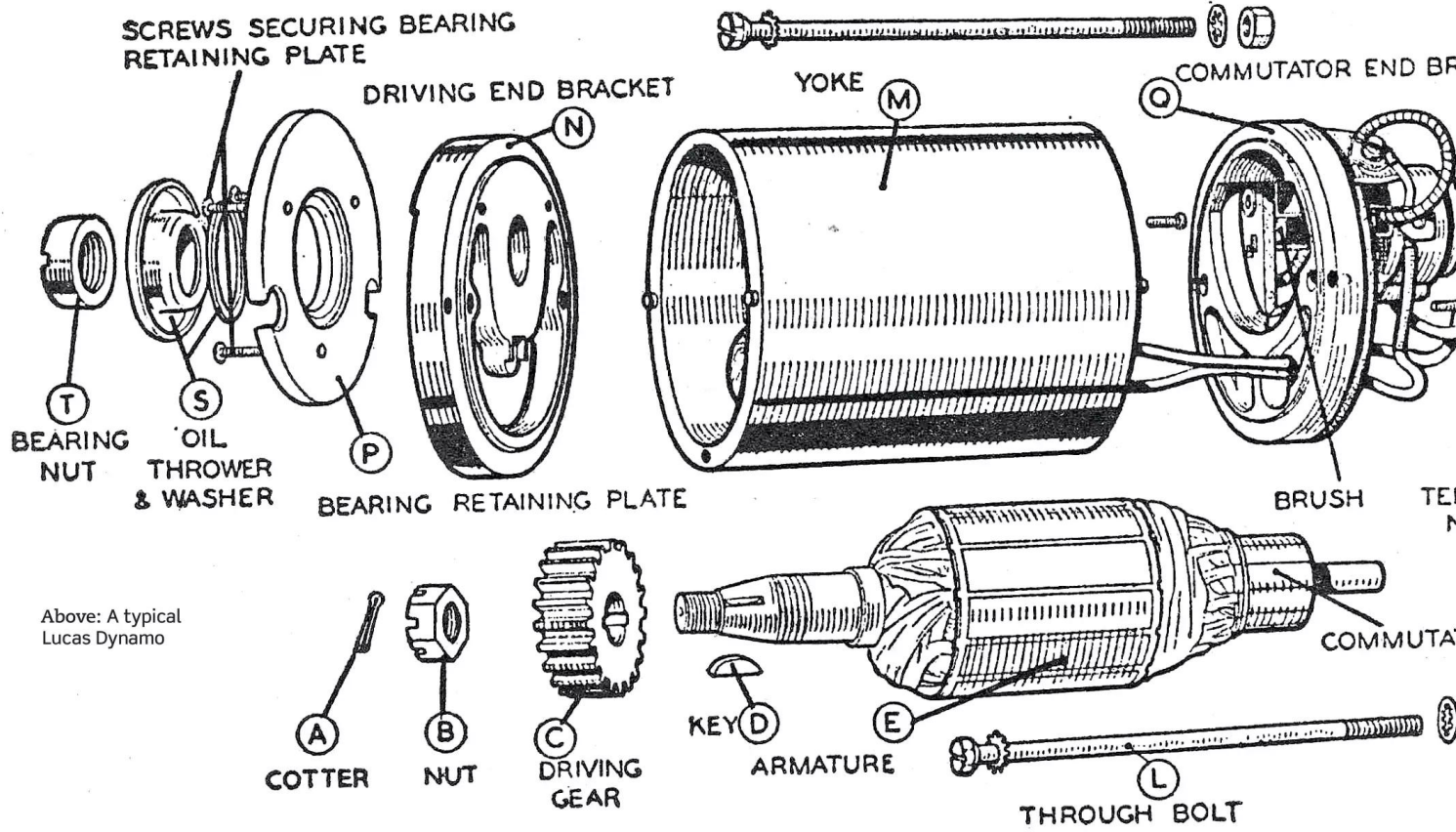
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# Gold Star electrics A LONG 'SHORT' TALE

WORDS BY PAUL SPAVEN

**F**OR TOO LONG I HAVE BEEN IGNORING THE FACT that when I switched on the lights of my otherwise nearly perfect 1956 BSA DBD34 Gold Star, the ammeter swung over to the minus side; the battery was being discharged. As my riding is during daylight hours and the noise from the bike is a pretty good warning to others of my presence, I didn't worry about it.

Until my chum Alan, a Norton fan, suggested that he and I go out for an evening blast – he on his newly rebuilt Manx. I am confident that the Goldie would storm ahead, but I would certainly not be in the lead after dark. Something had to be done...

With my trusty digital multimeter I checked the battery at rest and then with the lights on – both with and without the engine running. Definitely discharging under lighting load.

Phil Pearson Jnr and John Edwards had fitted an electric start on my bike about 18 months ago, converted the electrics to 12v/negative earth, and installed a DVR2N regulator. Perhaps that little device was faulty? That would be unusual – everyone tells me that they are brilliant.

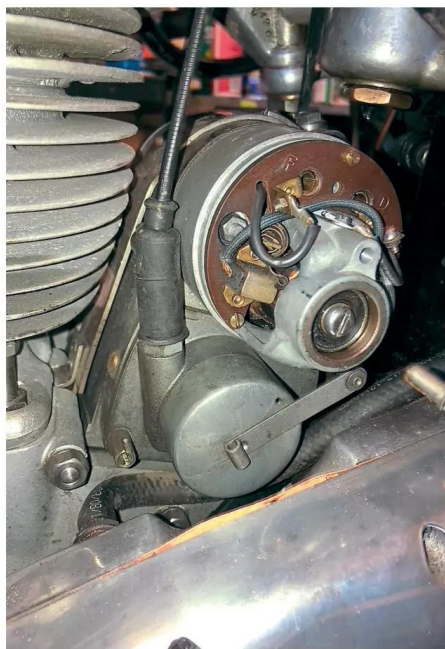
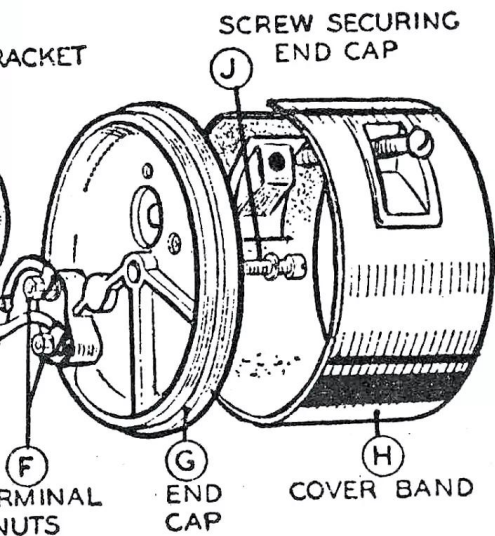
First I checked the fuse: Okay.

Then I tried to test the output from the dynamo, but the multimeter readings were all over the place. Like a demented pocket calculator. I needed expert help.

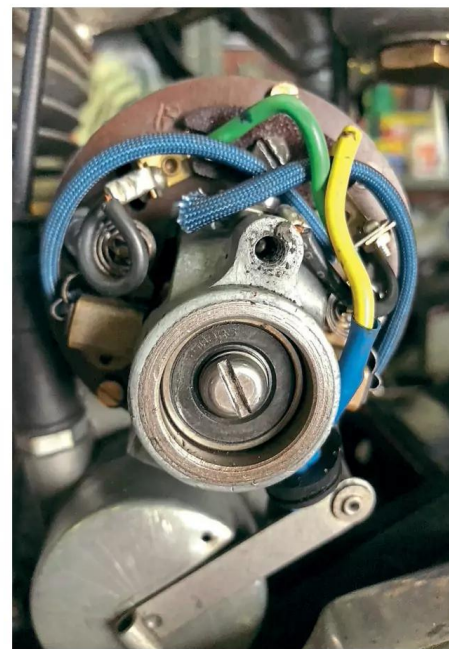
Phil and John were kind to me and helped to eliminate possible causes. On the basis that the DVR2N wouldn't usually be a suspect, we concluded that the dynamo needed a proper check. So, off it went for a short holiday near Great Yarmouth – during the Covid-19 lockdown! – for John to bench test it.

Good news, kind of; the left side brush had been dislodged and the resulting arcing from the armature had caused it irreparable damage. Bad news, that cost me money (I ought to explain that I am a Yorkshireman; definition = a Scotsman bereft of his generosity). John rebuilt the dynamo and returned it within a few days for me to install.

In the meantime I had rewired the two dynamo to rectifier wires in shiny new (and properly coloured yellow and green) cable, with new split bullet connectors and Superseal water/dustproof connectors. All nicely finished with black shrink



All original, but time for some care



Correct colours and sleeving

TOR



Early Gold Stars or later, always relied on Lucas for charging

tubing, reinforced with a second layer of blue shrink tubing at the base and a new rubber D seal. Lovely.

The dynamo went back in like a dream, all the connections were made, the cover fitted and I was very excited as I primed the carb, set the ignition retard lever, operated the valve lifter and pressed the red 'go' button... the bike burst into life. But the ammeter still had the same negative readings with the lights on!

Aaargh.

My head by this time was already raw from the thinking/scratching. And my stock of Yorkshire Tea was starting to run low. I find that one mug of brew per hour is the usual tally when I'm working on my bikes.

Phil kindly spent a lot of time on the phone with me trying to track the source of the failure. He is certainly one of the good guys!

The dynamo had been rechecked and tested before John returned it to me, so we ruled that out.

The 10 amp fuse to the rectifier was good (but I replaced it anyway; another 5p spent. Such extravagance).

The ammeter was not faulty.

So perhaps it was the rectifier at fault? John made up connections on a replacement DVR2N and I received it the next day in the post. This must be it. Surely.

I fitted the new rectifier, started the bike and... still no charging. No difference whatsoever. Same multimeter readings at the battery. More scalp scratching; perhaps the wounds will heal, eventually. More mugs of tea; I now fear incontinence. More calls with Phil.

I tested all of the wiring for continuity; perfect. Even rechecked the split bullet connectors in the dynamo; perfect (or as perfect as any Lucas split bullet connector can be). Could it perhaps be the magneto clutch gear to the dynamo slipping under load, postulated Phil? So with him on the other end of the phone I removed the black painted steel cover of the

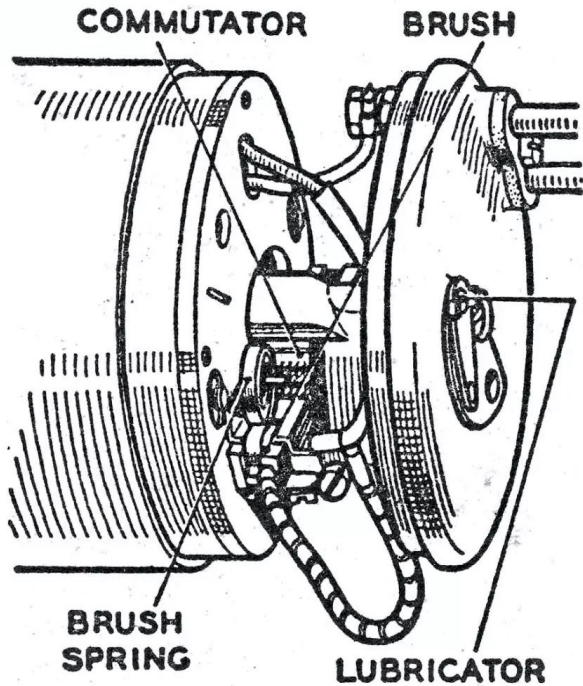


Fig. Y30. Commutator and Bracket Assembly.

Above and below: Original BSA manual is useful, easy to follow but doesn't say to check the cap

dynamo, started the bike and watched the armature and the end screw head spin – perfectly. Now what...?

Don't know why, but I glanced at the ammeter before switching off the engine. It was showing +10v to +12v, even with the lights on. Yippee. No idea what I had done, but it was charging. Magic!

So I fitted the black cover on, after doing a little happy dance.

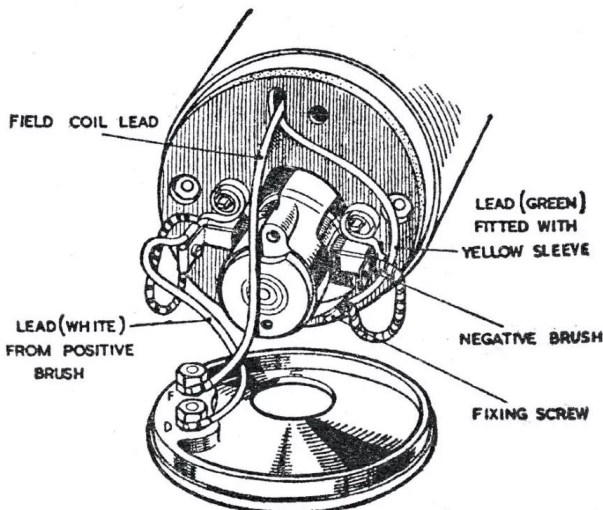
Restarted the bike and... yes, you guessed it. No charging.

I took the cover off again. Started the bike and... it charged perfectly. At the ammeter and to the battery.

So it works without the protective cover off, but doesn't when it's back on. I tried it a few times. Same result.

I could of course ride without the dynamo cover on and pray for no rain, no dust? In UK? Hmmm.

We now knew the location of the problem. And the cause must be a shorting out of the dynamo cables to the steel cap.



The answer – coat it with electrical tape!



I couldn't spot any shorting burns on the inside of the cap, so I carefully measured the profile and looked at the position of all the wires and connectors. The original black wire connector from the F (Field) terminal was protruding so far out that it must be touching the inside of the cap. Great design Mr Lucas; Prince of Darkness. Between my finger and thumb I bent the connector through 90 degrees and – yes; it worked. With the cap on.

Two weeks of head scratching, a few sleepless nights and a bit of money spent. (But the dynamo needed rebuilding whatever).

The short was rectified by simply bending a connector.

Blimey.

It's often the simple things that are so difficult to fathom – as my wife often says about me.

For added peace of mind I took Phil's advice and lined the inside of the cap with insulating tape.

Now, where is Alan and his Manx Norton? Time for a night ride methinks... **CBG**

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A new story

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY MATT, VAN DRIVING BY MARIA

# 1978 BMW R100S

Matt has bought another bike, but promises this will be the last...



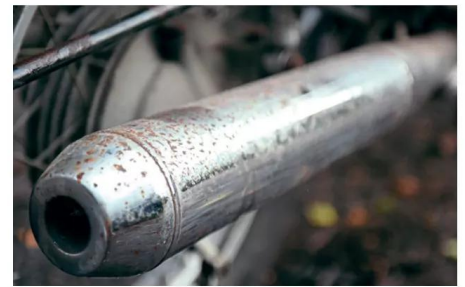




Brian and Denise's children both rode on the back of bikes!



R100S, but in RS clothes, so fairing and spoked wheels - marvellous!



Chrome exhausts have suffered from rust but only superficial



Kept dry for 23 years... but had to wash it to see what lurked underneath

**BLAME YET MORE MONEY LOST TO THE BIKING CAUSE** on my friend, BMW stalwart and all-round good egg, Rob Bensley. For years Rob has been spending his own time and money organising superbly-organised 'better riding' trackdays, used to race boxers and still thinks nothing of shooting up to Scotland or down through mainland Europe on his modern bike – and yes, it's a boxer.

His contact list is broad and wide, so when I read his round-robin email saying some friends had an early R100 for sale, I inquired. Some emails, phone calls, a house move and a lockdown later, Maria and I were coming back with, for once, a bike that was better than hoped-for in the back of the van.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

Magazines, the tool kit, the hand pump and a mirror full of a tearful family as we left in the van were all good signs this is an honest bike. Ideally I would like this to be my 'keeper'; a classic that looks good, rides well, is reliable and will take us anywhere.

I'd never intended to buy another bike, so it will have to wait its time in the workshop, but you have to have a root around, don't you. What horrors are hiding?

That paint scheme is showing signs of wear, with chips and scuffs, a little rust on the metal seat base



Original toolbox – collector-nerd's heaven. They even had tyre levers!



Tool tray, correct stickers and so original – I've never had a bike so good



Seat has been recovered and base is glass-fibre – shell is steel and recoverable

Three generations; Brian and Denise, thank you, we will be back!



Bubbles under the paint, but I like the originality



### BACK STORY

Being an 'S' model, there should be a headlight bikini fairing and the logbook says it should be red. Yet we have an 'RS' fairing and a really professional paint scheme that must have cost a fortune. But Brian bought the bike as it is, so couldn't shed any light. Oh I love a little detective work!

Brian and Denise had owned the R100S since August 1983, when it was a mere five years old. They had holidays on the bike, both children had their initiation into motorcycling on it and Brian even taught other riders on it as he was in the ambulance service. However, the last tax disc is from 1996, when Brian was no longer able to ride. The bike stayed with the family until reality hit home that it wasn't going to be ridden again after a 25 year sabbatical, and moving home was the final straw.

Brian and Denise handed us the service book, a restoration guide, dozens of BMW club mags and the logbook, which says the previous owner of AVR700T had it just five months; yet there are four owners before him – four owners in four and a half years?

The plot thickens. The number plate has 'supplied by Allan Jefferies' on the bottom, but that could just be a replacement and doesn't mean the plate is from new. And the Jefferies dealership is in Shipley, 75 miles away from where the PDI (pre delivery inspection) box in the service book is filled in, by Dowsons of Scarborough. I rang a bike shop that came up when I was searching the net (DW Motorcycles of Scarborough – 01723 366083 – really friendly and couldn't do enough to help) who said Dowsons used to be a huge bike shop in town and could well have been a BMW dealer.

But the dates don't add up – the bike was registered in September 1978, yet it was PDI'd in March 1980. And 'AVR' is a



Brian with his original FM helmet

Manchester prefix, which would fit in with Jefferies more than Dowsons. BMW press contact and all-round top banana, Neil Allen, suggested I contact Allan Jefferies and the excellent BMW club, which I have done.

My theory, based on the registration, is that this was a dealership bike, possibly a demo. Before computers, dealers would be issued with a number of reg and would tend to keep any they liked the look of for dealership or good customer bikes. AVR700T is a good one and could look like R100 if you squint (I never have seen the point in private registrations). And the fairing? The paint job? Again, just a theory, but there were twice as many 'RS' models as 'S' models made, the 'S' model was almost as expensive but wasn't as flash; so was it a way to sell a load of 'S' stock, hence the PDI date later than the first registration? I hope we find out!

and worse, some bubbling, possibly where it has sweated under a cover. Luckily, the tank looks solid inside with the red liner seen in most BMWs. Some time cleaning, touching up and polishing will show if it can be saved, as I'd really like to. An old bike needs to show some scuffs from life – it is 42 years old.

Tyres are in good shape, but rock hard – pity! So with tubes that's £250, but the alloy wheel rims look remarkably good and round. The front hub needs blasting and painting and the spokes are rusty (£80), whereas the rear spokes are fine (stainless), as is the hub, providing the drum hasn't scored.

Forks had recent gaiters and seals, but head races (BMW ones are taper bearings that last longer) feel stiff, so need looking-at. Rear shocks are the ones with the preload lever which I like, but I can't tell if they're working or not. I cannot feel any play in the swing arm, head races or wheel bearings.

Brakes. Hmmm. Fronts are the worst system. Cable from lever to master cylinder mounted under the tank. That operates the hydraulic system, which uses rigid pipe (like on a car) and rubber pipes (original ▶



Under 60,000 miles – barely run in



Idiot lights struggled



New screen but love the stickers



Block just needs a clean... I hope



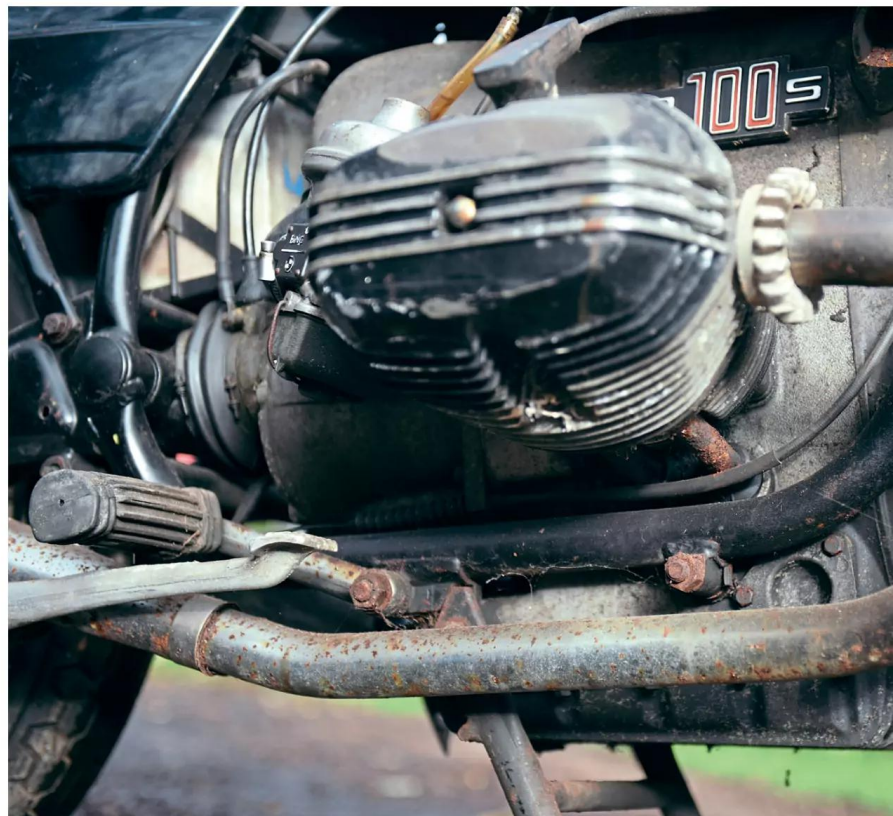
Wires and cables routed badly seem to be making the steering feel stiff



0.06 volts, after 23 years? I'll give it that.



Original pump, original pump, original pump!



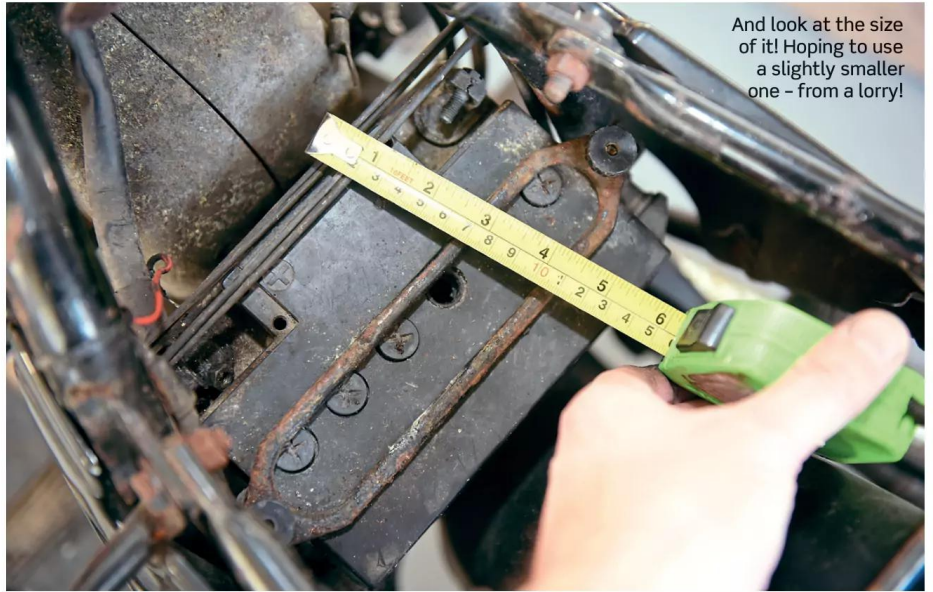


One key and it's been brazed - careful!



Above: Tank looks okay, but cap is knackered - aren't they all?

Below: A few steel items are rusty but even stored, Brian looked after his bike



And look at the size of it! Hoping to use a slightly smaller one - from a lorry!

ATE ones) to feed the terrible ATE calipers - that are rubbing. Rigid pipes look alright, but caliper and master cylinder overhaul, new flexies, pads and fluid should get it working somewhere near adequate. Oh, and the discs are slightly ridged. £200 I'm guessing... and more than double that for discs.

The frame, swing arm and fairing mountings are all steel and look fine for the age, but on this bike I'd like them painted. Powder coating takes less time to prepare and several people tell me I'm an old git insisting on painting; so I may investigate further. If I paint, it's free as I always have 2K gloss black and lacquer.

The battery is enormous - you could run a small town off it! It also read 0.06 volts, so there goes £120. With the tank off, the coils and relays showed how they had attracted moisture and rusted badly. Which explains how when I put a battery on, I got dim idiot lights, a funny relay buzzing from the indicator, no horn and certainly no starter. But the headlight dip beam works! I'm hoping time cleaning connectors and earths should have the electrics up and running.

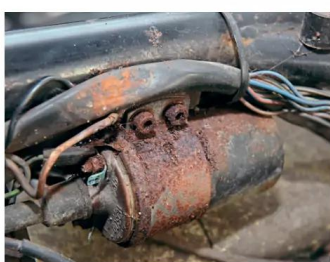
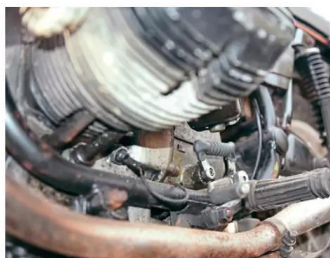
The throttle is solid. A quick feel of the Bing 40mm carbs shows why - they're both seized. I'm hoping this is recoverable, though I know Nev has a pair he may part with. So at least £100 for cables and service kits for the carbs, plus new fuel lines.

The engine turns over - Nev and I popped the plugs out, squirted some oil in and turned it over in gear. I can't test compression, but it was wheezing and I want to take it apart anyway. But the signs are good. If I can get away with a clean-up, timing chain, clutch, bore hone and some rings, then hurrah; but if it needs valves and seats, bottom end shells et al, then the bill for the engine could be hundreds.



Right: Master cylinder is under the tank and looks bad

Below: Barrels and underneath look better



I may have found the poor earth issue...



A little oil through the plug hole before seeing if it would gently turn over



New workshop, new bike.  
What a lucky man I am!



### CONCLUSION... SO FAR, THAT IS

Our R100(R)S is better than a 42-year-old bike that had been stood for 25 years has any right to be. Work needed is due to age, safety or longevity, unless we find horrors in the engine. Yes, it will amount to thousands, but it's the bike I've always wanted. And I really love the paint scheme, it reminds me of a Gus Kuhn replica, or something that BMW's Helmut Dahne would be seen hurtling over Snaefell on. Though I do appreciate it may not be to all tastes...

Most importantly, I can really see this bike being used, racking up the miles and doing what Hans Muth, the designer, wanted it to do.

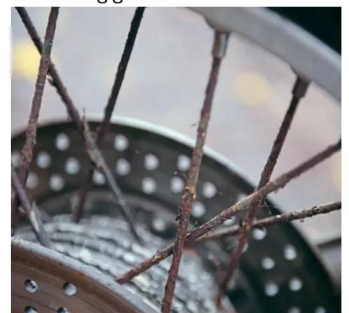
Brian and Denise were good enough to sell this bike to me when others offered more. But these others wanted to cut it up to make a custom, whereas I see it already as a custom, so in my mind it just needs restoring. The hardest part is waiting to start on it – but it must wait its turn! **CBG**



Front brake solid lines are good



Rear hub and spokes are looking good...



... but front ones are not



Calipers are first on the hit list



I want to preserve, not totally restore, so the story isn't lost



The worn rubbers tell a story

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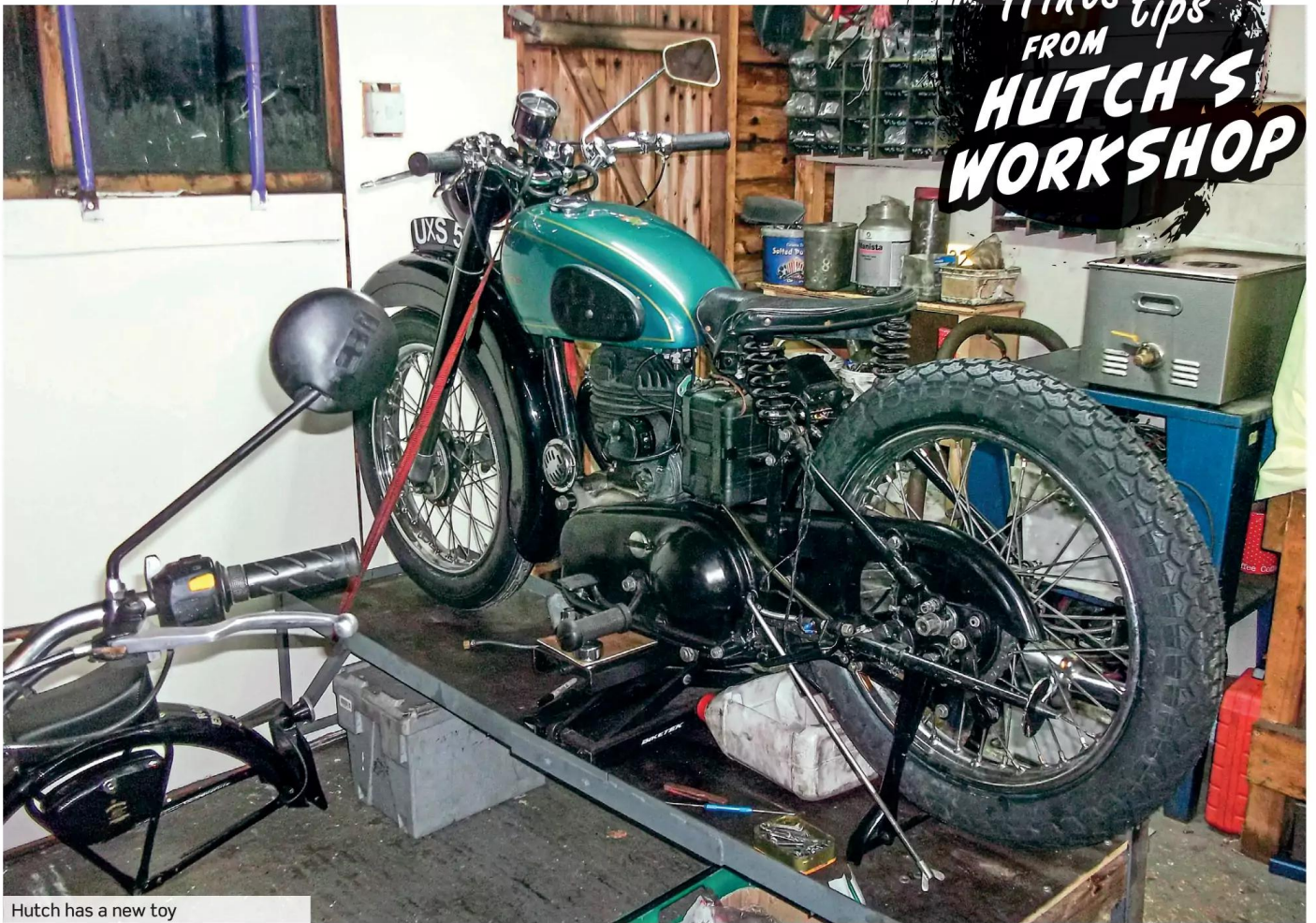
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Hutch has a new toy

# A quick time

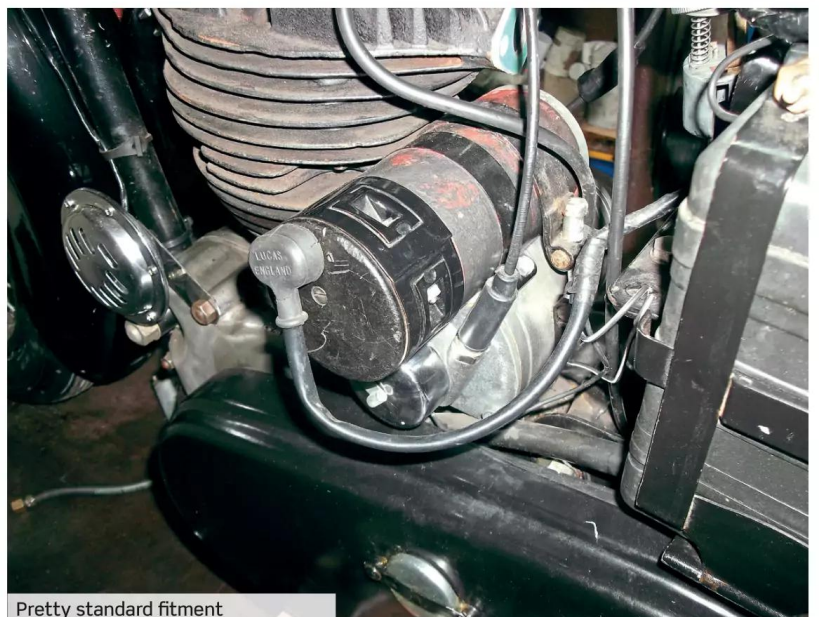
Hutch checks the timing of his 'new' 1947 Enfield to ease its starting

WORDS BY Hutch PHOTOGRAPHY BY Chelley

**H**AVE A NEW TOY IN THE SHED, A 1947 MODEL G Royal Enfield; it's quite pretty, certainly compared with the states in which I usually acquire my personal bikes. The bike starts and runs okay-ish... but I like to give all my bikes a bit of a going-over before anything else, it helps to get to know a bike on a spanner level, and certainly better than you can when viewing a bike to buy.

A couple of new tyres were fitted, as the ones it came with appeared that they could have been almost original fitment, the carb was removed to give it a looking at, as it was a little leaky. One of the other jobs on my list was to inspect the ignition timing. I find if the carburation and ignition timing are somewhere near then bikes tend to run and start nicer; the Mod G starts okay but has kicked me back a couple of times, although the PO was a little vague as where advance and retard were.

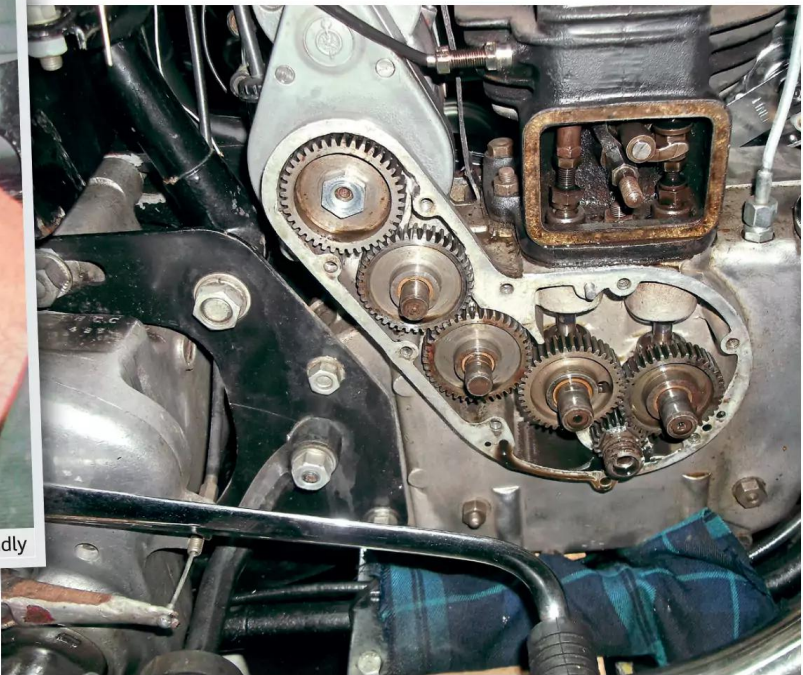
Like many bikes of its time, the Model G is fitted with a Lucas mag / dyno located behind the cylinder.



Pretty standard fitment



Spanner and feeler gauge - fiddly



Above: Mag could just need a gear adjusted

Below: Lolly stick shows TDC and 3/8th BTDC; not lunch...

The plug and the mag end cap were removed and the engine turned over by hand with the kickstart to establish which way the mag rotated. Then by operating the advance / retard lever it could be easily worked out which way was advance on the lever, the points opening sooner at full advance; in this case full advance was with a 'tight wire' at the lever.

A bit of delving into the manual which (fortunately) came with the bike gave some timing data of a 12- 15 thou points gap and full advance at 3/8in BTDC.

Using feelers I measured the points gap at 0.004in, so out with the mag spanners and adjust to 0.012in, always a fiddly job with the mag in situ.

With the bike in gear and while on its rear stand I rotated the engine using the back wheel (the kickstart being inaccessible on the other side of the bike). This allowed me to find the position where the mag points just open at full advance - I use the old fashioned rag paper method for this. I like to mark a point on the rotating part of the mag and a corresponding point on the static mag body using a scriber or thin marker so the timing point can be easily seen.

Now it needs to be checked that the engine / piston is in the correct position for the timing to be right, in this case it was 3/8in BTDC.

For accuracy, engines need to be set up for timing with a timing disc etc, but for a quick check to see if the timing needs further attention I use a lolly stick down the plug hole marked with TDC and 3/8 BTDC - and before anyone points it out I am aware of the sine error etc due to the angle of the plug hole....

So, setting the piston at 3/8 BTDC and the ignition set at full advance I took a look at the timing marks on the mag I made earlier; sadly, as the marks didn't correspond further work was needed to get the ignition timing set to somewhere near spec.

### Lucas Magdyno

Model MOIL for Single Cylinder Engines

**1. General**  
 The Magdyno is a base-fixed magneto and dynamo unit, the body of the magneto portion being arranged to carry a standard strap-fixed dynamo. A shock absorbing drive is arranged between the magneto and dynamo portions. The magneto portion has a wound rotating armature and a high energy magnet case integral with the body.

reach the wick, remove the backing spring and spring arm by withdrawing the single securing screw. The wick is carried in a hollow hexagon headed screw which can now be withdrawn. Take care not to lose the insulating washer or tube. Moisten the wick with a few drops of thin machine oil and refit the hollow screw.

At this stage bend back the brass locking tag from the hexagon head of the contact breaker securing screw and withdraw the screw. The contact breaker can now be removed. Take out the tappet which actuates the spring arm and lightly smear it with thin machine oil. Extract the wire ring and remove the face cam. Lightly smear both sides of the cam with Mobilgrease No. 2.

**CONTACTS**  
**LOCK NUT**  
**CONTACT BREAKER SECURING SCREW**  
**SCREW CARRYING LUBRICATION WICK**  
**SCREW SECURING CONTACT BREAKER SPRING**

**Fig. 2**

Refit the cam, taking care that the stop pin is correctly housed and the plunger of the contact breaker is engaged with their respective recess is provided for the 'eye' of the spring.

Check that the tappet moves freely in the contact breaker casting.

Thread the special tag washer on the contact breaker securing screw and place the flat edge of the washer against the location provided for it in the contact breaker casting. Tighten the screw and lock it by bending the tag washer against one of the hexagon flats.

Wipe away any dirt or grease from the contacts with a petrol-moistened cloth. If necessary, use a very fine carborundum stone to polish the contacts, re-cleaning

**2. Routine Maintenance**  
**2(a). Lubrication**  
 To be carried out every 3,000 miles.  
 The cam is lubricated by a wick located in the contact breaker casting (see Fig. 2). To

The shock absorbing drive is incorporated in the larger of the two gears which transmit drive from the magneto shaft to the dynamo shaft as shown exploded in Fig. 1. This drive permits maximum dynamo output and reduces peak shock loading. The shock absorbing drive is a helical fabric gear to a timing gear which is taken from metal gear centre to the magneto shaft, to fabric gear B by a friction plate C and clutch spring D. A peg projecting from gear centre A prevents relative movement of the gear centre and tension spring D. In the event of a back-fire or an electrical short-circuit, slip will occur between the contacting surfaces of fabric gear B and gear centre A.

**Fig. 1**

**Fig. 2**

**AN EASY RECTIFICATION.**

After reading up a bit more in the manual I removed the timing cover with the intent of pulling the mag pinion and resetting the timing. There are a couple of idler gears driving the mag pinion. I am a firm believer that people don't set things wrong on purpose, it was also obvious from the gasket that the timing cover had recently been removed. I found that if I turned the mag pinion one tooth on the idler gear next to it then the ignition timing was spot on against my timing marks - happy days. I could only assume one of the idler gears had come away with the timing cover last time it was removed, and to prove the point the bike started first kick when back together - if only it was always that easy. **CBG**



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**DUCATI Mk3 250** race bike, 1965, rebuilt race engine, balanced and lightened crank, piston, race clutch, new battery, £5600 Tel. 01932 563982 Surrey



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**DUCATI 750SS 2000**, 24,000 miles, injection model, MoT May 2021, new belts fitted & serviced with new plugs, oil & filters & brake fluid flush & change, £2495 ovno Tel. 07969 992557



**DUCATI 900SS 1997**, low mileage 10,747, mint condition, service history, MoT Oct 2021, starts and drives superb, Ducati handbook, tool roll and 2 keys, £4350 Tel. 07909 912543 Glasgow



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**DUCATI SCRAMBLER 1969**, Desmo head, lovely tidy bike, £5500 Tel. 01524 735039 Lancashire



**FRANCIS-BARNETT 1959**, Light Cruiser, very good condition, new battery, runs well, bike located in Yorkshire, £2500 ovno Tel. 07598 791860



**FRANCIS-BARNETT Cruiser**, 1934, 249cc two stroke, 100% complete, rare to find in this good solid condition, starts, rides & stops, 4 speed hand gear shift, £6500 Tel. Roy 07751 397302 Hants



**GREEVES 25DB Villiers 2T** twin, many new parts inc s/steel wheels & spokes, new exhaust & silencer, new ignition coils, on Sorn, £3750 Tel. 07379 511898 East Yorks



**GREEVES GRIFFON 250MX**, year 1969/70, a sympathetic restoration, contact for details, £4200 Tel. Dave 07788 217810 West Midlands



**HARLEY-DAVIDSON Softail Heritage Springer**, 1997, 1340cc Evo engine, vgc with known history, many features, Mikuni carb, original panniers etc, £13,995 Tel. 07798 866071 Middx

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1968 BSA Bantam D14-4 175cc . £2,250



1938 BSA B26 350cc..... £7,350



1937 BSA Empire Star 350cc .....£9,000



1931 BSA Sloper 557cc SV ..... £7,500



1951 Douglas Mk5 350cc ..... £5,500



1961 Panther 120 650cc..... £5,850



1938 Royal Enfield KX 1140cc..£22,500



1930 Sunbeam 9 500cc .....£14,000



1959 Velocette Valiant 192cc .....£4000



1950 Vincent Rapide C 1000cc. £47,500

1937 AJS 22 250cc nice pre war machine.....	£5650
1927 AJS 16MS 350cc storage since 1993.....	£3150
1927 AJS 2A V-twin 990cc last ownership since 1997 both books.....	£28,000
1960/61 ARIEL LEADER 250cc choice of 2.....	£3500/£2650
1953 ARIEL NH 350cc lovely tele rigid.....	£6000
1954/58 ARIEL VH 500cc, choice of two.....	£4750/£5350
1952 BSA Bantam D1 125cc lovely tele rigid.....	£3650
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1937 BSA Empire Star 350cc desirable machine.....	£9000
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1938 BSA B26 350cc pretty bike.....	£7350
1954/55 BSA B31 350cc choice of 2.....	£4250/£4650
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1927 BSA S27 500cc lovely vintage.....	£10,000
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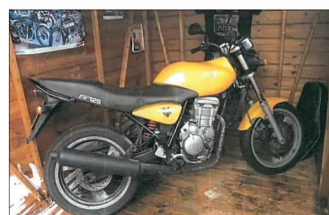
**MOTO GUZZI** Nouvo Falcone Military, low mileage 19,12kms believed genuine, unrestored original example in lovely condition, £5250 Tel. 07484 817393 Wiltshire



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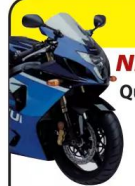
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## FRANK WESTWORTH

### FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Frank looks, in his sideways way, at the pastime of buying, then rebuying bikes.

*“What rot! I am – I remind myself – the fool who owns not one but two Norton lightweight twins. How and indeed why can this be? I have no answer.”*

**W**HY DO WE ALWAYS MAKE THE SAME mistakes? Do we never learn? Life can be perplexing...

Two years ago, almost exactly, I sold a motorcycle. Nothing unusual there, you might suggest, except that I sold it because I had replaced it with a similar motorcycle, a modern model from the same manufacturer which was better in almost every way. As you would indeed hope, progress being what it is.

I was entirely sensible about this, not least because I have made the same mistake before, many times, selling a bike only to miss it something rotten and then waste hours poring over the ads looking for another one. This is increasingly difficult as no one is building the old, obsolete, out of production bikes (add your own definition of ‘classic’ here) that we’ve enjoyed and then sold, lured, perhaps, by the shininess of the new. Who knows? In this case I was lured by a more relaxed riding position and far better brakes. Also by fashion, embarrassingly enough.

I asked a high price for the great outgoing bike, too, confidently expecting that no one would be fool enough to part with the requisite wonga and I’d be stuck with the old ruin. Not a bit of it. It sold straight away. This is always a deeply scary experience – it cannot happen that way without the asking price being far too low. I didn’t even need the money. And there is plenty of space in the big shed I like to call The Shed. I sold it because I had somehow convinced myself that it made no sense to own more than one touring machine from the same stable. What rot! I am – I remind myself – the fool who owns not one but two Norton lightweight twins. How and indeed why can this be? I have no answer.

Maybe I was short of money? Well, although I always am, as is everyone else, it wasn’t that. Money wasn’t particularly tight, and I am at that time of life when delaying self-gratification (in a motorcycle sense) is pointless, because with every year that passes every opportunity for monster self-indulgence should be firmly grasped with both hands.

Other views are of course available, but I do not subscribe to them. If 2020, a truly bizarre year, has achieved nothing else, it has reminded me that we are all – including me – mortal.

There truly is little point in putting off until tomorrow what a chap can enjoy today. Which sounds entirely selfish, but so what?

So, gentle reader, two years ago I sold a motorcycle. In itself that is not entirely unusual. I’ve sold lots of motorcycles. What is less usual is that the motorcycle I’d just sold was a replacement for an almost identical motorcycle – same marque, same model – that I’d sold maybe 15 years previously, this time because I was desperate short of cash. And having sold that bike, I spent the next decade vaguely searching for another one, just like the other one. And I found it, bought it, rode it, loved it, and... sold it again.

You can guess what I’m going to say next: I spent the intervening years looking for a replacement. I would suggest that this was a case of déjà vu, but it’s more a fine example of stupidity.

You can guess what I’m going to say next, too. Having wasted two years prowling the ads looking for the third example of a totally favourite motorcycle so I could buy it, ride it and most certainly never ever sell it ... I’ve finally stumbled across one while looking for something completely different. It’s great. In excellent order and not butchered nor bodged to the point where its gentle return to stock (I do this; no apologies) would break the bank, and it’s even the same colour as the first of its breed to lighten my darkness. And of course it’s asking for a couple of grand (say that quickly, it feels better) more than I sold the last one for.

I will love it. I will ride it far and wide and at every opportunity. Every one of my increasingly geriatric and opinionated two-wheeled chums will think that I’m insane to ride a bike which is old fashioned and older than its replacement, so entertaining abuse sessions are inevitable. I don’t care. I shall grasp this opportunity. Unless...

Unless another bike I should never have sold, a 1965 G80 Matchless in a fetching shade of psychotic blue, say, should appear for sale again after many years. And it just has. The very same bike, not one just like it. That bike may even be advertised in this very issue of CBG. I cannot justify both, not even in my least selfless moments. Plainly I need help. Can anyone offer advice? **CBG**

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

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