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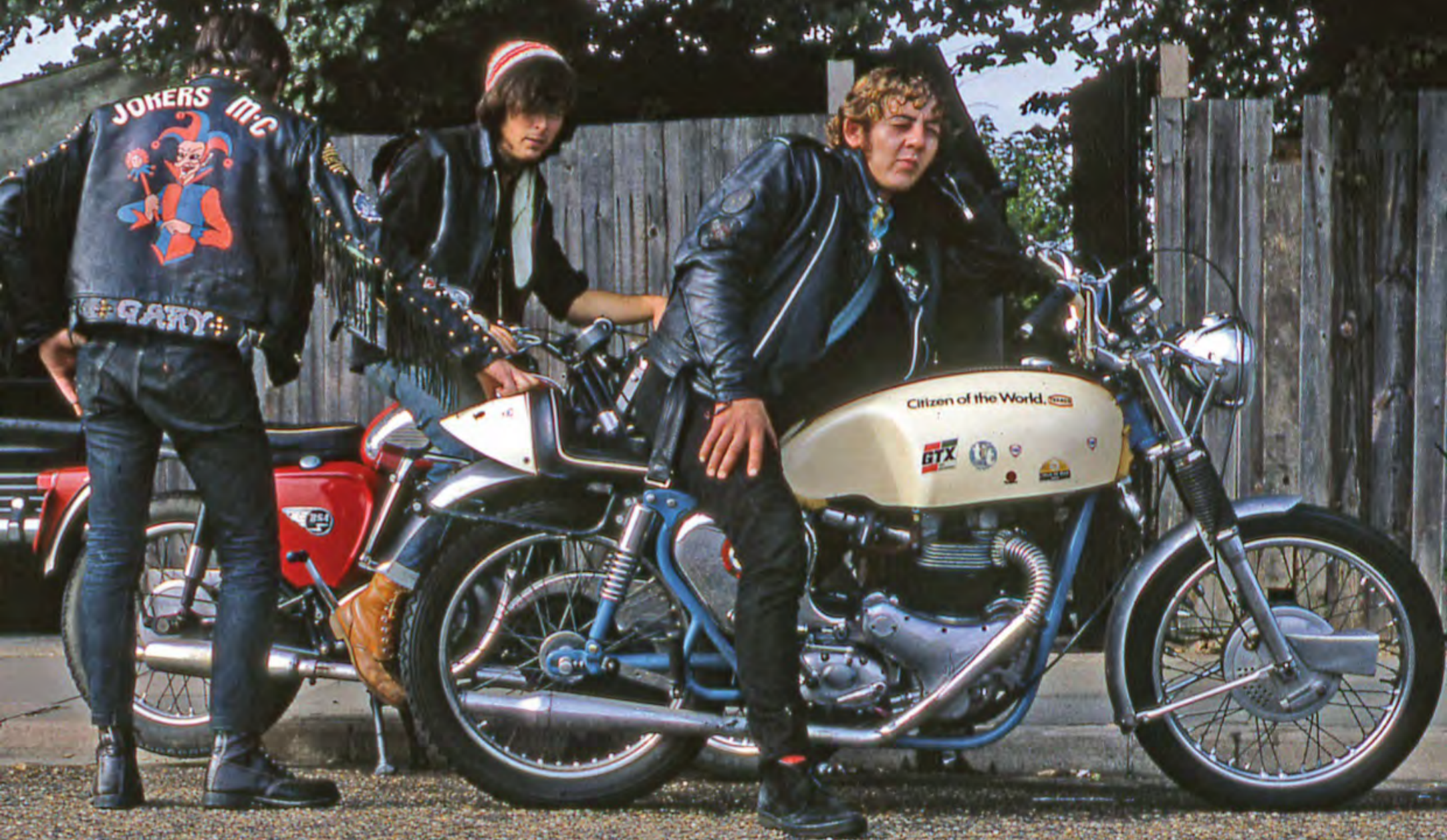
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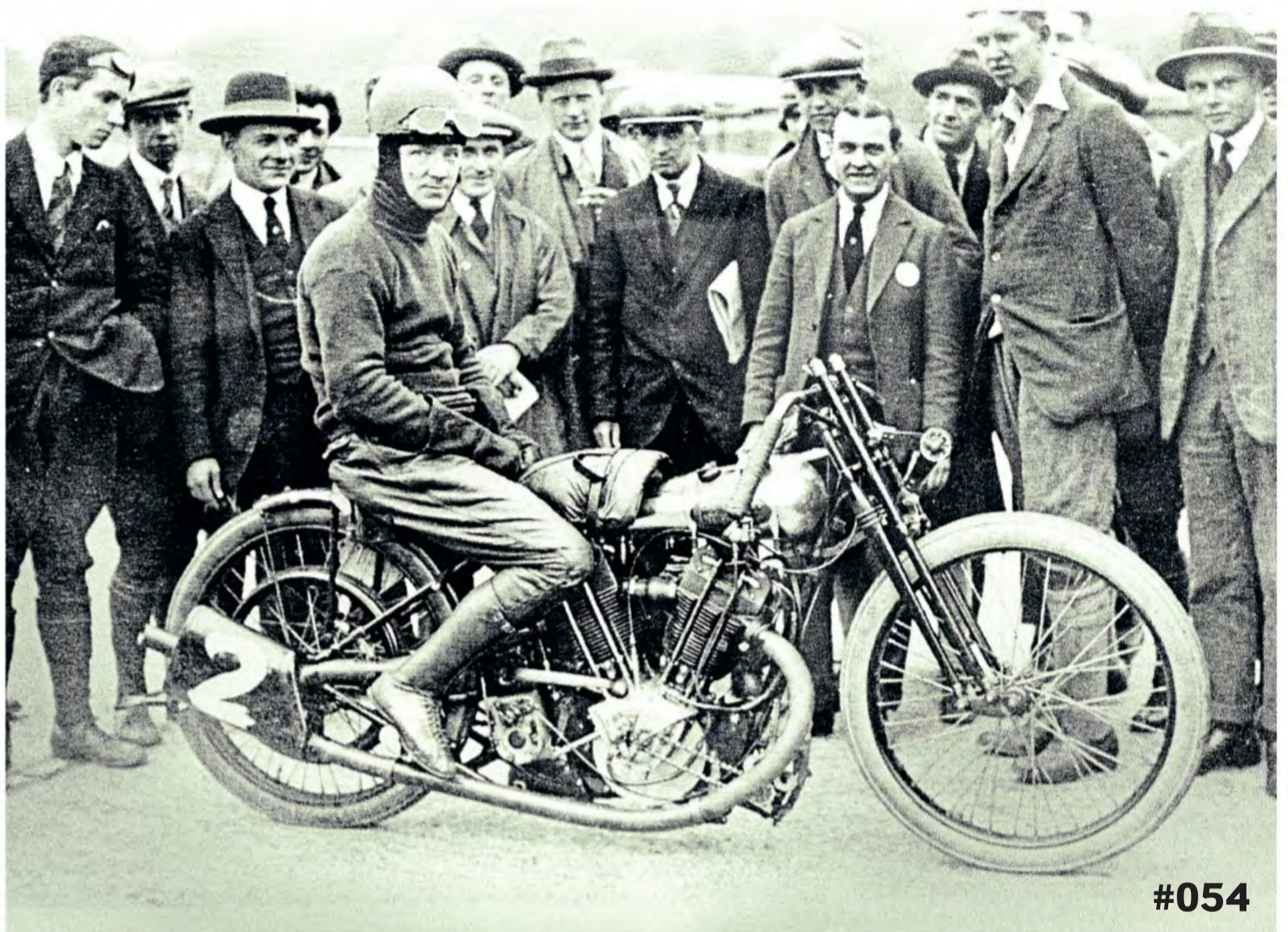


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Welcome



## Greetings, dear lovers of mostly old machinery!

**T**HE CREW OF CLASSIC BIKE GUIDE, wretched, giddy, drunken fools we may be, hope you are all happy, healthy(ish) and dealing with what the world throws at us, while still planning your rides, tinkering in the shed, buying projects and not, in any way, hitting that dusty old bottle of sherry at the back of the cupboard...

I must start by sharing the sad news of the passing of Graeme Murray Walker OBE, ex- Formula 1 commentator, at the ripe old age of 97. It was sadly too close to deadline to get anything in the magazine, but Murray, born in 1923, played a massive part in my growing up, as he probably did for many of you. He was my excitable preacher on a Sunday, and in the days of just four telebox channels and no other input of information, his words, no matter how muddled up or wrong they may have been, were gospel to a young racing fan.

Only years later did this funny man, so often the butt of James Hunt's japes, shoot even higher in my estimations as I discovered not only that his father, Graham Walker, was a racer, TT and Grand Prix winner for Rudge, also racing for Sunbeam and earlier, Norton, but he also was editor of *Motor Cycling* magazine, which is selfishly something I like to remember when journalism is looked down at so often these days.

And following in his father's footsteps, Murray himself was no slouch, competing in circuit racing and winning a gold in the ISDT (International Six Days Trial) and SSDT (Scottish Six Days Trial) on a Norton 500T. Even when his world orbited around four wheels, he made no secret of the fact two wheels were his love. He will be greatly missed and for your exuberant commentaries, faux pas and excitement, we all thank you, Murray.

We have been looking back too, with

two small photos emerging of my grandmother and grandfather, on a trip to Walton on the Naze, Essex, in 1934 and sitting on another Royal Enfield, a small two-stroke. They were based in Dovercourt; sadly the reg number no longer exists, but it's a lovely reminder of old times and a lady that whilst fierce, had, for better or worse, much to do with how I've turned out – I hope she would approve of a life of bikes, dirty fingernails and oily jeans!

That's it from myself, got to move a harmonium – don't ask. So here's to a good read and hopefully we'll all meet up here, same time, same place next month.

Be good

**Matt Hull**

editor@classicbikeguide.com



## ■ Past and present board track races

Nowadays beach races are extremely popular in the USA and Europe, but board track racing is also increasingly popular in Europe. Unfortunately, there are few real board track courses left, in Germany there is still a real wooden track in Bielefeld, near Hannover. On the Montlhéry circuit, just below Paris and of course at Brooklands in England, historical races are more often organised.

There are also tracks where cycling laps are normally held, which are suitable as a board track circuit. It was therefore the European cycling tracks that modelled the board tracks in America, early last century. Unfortunately, you rarely see beautiful wooden oval tracks anymore, most of them are asphalt or concrete. However, the atmosphere is no less and the enthusiasm among the riders and the public is enormous.

Authenticity is paramount, they ride motorcycles that are old, but the clothing and protection is also in style, for example, with only an old leather helmet and old-fashioned motorcycle clothing.

The speeds were not childish at the time, often exceeding 105mph ... Now, on short cycling tracks, it is often more than 80mph and that on a track of only 333 metres with curves that have banks that typically rise upwards, which run under an angle of sometimes up to 48° ... 'banked' as they call it there and what is called a curved track.

Riding was done without protection and without brakes – just a 'kill switch' on the handlebars caused some delay when needed, which resulted in many injuries and deaths in the past, often due to the huge splinters of the wooden planks from which the tracks were made, but also because riders flew off the track and ended up in the audience, usually killing several spectators.

For example, the Motordrome board tracks were soon nicknamed Murderdrome, where tens of thousands of people often came to watch. It was immensely popular, from 1908 to 1915 riding on tracks of about an eighth and a quarter of a mile (200 and 400 metres). After that came even longer, one and two mile long tracks, with the speeds increasing even more.

The many deaths and injuries unfortunately led to a ban on board tracks in 1916, after which the motorcycles were often adapted for other motor sports such as beach races and speedway. **CIBG**





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Onno 'Berserk' Wieringa

# Dream racer

— Made for using and abusing —

This Harley-Davidson JD 1929 Board Track Racer  
has been a labour of love, part historical  
artefact, part full-on racer





**T**HE DISTINGUISHED SOUND OF A HIGH performance inlet-over-exhaust engine rumbles in the ears, the unmistakable smell of old oil and gasoline is in the air. The sharp pulses from the exhausts stir the sand, the motorcycle shaking, and the rider dressed in period clothing twists the throttle and as a free galloping mechanical horse, he takes off. It is Jurgen who rides his old Harley-Davidson JD racer full throttle on the beach; with goose bumps on our arms we fully enjoy the visual and aural feel of yesteryear.

#### **Priceless**

Jurgen's board tracker got a lot of attention during the Normandy Beach Race last year and spurred on by this machine and its performance, we pay a visit to the sympathetic Belgian at his home, to learn more about his racer. "I chose this particular model for a lot of reasons," says Jurgen, "firstly because board track racers you see today are very often 'new' builds. I would have liked an original, real racer, but these are priceless and almost impossible to find."

***"Budget-wise, this bike, as they always seem to, did not come at the right time, but if you get such a chance you should grab it with both hands."***

#### **Replicas**

In the past, racing motorcycles were usually built by private riders themselves and made faster. Only a few were able to buy a racing engine from the factory. In addition, do not forget that often the same motorcycle was used for different disciplines of motorsports, a board tracker like this would also be used as a dirt-track motor, sometimes even as a hill climber and for other motorcycle sports – with minimal adjustments such as gear ratios and different handlebars, sometimes a different choice of tyres, but otherwise the same concept. "What many people do nowadays is build an old-looking or newer replica. Owners of replicas and/or restored bikes almost always follow the same path, put the same parts on their bikes and even the colour schemes hardly differ. So I wanted to do that differently."

#### **First model with a front brake**

This motorcycle was certainly not a factory racer because they used the JDH two-cam engine and had 8-valves – and fewer than 100 JDH are reported to have been built (they used the road-going JD frame). But it is very likely that this motorcycle was previously used by a private racer. "We suspect it was used for dirt-track or grasstrack and ice speedway.

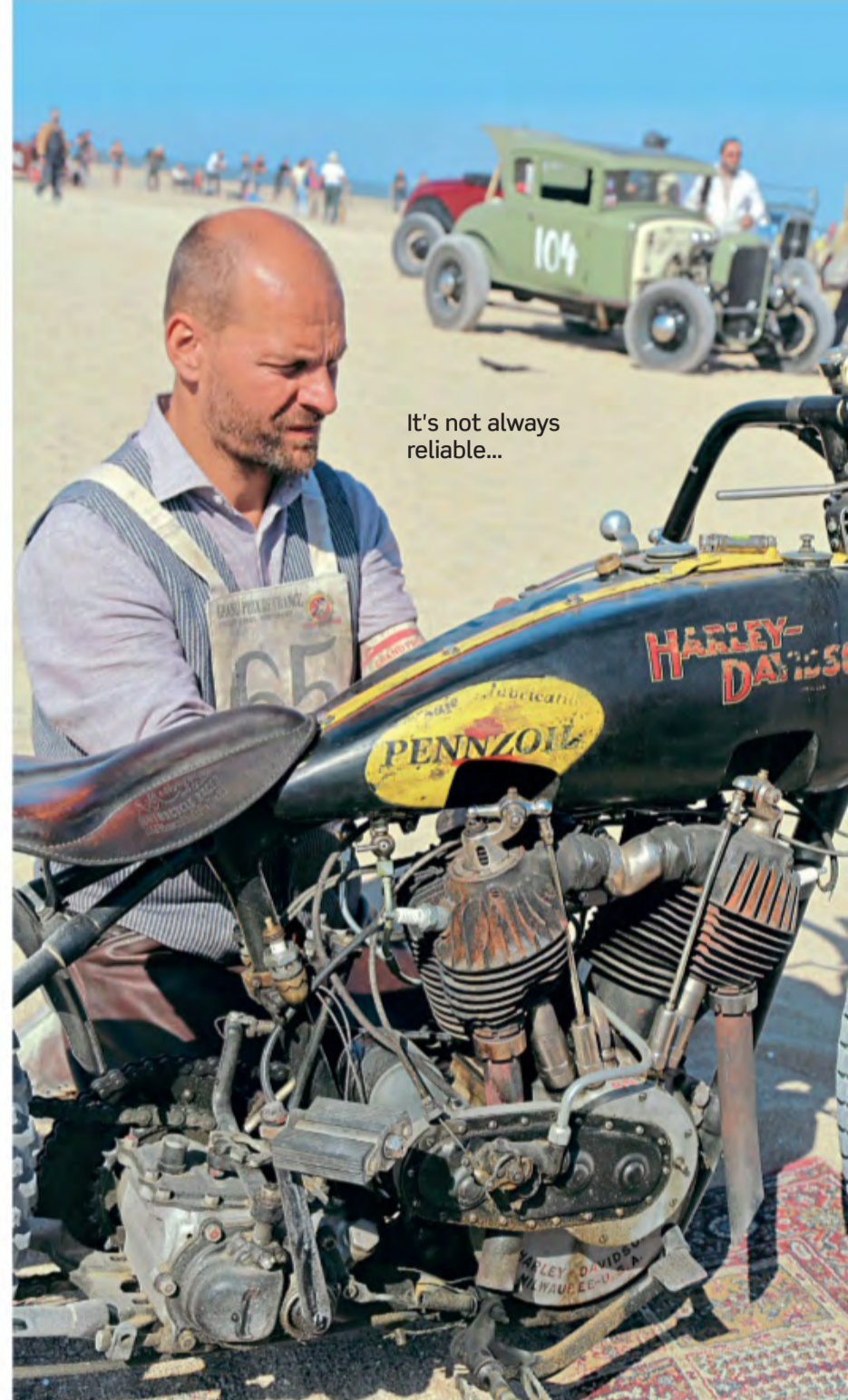




Originally from Sweden, this bike had many of the racing options, special cylinders and large front wheel. So he will certainly have ridden there on the tracks and getting much closer to an original racer will be difficult to achieve. This was also the first model with a front brake, which is also important on today's busy roads with a fast motorcycle," says Jurgen.

**Meant to be**

Jurgen tells the story about the purchase: "Well, it was meant to be, budget-wise; this bike, as they always seem to, did not come at the right time, but if you get such a chance you should grab it with both hands. I was not searching but I had dreamed about this kind of machine for a long time. I bought it from my brother who owns HD Classic in Baal. I am always lucky to be the first to know what motorcycles will come into his shop. My brother knew that I had long dreamed of building a bike like this one day. When he came across this motorcycle he called me quickly and I bought it without seeing it and knowing what it was, what parts it came with and what condition the engine was in."



It's not always reliable...

**Water damage**

The bike was a restoration project that had just been started when it came into the shop. It consisted of merely a rolling frame and engine. But you could clearly see that the motorcycle had suffered water damage, worryingly in the bearings and the engine.

Jurgen had major concerns about the condition: "This was a big fear because the pistons were stuck in the barrels. These are original cast iron pistons that can easily rust in the cast iron cylinders. Had these special cylinders been rusted, it would have been a major disaster for the racing project. Fortunately, it turned out that the water damage was very superficial. This makes purchasing such an expensive project with a lot of risk worthwhile!"

Details about



### Standard engine - nearly

The complete motorcycle was restored immediately after purchase, starting the engine last. "We first played with the expensive idea of building in a newly-made JDH race-spec engine. So the original engine has been checked and built in to the motorcycle to test ride it, pending the purchase of that new engine. But these engines are very expensive and for us, way too expensive. And we realised that with the regular JD engine with period modifications we are closer to an original racer than buying a newly manufactured racing engine!"

Elsewhere on the chassis the hubs are original but the rims and spokes are new because racing with beaded edge wheels is very dangerous. HD Classic has a racing team, Time Bandits, where they try to participate as much as possible in street races and beach races. "That's why these double rear and front brakes were important to me. I still want to keep it safe and these are compromises you have to make. The real board track racers had no gears and certainly no brakes!"

### Peashooter fuel tank

Jurgen continues: "Furthermore, this motorcycle has the optional steering stabilizer, steering damper and double rear brake. In America they only needed a rear brake on the big long roads. In Europe, there was a law for a motorcycle to have two brakes, and



Above: What does a JD board racer owner do when bored? Why, they make a bespoke trailer, of course

Harley had developed a rear brake especially for these countries, with a brake liner that was placed on the inside instead of on the outside. This foot brake pulled a brake liner on the round brake drum and a second one pushed open into the brake drum. This was sufficient back then. 1929 was the first year that H-D used a front brake. The JD model used a Schebler DLX 45 carburettor but my engine has a Linkert M88 which they used on the later WLA. It's fully adapted for racing. Also worth mentioning are the Mesinger racing saddle and 21 inch front wheel."

In the 1920s, the racers also sometimes used the fuel tank of the single-cylinder Peashooter because this tank was smaller, lighter and much narrower than the original tank; which is what's fitted to this bike. It had to be modified because the rocker arms of the head valves are too high, hence the 'bite' from the bottom on the right side. While the restoration project was in full swing, Jurgen also built an appropriately-styled trailer for the JD in the few spare hours left! ▶



## Some history and development

The Harley-Davidson JD from Jurgen is from 1929 and is a 1200cc inlet-over-exhaust engine. "There are many details to report," says Jurgen. "The cylinders are special Ricardo cylinders, we believe. Sir Ricardo went from England to America in the early 1900s at the request of H-D to help develop an engine for their new racing bike. He stayed there for three months, result being that H-D had a team that was always experimenting with the tips they got from the world famous English tuner.

"They then worked with inlet-over-exhaust engines and with these engines, the spark plug in the pocket valve. They learned that it is best to have the spark plug as close to the piston as

possible to have the most power, but then the temperature in the engine will also rise. The two cylinders that are in the same line are therefore disadvantageous to get the heat away on the rear cylinder. That is why a lot of rear cylinders were damaged during the tests.

"In this way they learned experimentally what the best compromise was between power and heat. These cylinders are almost impossible to find and certainly not as a matching set of two. You cannot buy two separate cylinders because the place of the spark plug is always different and will therefore also give a different combustion pattern. On my cylinders, the spark plug is also in a different

place and the displacement is also slightly larger."

It also includes a 'One year only' I-beam racing fork. The fork legs are round on standard forks. That's how these forks were made at the time, but since these Harleys often rode on dirt tracks or were used in hill climbing, racing, speedway and the like, they noted that this was a weak point.

In the year 1928 it was decided to bring a new model of Harley to the market and strengthening the front fork was one of the priorities. In mid-1929, they discovered that an I-beam (I-profile) was much stronger than the traditional O-profiles. They cast part of these forks and after the tests they decided in 1929

to quickly distribute these forks among the large dealers (due to limited numbers). It was also only the major dealers for H-D who had the race catalogues and where you could order racing parts.

They naturally made sure their own racers were the first to receive such an improved fork. For example, most forks ended up on the JDH sports models that were also used on the racetracks. This was still a kind of prototype fork because the model V in 1930 has the further developed I-beam fork.

The 1929 I-beam fork was not in the catalogue at the beginning of the year because it had not yet been developed, but would only have been an addition to the race catalogue by mid-1929.

**“While the engine warms up for a few minutes, Jurgen exclaims: ‘The best thing about the bike is that it’s mine, that I was able to finish my dream bike. The smooth lines and especially the fuel tank are, to me, beautiful’ ”**



## My dream bike

Jurgen puts on his helmet and just for fun, his goggles upside down: "Let's see who notices that!" he laughs. With a few hefty kicks, the board tracker comes to life. While the engine warms up for a few minutes, Jurgen exclaims: "The best thing about the bike is that it's mine, that I was able to finish my dream bike. The smooth lines and especially the fuel tank are, to me, beautiful. Also that it is slightly different from all the other JDs you encounter. Now it is a mix between a speedway and a board track racer. Normally for speedway there was a wide handlebar but I changed this to a racing handlebar that they used for board track racing. And just listen to that sound – beautiful right?"

## Far from original

After some laps on the sand, he continues his story: "It is far from original as it was when rolled out of the factory in 1929. But as a racer, as it would have been used in the 1930s, I think it comes very close. Due to the changes, such as the smaller fuel tank, racing saddle and so on, almost no original, standard parts fit on the motorcycle anymore. Do you have to order parts from a JD or a Peashooter?! Neither of them will fit and in the end you will have to modify almost everything. But this is how you create a motorcycle yourself and it is not something that is just standard. But it takes a lot of work and help – HD Classic and Ton Cornelissen have been indispensable!"

## Details

The bottle on the front fork is a copper oil can that lubricates the valve rockers and tappets. "Saint Christopher is the patron saint of travellers and assured you a safe journey. Every year in a place of pilgrimage you could have this shield dedicated to protect you all year round. Every year we also have masses dedicated to St Christopher and then the pastor comes to celebrate Mass and everyone comes with their vehicle with dedicated water to be blessed."



Above: Watch that coat tail now!

Below: Never take oneself too seriously...

Jurgen points to more special details: "That clock on the front fork is an option if you went on longer trips. Often in competitions between cities such as Paris-Nice. The liquid level on the tank is a special racing option." His brother Hans has an advertising brochure about that. It serves to see if it is "false-flat"! In other words, if there is a slight slope in the roadway that you do not notice. Then one could see that they had to change the pre-ignition to have more 'pulling' power. Jurgen bought the air filter in Raalte at the AMCA swapmeet. Hans liked this very much, but did not know on which engine he could put it.

"When I was there with my motorcycle without an air filter, he took me there and said: "This has intrigued me here for years ... wouldn't this be cool for your bike? I bought it immediately because it was so special. However, we still don't know where it came from and what it was used for." The steering damper is a friction plate that ensures that the sideways movements in the handlebar are damped at high speed and is from the Afa brand.

The engine has magneto ignition, the bike has no battery and no lighting. The Magneto with dynamo is a very heavy part on a racing bike, so these racers only had a magneto for the spark. Finally, Jurgen says: "I have been very lucky again that my brother Hans Devos of HD

Classic has been in the business for years and knew of or had many special and rare parts.

He also knew the people who were able to help me with information and building, for which I thank you very much!" **CBG**



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## More Ethanol in petrol from September

CLASSIC RIDERS WILL need to pick their petrol carefully from September. E10 petrol containing up to 10% ethanol will become the standard fuel available at petrol stations across the UK.

The increased volume of ethanol could cause issues for classic riders. Ethanol attracts water, causing tanks to rust internally and rot out glass fibre and distort plastic tanks, damaging seals and destroying fuel pipes.

To reduce the risk of damage, riders can use a range of fuel additives or move to E5 'super' blends (Super unleaded), which will remain available at many

filling stations but are more expensive. Not all super type petrols are ethanol-free and some use extra ethanol to increase their octane and RON ratings, so pick your fuel carefully.

Esso Synergy Supreme petrol is ethanol-free in most of England and Wales. It is not available in parts of the West Country, North East England and Scotland.

E10 is a mixture of standard petrol and ethanol made from materials including low grade grains, sugars and waste wood. Its use is expected to cut CO2 emissions on UK roads by as much as 750,000 tonnes per year. E10 has been sold in Europe, most notably in France



Helping yourself, a shilling in the slot petrol pump outside a garage in Cheltenham

and Belgium, alongside E5 for a number of years. Government impact assessments say that the move will result in a 1.6% overall increase in petrol prices.

An E10 compatibility checker for modern vehicles can be found on the DfT's website. [www.gov.uk/guidance/e10-petrol-explained](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/e10-petrol-explained)

## HELPING BSA RIDERS GO IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

BRING YOUR BSA twin's steering up to date with SRM's steering head taper roller bearing kit. It includes the upper and lower bearing sets and is a direct replacement for the original ball bearings, cups and cones.

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The set fits swinging arm, plunger and rigid models including A7, A10, B31, B33, Gold Star, M21, A50, and A65 models up to 1970. The set costs £49.22. Visit [srmclassicbikes.com](http://srmclassicbikes.com).



SRMs new branded bearings

## MUSEUM LIVES AGAIN

THE NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE Museum is to hold its seventh free open day Saturday, October 30.

Now one of the largest events in the biking calendar, in attendance will be some of the museum's specialist suppliers and craftsmen, including the museum's own restoration team as well as other classic motorcycling experts who will be available to chat and answer questions.

There will also be a host of other free attractions including

Henry Cole and Friends live on stage and a classic racer 'Start Up' feature presented by The Brackley Festival of Motorcycling.

Museum Live will also feature the draw for what is billed as The Best Classic Motorcycle Raffle Prize In The World, trade stands and displays and a large indoor autojumble.

For details of how to book an autojumble pitch, contact Dan Powell by email [danp@nationalconferencecentre.co.uk](mailto:danp@nationalconferencecentre.co.uk). Car parking for the event is £10 per car with motorcycle parking



Henry Cole and Sam Lovegrove will be guest speakers at Museum Live

free. For further details and updates on Museum Live 2021 see [www.thenmm.co.uk](http://www.thenmm.co.uk).

## Locking up, not locking down

Back in 2019, CBG scribe Oli Hulme was concerned by a spate of bike thefts in his locality, including his hometown of Burnham-on-Sea in Somerset.

He explains: "There were gangs stealing anything that wasn't securely locked up. Classics, adventure and sports bikes, scooters and mopeds were all getting nicked. They usually ended up wrecked, dumped in ditches or burned out."

Hearing that Avon and Somerset Police had a fund that used money seized from criminals to tackle theft and anti-social behaviour, he suggested to his town council that they could apply for a grant to provide bike ground anchors in public car parks. "A lot of people complain that

the authorities won't do anything to stop bike thefts, but it just took me a few emails." Said Oli: "I thought the anchors would come in handy for bike tourists and for locals wanting to secure their machines. If you don't ask, you don't get."

It took a little while for the proposal to get through the system, but at the beginning of 2021 a grant of £1000, along with a small amount of top-up funding, saw the proposal come to fruition.

A spokesman for the town council said: "There are now public ground anchors fitted in spaces used for motorbike parking. Knowing that the area, especially Burnham, is a popular destination for bikers, the town



council, with Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) approval, applied to the Police Community Trust for a grant of £1000 towards installing four heavy-duty, retractable ground anchors in the parking bays, two in each site."

Proper job, as they say down that way.

## New Dunlops help retro riders tread carefully

APPEARANCES ARE IMPORTANT, and so is sticking to the road. Modern retro owners can add all kinds of goodies to give their bikes a heritage look. Now Dunlop have launched a range of new tyres that follow the lines of the classic TT100 tyre using modern compounds and sizes.

The TT100GP Radial suits the modern Triumph twins particularly well but also the likes of the BMW R9T, Kawasaki Z900RS and Yamaha XSR. The Dunlop TT100GP range comprises two front and four rear sizes. It can be fitted to more than 60 different motorcycle models from 16 different manufacturers. The tyre is also proving popular with custom builders.

The tyre's tread pattern draws inspiration from Dunlop's heritage at the Isle of Man TT. The T100 name was coined when Malcolm Uphill rode his works Triumph Bonneville to victory in 1969 with the fastest lap of 100.37mph riding on Dunlop K81 tyres. This was the first time a production tyre had been used to break 'the ton' on the mountain circuit and Dunlop rechristened the K81 as the TT100 to commemorate this achievement.

The old style TT100 has remained in production since and is still popular with classic motorcycle owners. The Dunlop TT100GP Radial incorporates the look of the TT100, blending the



Dunlop's new hoops are made for big retros  
RIGHT: A familiar pattern brought up to date

classic tread pattern with technology that can harness the sportsbike-level performance of a modern retro bike. The tread pattern has had a minor revamp to improve rigidity and improve precision in bends, but the big changes are under the tread.

The tyre's compound features silica which increases compliance at lower temperatures by allowing the rubber to key into the road surface, boosting grip and rider confidence. Visit [www.dunlop.eu](http://www.dunlop.eu) to see the whole range.

## GO COMMANDO WITH A NORTON TEE

WHO DOESN'T LIKE a great motorcycling T-shirt? The Norton Owners' Club recently ran a competition for its worldwide members and friends to find the best-ever Norton-themed garment.

Assessing almost 200 entries from all around the globe was judge Marcello Oljemark Minale, a lifelong motorcycle rider and a big fan of the Norton marque. Marcello is managing director of the world-wide design agency Minale Tattersfield in London, so is very well qualified to make the decision.

When Marcello carried out the judging, he had no idea who created the T-shirts and was guided purely by his design criteria of relevance to

Norton, uniqueness, longevity, creativity and 'What I would wear to a gig'.

The winning shirt is the work of Norton Clubs Of America (NCOA) Vice-president, Marc Bouchard, in Washington DC. He created it for the Nation's Capital Norton Owners' Annual Rally XVIII in 2000. The featured bike is a 1972 750 Roadster Combat Commando still owned by NCOA member Christian Kelleher.

Marcello summed up the winning design: "A brilliant graphic treatment to say Norton without saying it. White on black – simplicity with clarity of mind. No need to add anything else. It communicates the essence



Suzy Greenway models the winning T-shirt

of the brand with a single gesture. Perfect solution to the problem."

The winning design will shortly be available from [www.nortonownersclub.org/nocshop](http://www.nortonownersclub.org/nocshop)

## Himalayan gets an upgrade



A new look for RE's budget adventurer

ROYAL ENFIELD HAVE unveiled a new Euro 5 Compliant version of their popular Himalayan adventure bike. The Himalayan comes in three new colour schemes, along with a range of additional model upgrades including the Royal Enfield Tripper, the marque's turn-by-turn navigation device for real time directions. The model also comes with switchable ABS for the rear brake, providing every rider with additional performance options depending on their own requirements. All Euro 5 Himalayans will come with a three year warranty and roadside assistance as standard. There is an improved seat and a redesigned windscreen and remodelled front guards and rear carriers. The Himalayan range costs between £4599 and £4699.

## OPTIMATE'S CHARGER GETS A BOOST

JUST AS HOOVER has become the eponymous word for a vacuum cleaner, OptiMate is a brand name that among motorcyclists has become a generic term for a battery charger.

The latest model, the OptiMate 5 Select will save, charge and maintain all 6V and 12V lead-acid, AGM and Gel batteries for motorcycles, cars and vans, as well as recreational vehicles, like golf buggies and ride-on mowers.

Connect the OptiMate 5 to the battery, select the appropriate voltage and it does the rest. If you accidentally choose the wrong voltage, the OptiMate will ask you to check before starting. Once confirmed, it will start diagnosing, recovering, charging, checking and maintaining completely automatically. There's no risk of over- or under-charging and the OptiMate5 Select has built-in spark suppression, with automatic shut-down, if short-circuited or the battery is disconnected.

It can be left attached for long periods, ideal for winter lay-up and for vehicles only used occasionally. It's also waterproof and tested for use at temperatures down to -40°C, so can be used outside. It will recover a battery from deep discharge, as low as 0.5 volts.

It comes with two interchangeable SAE connection sets, one with clamps for bench charging, the other with in-line protection fuse and eyelet terminals, for permanent connection to the vehicle's battery.

Optional accessories include additional fused permanent connection leads; cigarette lighter plug leads to charge via the DIN socket as found on some BMW, Honda and Triumph motorcycles, 1.8m and 4.6m extension leads, and weatherproof sockets to provide a convenient 12V supply for on-board devices. The OptiMate 5 Select costs £89.99.

[www.optimate1.com](http://www.optimate1.com)



# THE MALLE MILE

## *the race like no other*

Jonny and Robert are Malle London, making beautiful motorcycle and leather goods and clothing. But for the last six years they have also arranged the Malle Mile, the best old and alternative bike event of the year. 2020 threw almost all events to the wind – but not Malle Mile – how did they manage to pull it off?

Words: Robert Nightingale



**E**VERYTHING FUN WAS CANCELLED IN the summer of 2020. Glastonbury, Goodwood, Wheels & Waves – cancelled. We foolishly said: ‘Let’s wait’.

In the chaotic spring of 2020 we spoke to riders, marshals and the Malle family and asked: “Do you want The Mile this year?” The response was a resounding: “Yes, please God, yes.” But along with the enthusiasm, everyone we spoke to said: ‘But seriously, it could never happen?’

We spoke to the councils and the government events committee who said: ‘We want things to happen, if they can happen safely – but no festivals.’

We threw the idea of a festival out and nothing hosted inside. We went back to the first ever Malle Mile, refocusing on hosting the best motorcycle race we could.

Jonny and I set about redesigning, many more meetings with the councils, presenting concepts for one way systems,

socially distanced spectating platforms, sanitisation stations at every junction and start line, Malle-made PPE, contact tracing and contactless everything. We tried to get permissions for bands behind glass screens or projected on the Manor House but received more rejections. Until, finally ‘they’ said: ‘if you can do all that, then yes, The Mile can go ahead.’

Then just 17 days before The Mile dates, we got word that Government thinking had changed. Everything in England was cancelled again. Devastated, new dates were proposed, accepted and with more than a hint of trepidation we announced the new dates for late August.

Thursday night, as our team was putting up podiums, exhibition tents, marking out racetracks and installing barriers, you could sense a nervous hesitation in the atmosphere. The Government, police, council, even MI5 could call at any time to shut everything down. We were answering the Malle

## What is it?

The Malle Mile is an event like no other. Held in the grounds of a large estate, all manner of old and new bikes and riders collect for the weekend – the only remit is bikes should be inappropriate; classics, customs or café racers. Even choppers are invited. And then all these machines race on an off-road sprint, a hill climb or even a massed race. The fun is immense, the rivalry purely there for fun and smiles and laughter are mandatory. The Mile genuinely brings folks from all circles, as biking can, and I personally find it the most ridiculous and enjoyable motorcycle event of the year.

**Matt**





phone on site every three seconds asking 'is it happening? Are you sure it's not cancelled?'. The tension was building. We knew if we could get to 12.01am, then it would be Friday and The Mile would be happening. 11.59pm, 12.01am – the Mile was on!

The Mile had been sold out for weeks; more than 400 motorcycles poured in within the first hour. You could sense the energy in the air, everything inappropriate that we've come to know and love at The Mile was allowing all a break from the weirdest of years.

More than 500 motorcycles entered the sprint in the various classes, before the entire Mile crowd moves across the site to The Hill Climb. The 'Channel 9 Commentary Crew' barely keep the crowd informed about race happenings and rider

details, but did keep everyone amused; the 'Dogs and matching owners' was a particular highlight.

The Malle 100 has become a firm favourite amongst the riders and spectators at The Mile, the one mile off-road race circuit has 21 bends, most of them tight hairpins, 100 riders complete the race in heats of 10, with a Le Mans style running start. This race is always great fun to watch, the custom Harley-Davidson motorcycles from 'The Mud Club' were in their element and the more experienced riders were soon lapping newbies.

Watching the more experienced off-road riders on this track is like watching ducks taking to water. Suddenly standing next to me is Neil Hawker on his Dakar Race machine, a famous motorcycle and rider that have completed the gruelling Dakar race, and he's about to race The Mile Hill Climb? Racing against what could only be described as a BMX with a lawnmower engine custom built into it. Two extremely custom machines from the polar opposites of the motorcycle world, side by side, one completely inappropriate and therefore appropriate and the other, professionally sponsored by Michelin, completely appropriate and therefore inappropriate – and both riders grinning

away, ready to race. Okay then... 'clutch hands up, flag up, go!'. We host The Mile to put the fun back into motorcycling, bringing a necessary young energy and feel to the wider motorcycle culture. The Mile is all about everything on two wheels; if you can ride it, you can join in the fun... And the wilder, older and rarer the machine the better.

The Mile is about inviting classics, café racers, customs and choppers. But after hosting The Mile in 2020, against such odds, but with overwhelming support from the motorcycle world, we saw how motorcycle people could pull together; we merely laid out the playing field.

In 2021, the next chapter of The Mile will be held at Grimsthorpe Castle, Lincolnshire, its new home, a beautiful medieval castle with a 6000 acre deer park. It's a necessary larger playing field for all of our guests who like motorcycles and their guests, who like people, who like motorcycles. Fingers crossed that The Mile will rise again in 2021, we'll be introducing road racing on The Dash, an extensive enduro course called The Malle Scramble and a lot more to be announced in the run up to July 23-25, 2021. What else are bikes for? **CBG**

**For more information on the 2021 event, visit [mallelondon.com](http://mallelondon.com)**





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# Specialists

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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**‘WE WILL**



# BE BACK!

Many saw the devastating photos of the TOP Mountain Crosspoint Motorcycle Museum in the Alps on fire. Onno Wieringa speaks to the family that own it and we look back at how the museum was before the tragedy

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY Onno "Berserk" Wieringa, Alexander Maria Lohman, Remko and Daan.





**A** COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, A malfunctioning TV-monitor caused a disaster for the TOP Mountain Crosspoint motorcycle museum, in Austria. Many enthusiasts, including myself, had never heard of the museum; but it boasted almost 300 unique exhibitions.

Tragically, the first time this amazing place was seen by many was when it was ablaze, and unfortunately was almost completely destroyed: the exhibits in the main hall were all irretrievably lost; 15 years of passionate work destroyed. Only the exhibits of the special exhibition "Indian Motorcycles" on the ground floor could be saved.

"I had tears in my eyes and the hairs on my arms stood up. Devastating news, one of Europe's most beautiful museums was on fire, I was shocked, just like the rest of the world. A big loss for all motorcycle enthusiasts from everywhere," said Atilla Scheiber, one of the family that owns the TOP Mountain Crosspoint museum and complex.

But – no one was injured and the entire cable car and restaurant section of the TOP Mountain Crosspoint were unharmed. The owners would like to thank the voluntary fire brigade of the Ötztal and the rescue and police services for their hard work. "Right now the clean-up work is in full swing and we will start rebuilding our TOP Mountain Motorcycle Museum as soon as possible – we will be back and it will be spectacular, we promise!" says the Scheiber family and the TOP Mountain Crosspoint team.

Now, a few weeks after the fire, CBG

contributor, Onno Wieringa, had a long talk with Atilla, who together with his twin brother Alban, owns the Top Mountain Crosspoint Motorcycle Museum, located on the Timmelsjoch mountain in Tyrol, Austria.

**Atilla, first of all, thanks for having this talk with me. We know you are having an extremely hard and difficult time right now. What went through your head when you arrived that night at the museum?**

"I was shocked, I couldn't believe it. Now, after a couple of weeks, I start realizing what happened; we lost everything. Imagine, 15 years of collecting, travelling all over the world, searching for motorcycles. The hard work, the difficult deals we had to close and then this happened, everything gone in just three hours..."





**How many motorcycles were lost in the fire?**

280. We had 110 brands on display, motorcycles like Brough Superior, Flying Merkel, Clement, a 750 MV Augusta, Ducatis, Pope, Thor, various Harley-Davidsons like Panheads, Knuckleheads etc etc. Also something we were so proud of, a great collection of the rarest vintage racing motorcycles, all lost.”

**Do you get any help, support?**

“Yes, it’s heart-warming, so many people and companies offering us their help and support. Individuals, but also motorcycle clubs want to help us. We could, of course, not insure everything, but the insurance company is also helping us and is very cooperative.”

**So what about the future?**

“Well, we are already making plans for a new museum, in the same place.”

**Same lay-out and set-up?**

“Yes, but bigger, also in the sense of a true motorcycle experience. We plan on doing a lot more than just showing a collection of

beautiful vintage motorcycles, also making it fun and interesting for people who just come to visit, not only motorcycle riders. The new museum will be bigger, but more concrete and less wood.

“The outside should be ready by the end of this year, so right after that we can concentrate on the interior. We have to look all over the world for ‘new’ old motorcycles, perhaps we can buy a motorcycle museum somewhere, maybe other museums can lend us some of their motorcycles.”

Thanks Atilla, we all wish you, your brother Alban, the Scheiber family and of course the whole Top Mountain Crosspoint Motorcycle Museum crew all the best.

Is there anything that we, readers and motorcycle enthusiasts can do to support the museum? We can start by signing up for their newsletter and of course, all come to visit the museum as soon as it’s open again. **CBC**

**Info:** [www.crosspoint.tirol](http://www.crosspoint.tirol)  
Timmelsjochstrasse 8  
6456 Hochgurgl Austria





# And now for some good news...

Words by: Oli

**T**HE NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE Museum is getting ready to open its doors after 14 months in lockdown.

James Hewing, Museum Director, says the complex will be ready to open its doors on Friday, May 21, a few days after the provisional date for the reopening of indoor venues, provided the Government is able to stick to the dates.

"If everything goes to plan, we will reopen for three days a week at first, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, potentially from May 21. Then shortly after restrictions are completely lifted, we will reopen fully as soon after June 21 as possible. We can see light at the end of the tunnel," said James.

"It will take a little while to settle things back to normal in a limited way. We'll be following Government guidance. There won't be any restrictions as we have plenty of space for visitors to view the exhibits."

One of the biggest blows to the museum during the pandemic was the refusal of a grant from the £165 million Culture Recovery Fund, which was supposed to support museums and heritage locations as well as theatres, cultural organisations and public events.

"That decision was catastrophic for us," said James. "They won't give a reason why they refused our application. I can only think they didn't believe we were 'culturally significant' enough. I don't usually subscribe to the idea that the world is against motorcycles and motorcyclists because they are dirty and grubby – that's just not generally the case any more, but I do think there's an element of that here. I

***"If everything goes to plan, we will reopen for three days a week at first, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, potentially from May 21. Then shortly after restrictions are completely lifted, we will reopen fully as soon after June 21 as possible."***

suppose they just aren't used to dealing with venues like the NMM. We might be closed but we still have bills to pay."

For the past year, the museum has been mothballed, and staff were furloughed, but a few still lost their jobs including the museum archivist, members of the retail team and most of the restaurant staff. "We have lost some very good people. It was incredibly sad," said James.

To try and fill the hole in the museum's finances, an appeal raffle and an appeal for donations was launched.

"People have been very generous, which is amazing, especially right now when almost everybody is suffering. We did get a boost in donations when people heard about the refusal of the grant. There was a huge reaction. Opinions varied from incredulity to disgust.

"As well as the many individual donations we received one of the biggest boosts came from Triumph, who donated

a new 660 Trident for our Triumph Over Adversity raffle. It's helped us out massively and was very generous of them. I got the feeling Triumph were pretty appalled by the refusal of the grant too."

The museum also sold off some of the "duplicate" exhibits held in reserve. "These were bikes that were extremely similar to things we had already on display. This included identical bikes, and others such as one of two Triumph Bonneville from adjacent years." The auction sales have gone a long way in keeping the museum ticking over.

Events will restart with the hugely popular free admission Museum Live open day scheduled for Saturday, October 30, featuring a host of attractions including Henry Cole and Friends live on stage.

Museum Friends events, including Tours Days, Try a Classic Bike Days and Workshop Training Days will also return, with dates to be fixed once it becomes clear that they will be permitted. Museum Friends will hear about these dates through their exclusive newsletter.

You can support the museum by buying raffle tickets, making donations through the website and by becoming a Friend of the NMM. Becoming a Friend costs £29.95, and comes with several benefits, including 12 months unlimited free admission to the museum. Visit [www.nationalmotorcyclemuseum.co.uk](http://www.nationalmotorcyclemuseum.co.uk).

James said: "Most of all we would like to thank all of those who have helped support the museum during the closure. We still need your help, so please keep donating, but most of all, when the doors open again, please come and see us." **CBC**

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Words by Oli Hulme

Photography by Gary Chapman

# Suzuki GT185 Yamaha CS5

**I**N THE EARLY 1970S, WITH THE BILL FOR insurance on a 250 crushing your average young rider's spirit and apprentice wage packet, the sporty Japanese 200 was just the thing. They were cheaper to buy and run, could be coaxed into long journeys, were moderately fast and could be thrown about.

Your biggest decision was which motorcycle brand to go for. This kind of youthful tribalism was very important at the time, almost as much as which football team you supported or who was your

favourite Pans Person (Dee Dee, since you ask). Suzuki, with everybody's hero Barry Sheene on their team, had an advantage in the street cred stakes. Until he left for Yamaha and you had to sell your Suzuki and buy a Yamaha and branded leathers. ♣



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### YAMAHA'S PURPLE PATCH

Yamaha had a bit of a head start in the tiddler twin stakes and had been making 200s for a little longer than Suzuki. Unlike their rivals they concentrated on small two-strokes for most of the decade, their biggest offering being the four-stroke XS650, while Suzuki made 550 and 750 triples of much gaudiness alongside their smaller twin pot screamers.

Yamaha's CS5 was launched in 1971 and only lasted a year before being replaced by the CS5E, and that was only in the shops for a few years before it too was superseded by the RD200. Today this can cause some issues with parts supply. It had a compact 195cc twin cylinder engine. The 180-degree two-stroke had a four-main-bearing crankshaft with needle roller small and big-end bearings. It was strongly based on the already proven CS3 engine, but the top end had received a new look for the 1970s, a look that started

***“Electrics included a combined 12-volt DC generator/starter motor unit, backed up by a kick-starter. While this might be considered a technical marvel, it had its origins back in the 1920s when belt driven combined Dynastart systems were used on cars, starting engines via a belt”***





on the CS5 and continued into the end of the decade on the RD200 that replaced it just a few years later.

The round barrels and trimmed-down cylinder head fins of the CS3 became square and modern and the heads had been redesigned internally too. It had a two-stroke oil pump, which was branded on the Yamaha as the Autolube system, and a pair of 20mm carburettors squirted the fuel into the engine. Helical primary gears drove a wet clutch and five-speed gearbox. Electrics included a combined 12-volt DC generator/starter motor unit, backed up by a kick-starter. While this might be considered a technical marvel, it had its origins back in the 1920s when belt driven combined Dynastart systems were used on cars, starting engines via a belt. Some 1960s Villiers motorcycle engines had them too.

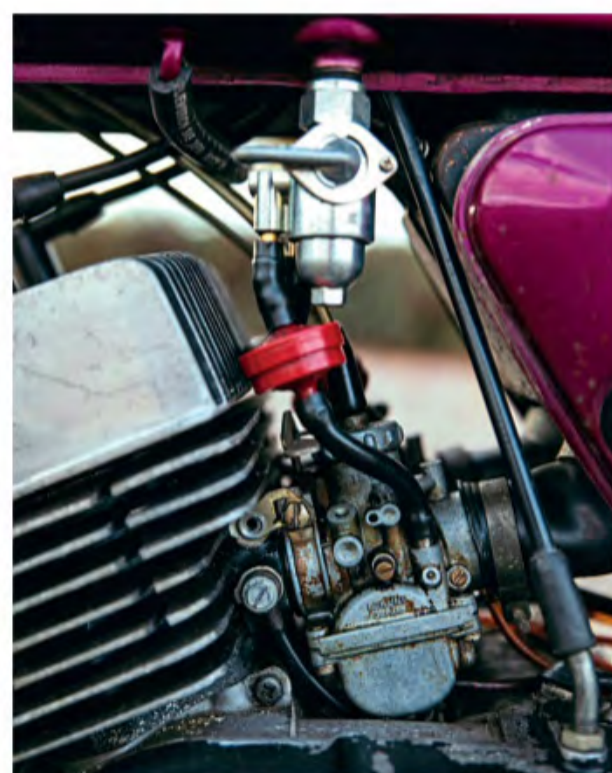
There was a single-downtube spine frame, which retained the CS3 model code. It looked pretty spindly

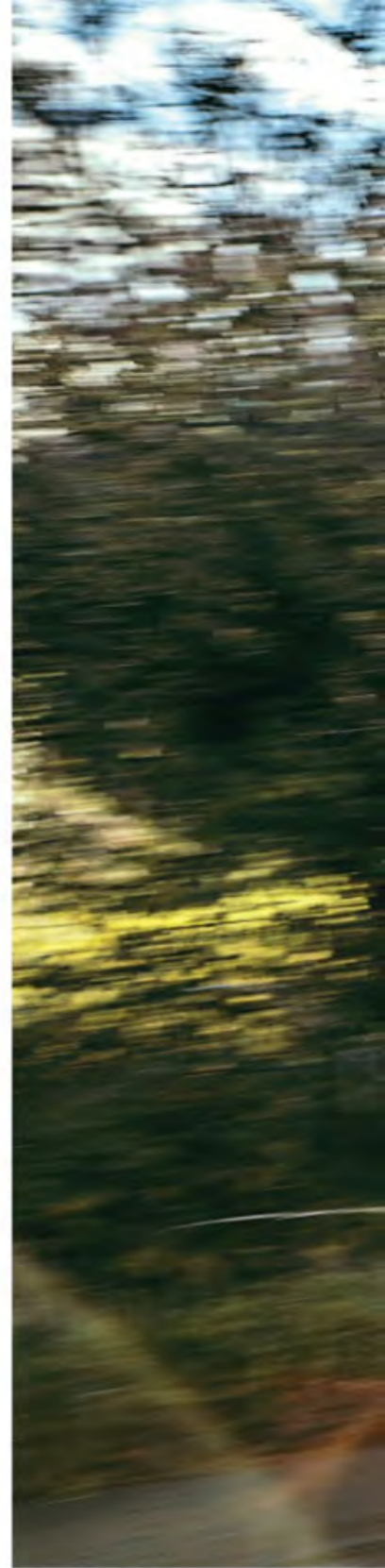
#### SPECIFICATION YAMAHA CS5:

**ENGINE:** Two-cylinder 195cc two-stroke twin **POWER:** 22bhp @ 7,500rpm **BORE/STROKE:** 52mm x 46mm **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 7.1:1 **TRANSMISSION:** five-Speed constant mesh gearbox, Wet multiplate clutch **TYRES:** 3.00 x 18 front, 3.00 x 18 rear **WEIGHT:** 117kg/258lbs **SUSPENSION:** Oil-damped telescopic forks, twin oil damped adjustable shock absorbers **BRAKES:** 7in/178mm drum, 5.9in/160mm sls drum rear **WHEELBASE:** 1245mm/49ins **FUEL CAPACITY:** 9 litres/2 gallons

Above: Pre-runner to the RD200, the Yamaha CS5 can suffer from rare parts

and was matched with a conventional telescopic front fork and rear swingarm. Physically the CS5 is smaller than the GT185. Like other 200s it used skinny tyres, a 3 x 18-inch rear and 2.75 x 18-inch front. Brakes were drum with a 7-inch twin-leading-shoe at the front and 5.9-inch single-leading-shoe at the back end. ▶

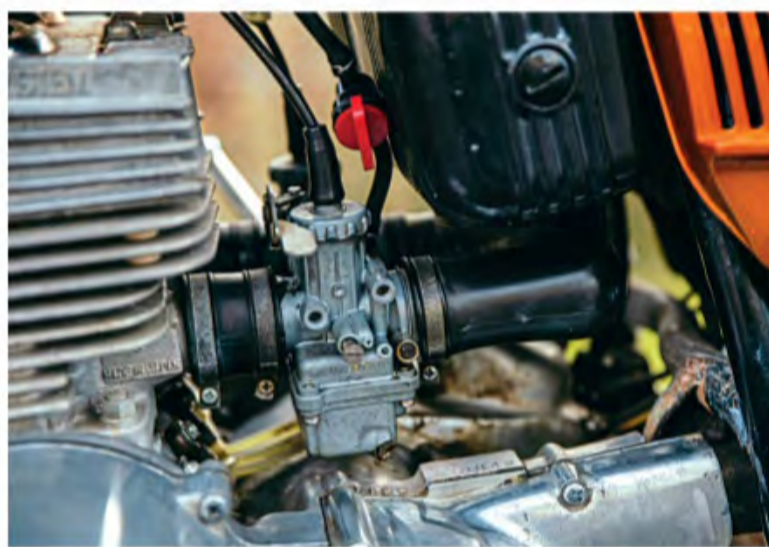




### SUZUKI'S TEEN DREAM

The Suzuki GT185 arrived in 1973. The job of the 185 was to provide a budget alternative to their GT250, and it had a few eye-popping extras, not least its Ram-Air cooled cylinder head. It's always been a questionable addition, more style than substance and on the 185 this innovation was cast into the head, rather than being an occasionally rattly bolt-on shield. The GT was a 184cc two-stroke parallel twin with a four main-bearing crank. The conventional piston-port design sported a pair of 20mm Mikuni carburetors and lubrication was by Suzuki's CCI (Cylinder Crankcase Injection) system. Primary gears drove an 11-plate wet clutch to a five-speed gearbox.

The electrical system was fed by a 12-volt DC generator that also doubled as the starter motor, mounted on the left-side end of the crankshaft. The



Above and below: Check out that cylinder head - that was the Seventies' equivalent to winglets!

device was only offered on sub-200cc bikes, and it's just possible they were a marketing ploy to make the little Suzuki easier for the novice to start. The extra weight of the starter wasn't a huge issue on the GT185 as it was vastly lighter than the GT250. A



### SPECIFICATION SUZUKI GT185:

**ENGINE:** Two-cylinder 184cc two-stroke twin **POWER:** 21bhp @ 7,500rpm **BORE/STROKE:** 49mm x 49mm **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 7:1 **TRANSMISSION:** five-speed constant mesh gearbox, Wet multiplate clutch **TYRES:** 2.75 x 18 front, 3.50 x 18 rear **WEIGHT:** 115kg/253lbs **SUSPENSION:** Oil-damped telescopic forks, twin oil damped adjustable shock absorbers **BRAKES:** 9.3in/236mm disc 6.3in/160mm s/s drum rear **WHEELBASE:** 1315mm/52ins **FUEL CAPACITY:** 10 litres/2.2 gallons



**“Once you grab a big handful of throttle and get to 5000rpm however, it’s time to shut up and hang on. Everything starts to happen extremely rapidly. It will shoot off, hedges becoming a blur”**



Above and below: Big bike feel and pace in a pint-sized package

kick-start was included as back-up. There was a single downtube steel tube frame of moderate rigidity with a telescopic front fork and a rear swingarm controlled by a pair of extra bouncy shocks that looked better than they performed. Both ends ran on skinny 18-inch tyres. After the first model used a feeble TLS drum, this was quickly replaced by a very sophisticated hydraulic front disc for 1974, which gave the GT considerable cachet in the bus-stop bragging stakes.

The GT is well equipped, with twin clocks, an ignition switch in the middle of the bars, and used versions of the kit fitted to its bigger siblings.

#### **THE GT AND THE CS FACE OFF**

There are a few significant differences between the CS5 and the GT185.

#### **The CS5**

The build quality on the Yamaha looks and feels far better than the Suzuki. The purple and white paint job on their CS5 is positively lustrous and very early Seventies and the lines of the little Yamaha are gorgeous. Yamaha described the look as ‘Europa’ styling, and the design of the peanut style tank and tin side panels quickly became Yamaha’s signature look, until the coffin style tanks of the RD range arrived later in the decade.

Instruments and switchgear are excellent, as are the long, seam-free, silencers. The Yamaha picks up the power much lower down the rev range, starting almost as low as 3000rpm, arriving with what might even be described as grunt. And Yamaha played a blinder with the CS5’s replacement the CS5E, which used reed valves, a then new Yamaha innovation and their Torque Induction system made a big difference to the way the power arrived at the back wheel and made everything more tractable. It seems the word torque in Torque Induction actually means something. The front drum makes short work of hauling the lightweight twin to a halt. The drum brake is a little fierce and requires careful management and adjustment to stop the front wheel locking up.

Handling is more than acceptable. It doesn’t bounce about too much, and the lightness of its being makes for a hugely entertaining ride.





### THE GT185

The GT is likewise a dinky little thing, not quite as small as the CS5, but still a diminutive motorcycle. It was designed for skinny young riders who it suited perfectly.

The gearbox is easy to stir and it has to be. The GT has little in the way of discernible torque and does virtually nothing until you get to 5000rpm. If you let it drop below 3500rpm, it will feel as if it's going to die at any minute and you'll need to drop it two gears to get things spinning again.

Once you grab a big handful of throttle and get to 5000rpm, however, it's time to shut up and hang on. Everything starts to happen extremely rapidly. It will shoot off, hedges becoming a blur, the cloud of blue smoke being left far behind. Drop the clutch without care and the front wheel will become exceptionally light indeed, reaching for the sky. It is this kind of hooligan behaviour that endeared the little Suzuki to so many young riders, who would of course claim they meant to do it to their friends, and say it was accidental to those in positions of authority.

Handling is interesting. The soft shocks and equally soft forks, combined with a surprising amount of travel mean that the back end can wallow, while forks bottom out in corners. This unfortunate combination is a challenge if you get over-enthusiastic and would have been all the worse for an inexperienced rider. Though possibly that teenage fearlessness and the rider's ability to bounce without doing themselves a

### THANKS TO

Somerset Classics for providing the two twins. As we go to press the Yamaha has sold for £3195 and the GT for £3495. Another GT185 is available for the same price. Visit [somersetclassicismotorcycles.co.uk](http://somersetclassicismotorcycles.co.uk).

Above and below: Which you choose will mostly be down to brand loyalty, but Oli picked the Yamaha - just.

mischief might have been a suitable counter.

The finish on the Suzuki was a little more garish than on its rival from Yamaha. The designers liked metalflake and chrome in abundance, yet neither paint nor chrome were thickly applied, and the GT would deteriorate rapidly if not looked after, which was a shame.

On the whole though, the GT has more of a massive grin factor. It would have made you feel like king of the hill back then and retains this charm. It's massively entertaining and is far more capable of providing nostalgic teenage kicks than a sports moped that will be twice the price.

### THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE

You could have both for the price of a British 650, but if you had to choose?

The Yamaha looks like a two-thirds size 350, yet despite its size the Yamaha feels larger and more capable than the Suzuki. What it doesn't quite have is the Suzuki's edge-of-your-seat, fast accelerating, performance. It's a lot less frenetic and would be easier to live with. It couldn't really be described as sensible, but for the young riders it was targeted at, it was at least easy to ride.

These little 200s had a short shelf life in the UK. After half a dozen years in the showrooms the 200 twin was killed stone dead by the advent of the 125cc learner law. Both Suzuki and Yamaha created cooking versions of their twins for the commuter market, the SB200 derived from the GT's replacement, the X5 and RS200 from the RD200. But the 125 learner laws caused the sporty twins to become largely valueless, and they were left rotting in sheds. With a short shelf life for the model, parts for the Yamaha can be hard to find and expensive when you do track them down, both NOS and used. Apart from the move from drum to disc brake, the GT185 remained largely unchanged, apart from colour and trim. Suzuki have a Vintage Parts programme and many parts are still available new, at a price. (£101 for a starter solenoid anyone?) This availability could tip the balance in favour of the GT.

It's hard to pick a best buy, but the Yamaha just edges it. It handles better and the power delivery is easier to live with. The build quality is superior, and it's a prettier bike all round. In reality they both have their virtues and vices, and if this is the kind of machine you fancy, either of these tiddlers will satisfy you. **CBC**



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# Honda 350 twin

With the most rotten old pile of British junk worth more than your home these days, how about a nice, air-cooled, 350 twin, easy to work on and great to ride with electric start, metric fastenings and most importantly, still a realistic price!

WORDS BY Oli Hulme PHOTOGRAPHY BY Gary Chapman





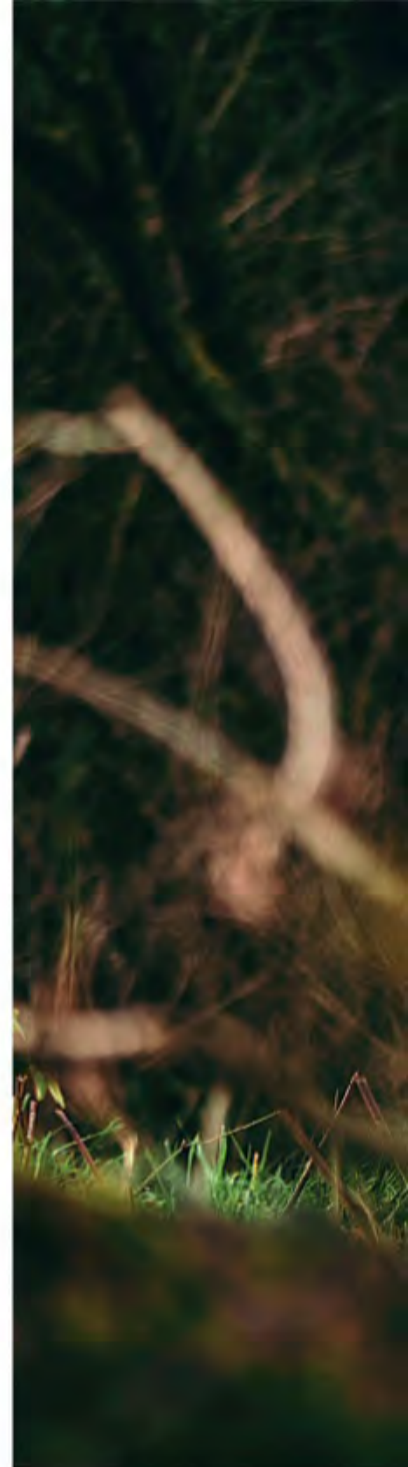
**W**E IN THE UK NEVER REALLY took the Honda 350 twin to our bosom, yet as the years pass once-unfashionable motorcycles sometimes get a new lease of life. Today these twins are enjoying something of a renaissance.

This early lack of recognition had a lot to do with Britain's L-plate laws. If you were young and over-enthusiastic, without a full licence, then you would plump for a 250 from one of the big four Japanese manufacturers. Only Honda would sell you a 250cc four-stroke and it would be left behind in a cloud of blue two-stroke smoke, until the rival's plugs fouled, at least.

Meanwhile, lurking in the Honda dealership were the CB350 twins, which

appeared to be just a bigger version of the bike the law restricted you to. There were only a few reasons for picking up a CB350 twin. They were more affordable than the 400s, and significantly cheaper to insure.

The CB350 buyer was often older and they bought them as straightforward day-to-day commuting transport bought by people on a budget. Maintenance and servicing were often of the kerbside kind, and they would be hammered around on bad roads in all weathers. When things broke, you went to your local Honda dealership and were told there was a six week wait for whatever it was you needed, so you went to your local breakers and bought used parts that were only slightly less worn out than the ones you were replacing. But this was just in Britain. ▶



Above: Easy to ride and while heavy, surprisingly spritely on-road; though heavy and not an off-roader

Below: That's one heavy engine. easy to work on though, and electric start

Elsewhere in the world, Honda's 350s had much easier lives than the CB twins bought in the UK.

The first CB350K had the look of a purposeful and vaguely sporty machine. Then for reasons best known to themselves Honda went backwards, and the late CB350K stylistically had the air of a British twin. One can only assume that someone at Honda had decided there was a hole in the market for a cheap middleweight twin with a traditional look. The result was not without its charm, perfectly serviceable but

lacking in oomph. This in turn was replaced by the CB350G. This was slightly more angular than the K series, but like a lot of Seventies bikes, it lacked pizzazz, and came in a selection of rather dull colour schemes.

This was replaced in the UK by the road-going CB360G5 which, by adding 32cc took the twin out of the cheaper insurance bands, which was a little foolish from a marketing standpoint. It was a rather bland looking machine, even more so than the CB350K model, though it did have a disc brake. The drum on the K was arguably better and is now popular among vintage racers.

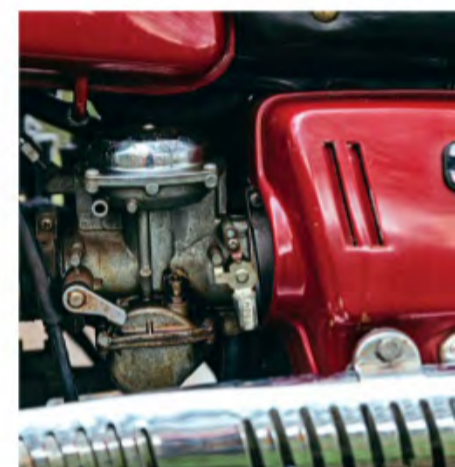
The CB360 was in turn replaced with a budget version badged as the CJ360T. Often derided for its budget trim, the CJ has a stripped-down look that has a certain something, and at least it came in bright yellow, red or occasionally, blue. The slender lines are something you either love or hate. Strangely, Honda removed the electric starter as an economy measure. While the 360 twin was not exactly hard to kick over, the lack of an electric start meant that the CJ lost Honda's only real advantage over rival two-stroke twins. The CJ models were ultimately replaced by the all-new CB400 Dream.

A lot of these twins have been seized on by the Bobber and custom builders, because they are cheap and easy to customise. Slap a thin brat-style seat on it, some cut down mudguards, a couple of budget 'mufflers' and a pair of knobby tyres and you are away. And if you are canny, you can sell the leftover bits for a premium.

You can pick a Honda 350/360 up for restoration in one piece for anything from £1000 upwards, and a good complete runner for between £2000 and £3000. CL Street Scrambler models, especially those with complete exhausts and the correct trim carry a premium of around £500 over the road bikes.



**“So you went to your local breakers and bought used parts that were only slightly less worn out than the ones you were replacing. But this was just in Britain.”**



### The CL350/360

A third of Honda 350 sales were of a motorcycle that never reached UK showrooms, the CL350 street scrambler, a ride-to-work, ride-for-fun two-wheeler.

Mark, at vintage Japanese specialists Somerset Classics, says that the CB, and more commonly the CL, has become massively popular with classic riders. This has a lot to do with their looks, how easy a Honda 350 is to live with, and their ready availability.

“It’s fun to ride, looks and feels like a period classic should and at the same time it’s got an electric start, an engine that’s easy to work on, you can get spares for them, and they are fairly light and easy to ride and are mostly oil-tight. A lot of people are finding old British bikes hard to start, or to look after. The Honda 350 though, is perfect for day-to-day riding, and just keeps going, while retaining that classicness.”

The CL350 wasn’t available in the UK when new but sold in vast numbers across the pond where the inexperienced rider wasn’t constrained by L-plates and 250 laws. In Arkansas you can ride a moped from the age of 10 and any motorcycle from 14 in three other states. Often these bikes

were bought as fun machines, rather than day-to-day transport. By the time they had reached 15,000 miles or so the owner would have grown out of their street-scrambler and relegated it to the back of the garage. Now the dustsheets are being pulled off these machines and many of these bikes end up in containers destined for eager buyers in the UK. And who can blame them for being eager? A low mileage mount, often with no more than a couple of owners, it’s mechanical longevity barely tested, does have considerable attraction.

Honda brought out the first CL350 in 1968. The tank was a slightly truncated version of the angular CB series roadster item. The frame had a single steel front down tube which had been welded to a twin tubed cradle tubular steel cradle. The frame had a pressed steel top section under the petrol tank and a pressed steel rear down tube hidden by the side panels. The CL350 had all the refinements of the CB350K roadster such as 12-volt electrics, a reliable electric start, good lights and modern instrumentation. The engine was a 326cc air-cooled parallel twin with a single overhead

Top: CL350 exhaust looks good but unobtainable

Above: Predicable left-foot gearchange and workings, but with those old-school looks



# What to look out for?

## SERVICE COSTS:

Doing a home service on a CB350 isn't beyond the average home mechanic, though a set of JIS screwdrivers will come in handy if you don't want to butcher your screw heads. You might want to change the casing screws for stainless allen bolts (around £20). Oil filters are £7.99, air filters are cleanable, the sump takes two litres of oil (£15-20) and spark plugs are £4 each. Brisk plugs from F2 Motorcycles are worth considering. A new chain and sprocket kit is £40 from M+P, while a decent set of Dunlop K82 tyres will cost £170. You can get cheaper tyres; it all depends on how much your skin is worth.

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## EXHAUSTS:

The exhaust downpipes are good, but the silencers rot. Replica silencers for the CB350 models are around £114 from David Silver, but basic pattern pipes will do the job. Original upswept silencers for the CB360 cost £185. The studs holding the pipes into the head will have rusted, so take extra care removing the nuts. The CL exhaust is a different matter. The high-level exhaust changed every year, for a start, and on early models they came with easy rust painted mild steel exhaust boxes behind the heatshields. If you seek originality, make sure the bike you want to buy has decent exhausts. In 1970 Honda gave the CL and CB twin a refresh and the CL's high-level two-into-one silencer box was replaced by a pair of British sausage-style silencers, which was a more practical and hard-wearing arrangement. Replacements are unobtainable.

## LUBRICATION:

The original manual lists 10w-40 multigrade for the unit construction engine and gearbox. A good motorcycle semi synthetic oil will be fine. The most important thing to do is change engine oil every 1000 miles and keep the filter clean. Grease the swingarm pivot regularly.

## CARBS:

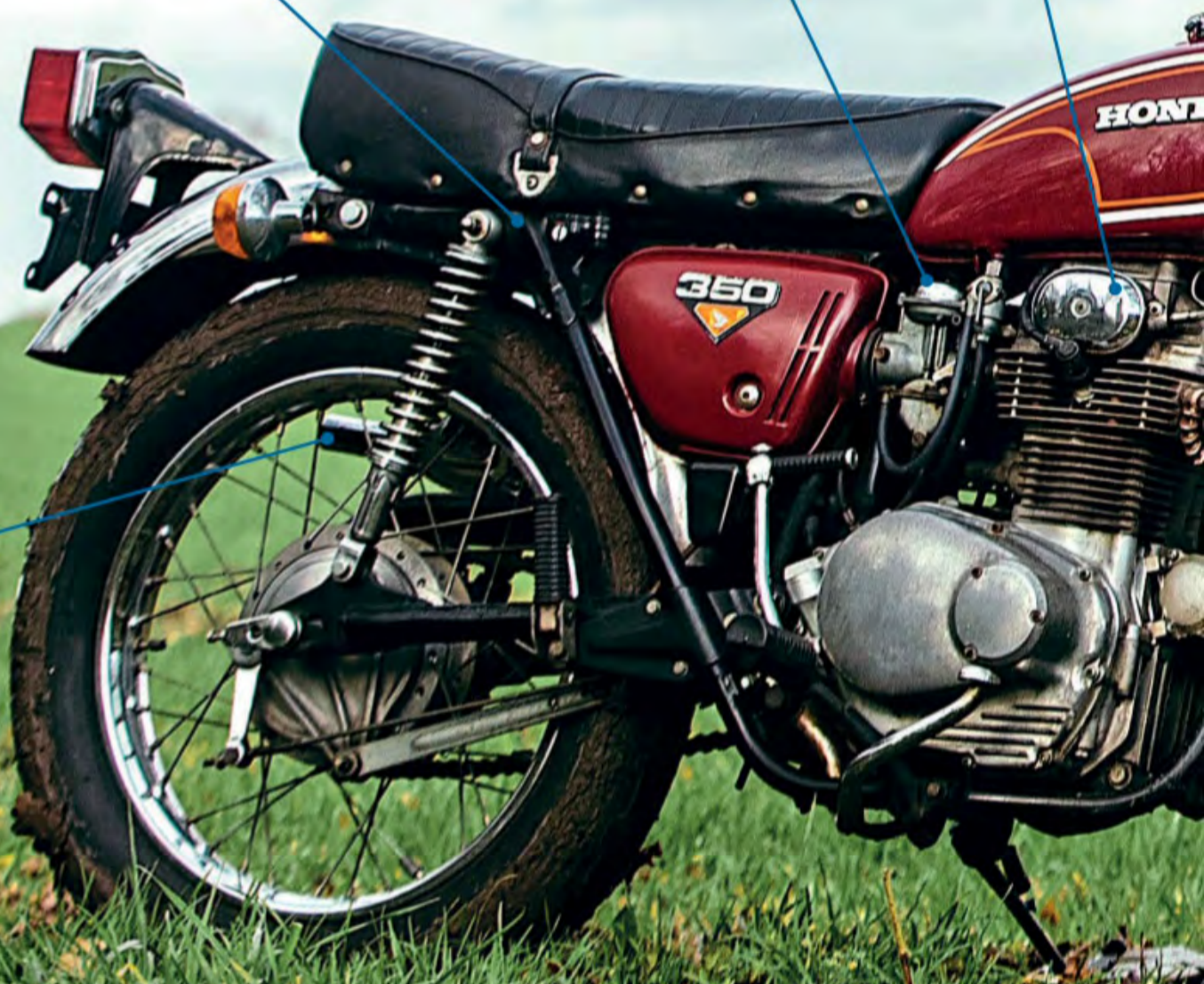
A lot of US and Canadian imports will have been sitting for a long time, so expect gummed up carbs. At the same time those carbs will often have been untouched by human hand, which is a good thing. Take them off, carefully avoiding splitting any rubber parts, dismantle and clean. Ultrasonic cleaning makes them look good and may help but do make sure you clean all the jets. If the previous owner has binned the original air filters, replacements cost £32 from David Silver. The airbox is harder to find.

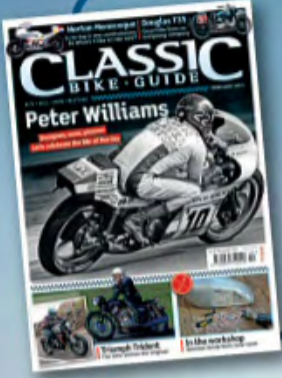
## FRAME AND SUSPENSION

The 350/360 had a mixture of a tubular cradle and a pressed steel top tube hidden by the petrol tank. This stretches back under the seat. Where the lower cradle tubes meet the shock absorber mounts and where the single front down tube meets the cradle are both potential trouble spots, where water can get inside and rot the tubes from the inside out. You cannot lubricate the stand pivot without removing the stand, it seizes and can wear oval. Frames can crack around the swing arm pivot if not looked after. The rear shocks will, if original, be worn out. As they have a forked clamp at the base, replacements are limited, but pattern items and upgrades are available (Wemoto have both period pattern shocks at £78 or Hagons at £148). Forks are basic and replacement stanchions can be found (Wemoto £126.47 each)

## ENGINE:

If there's an issue with the engine, it's nearly always going to be something to do with the camshaft operation. The camshaft runs in aluminium end caps mounted on either end of the cylinder head. An endless chain (David Silver Spares pattern £25, original £59.95) loops around the crankshaft and cam sprockets. There are two springs per valve and the outer springs are progressive. The cam chain tensioner roller was made of rubber and may well have become brittle and hard. Check the inside of the centrifugal oil filter where bits of crumbling roller will have lodged themselves inside a half-inch sleeve. The roller may need replacing (David Silver Spares £59). The cam end caps, and the cam lobes could also have suffered if the engine didn't get the specified 1500-mile oil changes. After an increase in capacity to 354cc, a beefed-up crankshaft, revised oil pump and an extra gear, power was down by 2bhp. Although externally similar the 350 and 360 are completely different bikes with few interchangeable parts.





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### **BODYWORK:**

Side panel lugs fracture. That's one of life's great lessons, and they will fracture on Honda 350s. Lugs can be plastic welded, and there are various plastic glues that might work. As you don't want to lose your side panels, attaching them with ratchet ties won't hurt. Watch out for the light-fingered stealing the expensive and hard-to-find side panel badges. Petrol tanks are made from good quality steel. Seat bases will rot, especially if the seat cover has split, allowing water into the seat foam to reach the metal seat pan. Pattern front mudguards are available if yours are rusty beyond patina. (David Silver £135).

***“but Honda clearly didn't expect users to have serious off-road pretensions as they didn't bother to fit a bash plate and it had road tyres as standard.”***

### **ELECTRICS:**

These were pretty good when new but can sometimes need a refresh. The bike came with separate regulator-rectifier set ups. A universal combined Reg/Rec will cost you £59 from Rex's Speed Shop. Pattern coils and points are easy to find. British Bike Bits will sell you an electronic Boyer system for £189.60. Left-hand switchgear, both original (£59) and pattern (£29), are available from David Silver.

### **HEADLIGHT:**

Like a lot of Seventies Japanese motorcycles, the CB/CL was fitted with a sealed beam headlight. This can be swapped for a superior H4/LED headlight (Paul Goff, £42.90-71.25). Make sure the shell is the right one, as the 360 shell is smaller and replacement reflectors may not fit.

### **BRAKES:**

The drums on the early bikes are good items and don't require major maintenance. The disc on the last models was a Honda design which uses a swinging pivot, and this can seize up and needs regular attention.





camshaft, two valves per cylinder, twin CV carbs, a five-speed gearbox, and a reported 33bhp at 9500rpm. Honda optimistically claimed a top speed of 100mph. It had braced bars, forgiving suspension and a high-level exhaust system.

What Honda did with their exhausts will cause issues for the buyer of an old model today. While the first models had double skinned down pipes, they changed the system regularly, and, as with their CB350 four, they made the silencers out of light, thin metal to save weight and cost. The problem today is that these silencers were made in different versions over the years and are very hard to find in decent condition. Mudguards front and rear were chromed and trimmed, and the forks were given smart rubber gaiters rather than the road bike's more conservative painted steel shrouds. The engine, which has a 180-degree crankshaft mounted on roller bearings, was a bit vibratory. Given it produced peak power at 9500rpm, this wasn't a surprise.

Honda put a 19-inch front wheel on the CL with an excellent front drum brake which some riders found almost uncomfortably powerful. This bigger wheel, combined with rerouting the exhausts gave a little more ground clearance than the CB, but Honda clearly didn't expect users to have serious off-road pretensions as they didn't bother to fit a bash plate and it had road tyres as standard. The rarely seen SL 350 model had more off-road potential. You weren't going to take part in any desert races on a CL, but it was more than capable of negotiating dirt roads in the great outdoors.

#### SPECIFICATION:

**ENGINE:** Two-cylinder two valve per cylinder four-stroke OHC twin **POWER:** 32bhp @ 9500rpm **BORE/STROKE:** 64mm x 50.6mm **COMPRESSION RATIO:** 9.5:1 **TRANSMISSION:** five-speed constant mesh gearbox, Wet multiplate clutch **TYRES:** 3.00 x 18 front, 3.50 x 18 rear **WEIGHT:** 157kg/346lbs **SUSPENSION:** Oil-damped telescopic forks, twin oil damped adjustable shock absorbers **BRAKES:** 7in/180mm 2LS drum front 6.3in/160mm s/s drum rear **GROUND CLEARANCE:** 180mm/7 inch **WHEELBASE:** 1321mm/53ins **FUEL CAPACITY:** 13 litres/3 Gallons

#### On the road

The thing about the CL350 is just how much fun it is. It's a full-sized motorcycle, with a reasonable amount of power. It handles reasonably well and is firmer than you might expect of a 1970's runabout, many of which were squidgy in the extreme. The CL's engine barks along through its twin shotgun style pipes.

It also feels as if you are getting something of quality. Almost all the ancillary bits and bobs are well made, and on the steel we borrowed all the original equipment was there. Brakes are good, instruments clear, switchgear faultless. The proportions are excellent. You can see out of the mirrors. The cables, despite sitting for decades on the one we rode, are smooth. The seat is comfy enough for long rides, and the trail bike-style bars and big front wheel make it easy to flip about. Keep to the back roads and they'll show the CL in its best light.

Power delivery is great, and while you won't win any traffic light drag races, it's easily capable of keeping up with modern traffic. The sole issue for the new owner is likely to be getting the hang of the

Above: Most come from the USA, so make sure they have paperwork, though Honda is great for dating letters

Right: Gary the photographer couldn't get Oli off the CL350!



choke arrangement – there's nothing to indicate what's on or off and finding the lever while riding along to turn it off in thick gloves is challenging.

The gearshift and clutch arrangement are typically Honda, that is to say it's smooth, light and allows changes to be instinctive. There's no massive clunk, no stuck clutches and no false neutrals.

The CL feels like the kind of bike you can ride around on all day, every day, with a bit of style. Given the choice between one on the current crop of new street scramblers and a CL350, the easy-to-live-with Honda wins every time.

### **Buying on a real-world budget £2000-£3500**

You might not think you can pick up a usable British Classic for less than £3500, but you can, and it could even have an electric start. Norton's Electra/ES400 was developed for the US market in the early 1960s. It used a mixture of generic AMC lightweight and Norton running gear with Norton's Roadholder forks and there's a well-designed engine unit in there too with a good gearbox. The ES 400 also boasted a Lucas M3 electric foot similar in design to that fitted

to Honda 350s and later to Commandos and T140 Bonnevilles. There are top notch 8-inch drum brakes. It also had futuristic novelties such as indicators. They aren't exactly common, but you can find them for sale, if you are prepared to put up with a long hunt.

Perhaps you want to find something now with a little more zip? Nostalgia being what it is, the CB350s two-stroke rivals have shot up in price beyond our £3500 limit in recent years, so how about a rival four-stroke? A late 1970s Suzuki GS550 needing a little work can still be had for less than £2000, while the older Honda CB550 is not much pricier. The famed Honda CB400/4, good examples of which rose in value dramatically 10 years ago, has now seen prices settle down a little and a good one can be found for around £3000.

Looking for something a little more modern and a little more exotic? A useable Moto Guzzi V50 is easily obtainable for around £3000, MkI or MkIII is best. If you are looking for something that seems cheap but will ultimately drain your bank account of everything you have saved, try an early 1990s Ducati 600 or 750SS. Available from £2000, just keeping it running will bleed you white in weeks. **OTG**





# Restoring and rebuilding a Honda CL350 By Matt

Above: One was a mix of CB and CL parts, while the other was partly burned. Great buy, Matt

Below: Help was needed

**I**CAN'T REMEMBER WHY, BUT I BOUGHT A PROJECT Honda CL350 from DK Motorcycles in Newcastle under Lyme, more than 10 years ago. In fact, I bought two. One was in good condition while the other looked like it had been in a fire. As I recall, one was £1200, the other £800.

DK were buying stock from the US on a large scale at the time and told me that the easy-to-find bikes on the coast had already been snapped up – they had to advertise and hunt further inland to find bikes. My good one had a CB tank and CB350 18in front wheel, not the 19in the CL should have – it had been put together with parts to look whole, but the engine turned and chassis numbers matched up.

The other one hadn't been in a fire, but had been parked up after a minor spill or problem, somewhere hot, by a window. The seat and rear light had completely melted and the silencers (or should that be mufflers on a bike from America?) resembled a chestnut husk – junk. In fact the wheel rims, headlight surround and side panels were fried – literally – too.



I seem to remember falling in love with a Rickman/Metisse (not sure what you're meant to call them, there's been so many bloody arguments about what they're called) with a Triumph twin in, realising they're terrifyingly expensive for something I wanted to actually use and throw around in the mud, and the Honda, while smaller, slower and not as good, had a unit engine, suspension I understood, CV carbs and metric nuts and bolts.

I stripped the good one, searched for a CL tank on eBay and sent off to Honda UK for a dating certificate for both. I also quickly found the extent, either side of the Atlantic, of bits being put on these old wrecks to make them more saleable. I knew the front wheel was wrong, but quickly realised the forks, and then the front mudguard were all CB350 and not CL350. Not a massive problem, and the other parts can be sold, but the irony was that the parts I needed were sold by – DK on eBay! Let's get one thing straight – never had anything but good service and everything at a fair price from DK motorcycles, just realise what you are buying.

The next issue I had was that the usual condition of parts is reversed. Because of the hot weather there is rarely any bad rust, but chrome suffers. The frames look like new, but are full up with sand and both mine had broken frames – one on the lower rail where the footrests mount, the other dented. The electrics are fried; brittle, corroded and barely of use even as a pattern to make a new loom. As are any parts made from plastic – even the rubbers that you push the side panel tangs into will be rock hard and need heat to soften enough to let go. Budget for a loom which you will need to make unless David Silver has cleared out a US dealership recently, as well as the old-school regulator, bulbs, and of course a battery.



One area I found I didn't need to worry about too much, bizarrely, was the engine or gearbox. My main bike had covered just 13,500 miles and the 'fire bike' engine said on the faded speedo, a mere 1500 miles. Of course, I didn't believe that for one moment, until years later I stripped said engine to prepare it for a little classic racing (a project that was abandoned when I tried to sit on one, finding my knees won't bend that far anymore...) with expert engine builders, BDK race engineering, to find a barely run-in unit. The bores looked factory and the piston rings were still sharp!

Above: Old bodywork off and they start to feel easier

Above right: Oh, a wasp's nest in the headlight, of course

Below: How the 'good one' looked in the shop





Above: The burned one was stripped to be turned into a racer – but I'm too fat and my knees wouldn't bend that far anymore...

Right: This damage is from the sun coming through a window

Below: This was my inspiration. Now it's hopefully to end up in the dirt instead

The other engine needed a thorough service as they run no real filter, but apart from the starter being crap (ditch it unless you need it – the kick-start is fine) and the valves being all over the place (the USA make the greatest tools but if you use AF spanners on a Japanese bike then nuts are gonna round off, boy!) I left it alone. It is damn heavy for a 'little' 350 though, as is the frame!

The carbs were horrible as in almost in the bin horrible. But I'm tight, so cleaning was the order of the day. In hindsight, some Mikuni VM32 would be better, with more power, more reliability and really quite cheap.

Cables can be added to the shopping list as they will be totally brittle, but keep the ferules, as I've not seen the original type in a do-it-yourself kit – that's right, thanks to the longer suspension and higher bars, you'll be making your own new cables.

Exhausts also weigh a ton, and unless you're very, very lucky you'll be having to fabricate your own. I repaired one set, but instead of having it rechromed after welding, I kept the metal shiny with a wire wheel and then lacquered it with 2k lacquer – very hard.



### Is it worth it?

Definitely, yes. The experience will be different to a British bike or a bike that has lived in Britain, but not harder. You may not be able to buy off the shelf, but the CB350 means most parts are available and the custom scene loves these bikes, so they help with various parts. Thanks to the price of a top example, I wouldn't spend a fortune making a concours example. These bikes are for keeping on the road and using. They give satisfaction when doing them up and then when riding, make back roads your friend; keep an OS map on you to seek out some trails and enjoy. They are a bike that generates smiles aplenty. **CBG**

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# Brough Superior SS100

To start our look at 'coffee table' bikes, there could be only one choice - the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles



**H**A - KIDS, EH? DON'T KNOW they're born'. Those often-ridiculed rug rats, wage-eaters, spoiled brats, call them what you will - but one of them, a young, vociferous lad by the name of George Brough, brought us and generations before us a range of motorcycles the likes of which we hadn't seen, and never will see again.

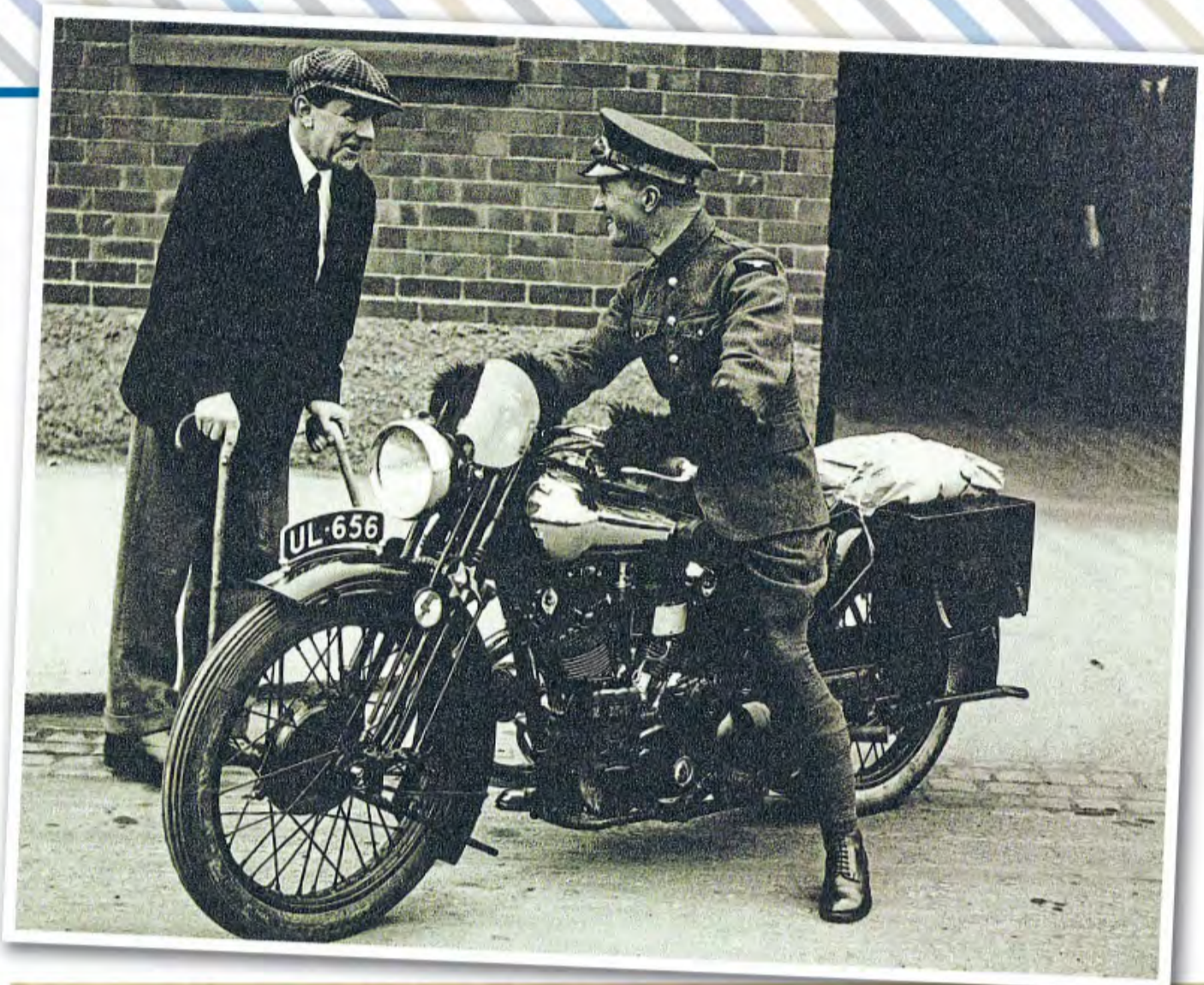
The Brough Superior was born from a young man's enthusiasm - and a little egotism - to break away from the well-made and respected bikes and then motorcycles that his father, engineer William Brough was making in Nottingham.

This was a momentous time, with industrial advances the likes no one had seen before. Coal was powering most moving machines and an intelligent engineer like William not only built his own house, but saw the revolution of personal

transport as a good future for the family. Brough built bikes, their own engines and even cars, albeit on a small, sensible scale.

George, probably from hanging around his father's works, quickly picked up motorcycling, with stories of him riding from his young teens. And these machines were effectively bicycles with small engines attached. But as they became more commonplace, so did the idea of competition and young George was soon to be seen at many trials and events on a Brough motorcycle; with some success, it has to be said.

In the Nottingham road trials in 1911, George rode a V-twin produced in the Brough factory and he came first in the London-Edinburgh trial three years running - 1910, 1911 and 1912. This won for him the Motor Cycling Cup. In fact, speed and competition would surround George, quickly gaining him a 'mad'



reputation with the locals – including the constabulary.

The First World War was about to engulf the country. William Brough wanted to play safe, create solid and reliable products and be sensible; George was ambitious and saw the war as a way to succeed. During his war duties at his father's factory, which made fuel parts for aero engines and anti-aircraft shells, George satisfied himself by designing 'the perfect motorcycle', with friends he met during his service.

By 1919 George set up on his own to create this lavish machine, with his father giving much help, including staff. And the new company's name? Brough Superior, to the disapproval of his father, who felt it implied his own products were inferior.

With George known as a sportsman, his

father's reputation for quality and George's reputed larger-than-life PR skills (and ego) Brough Superior became an established brand in a market of one – the market for 'upmarket sporting machines'.

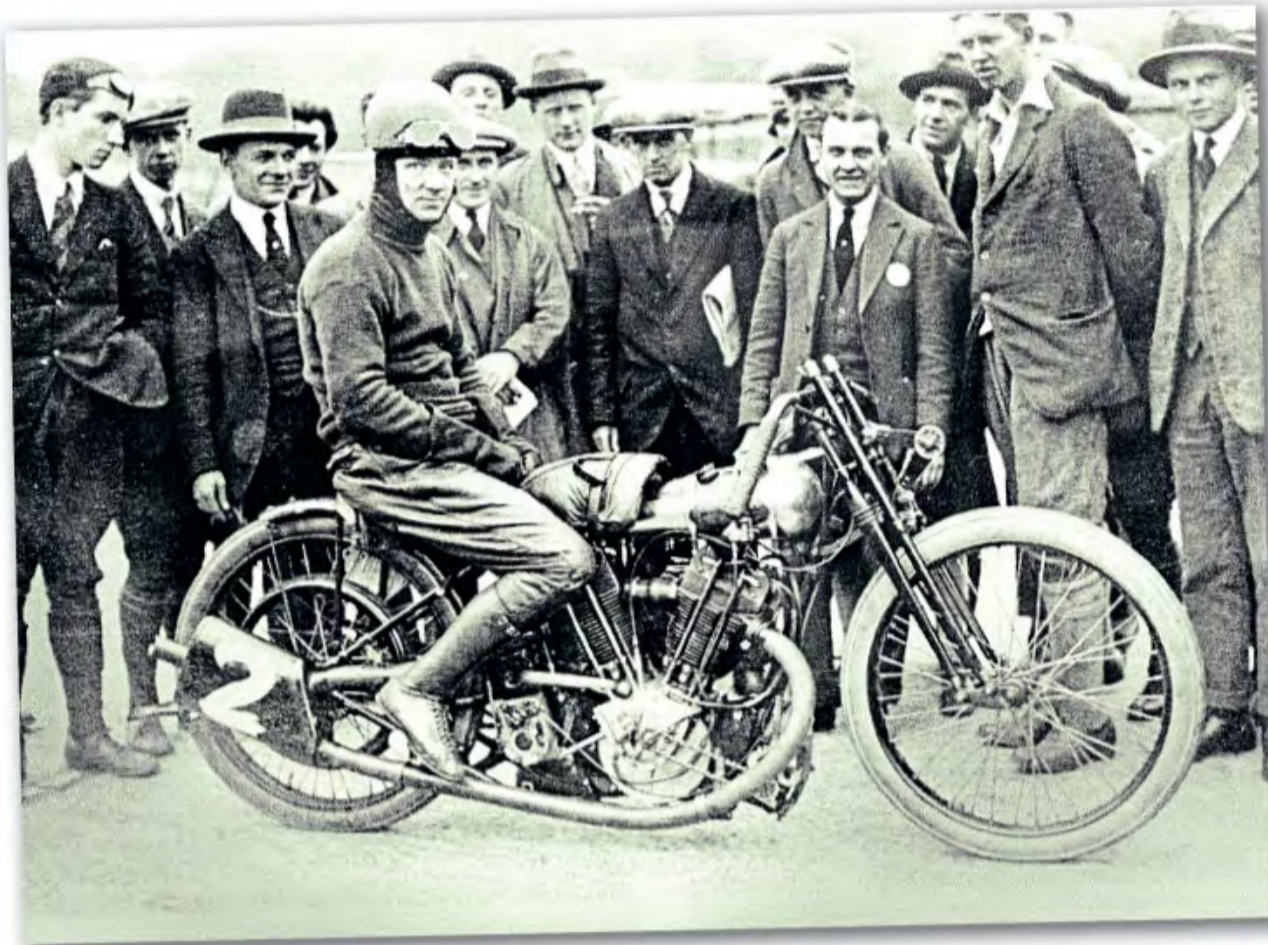
Unlike Brough who made most parts themselves, Brough Superior used mainly third-party parts like J A Prestwich (JAP) engines, Sturmey-Archer gearboxes and a copy of Harley-Davidson forks. Even the frames were made by a different company. One critic pointed out that George had simply created a beautiful hand-beaten and soldered petrol tank which he stuck on top of other people's components, which was more than a little unfair as he prepped all those bought-in parts himself.

Each motorcycle was built twice. The first assembly was for fitting of all components, then the motorcycle was taken apart and

all parts were painted or plated as needed, then these finished parts were put together. Every motorcycle was test ridden to ensure that it performed to specification and was certified by George Brough. Brough's focus on not just upmarket, but sporting bikes, made them the poster bike and one which after the devastation of the First World War, was greeted with affection – even if most couldn't afford them.

From that first bike, the 'Mark 1', or 90 Bore (named because the JAP 980cc V-twin engine had a 90mm bore), must have been like seeing the first motorcycle. V-twins were for hauling sidecars, sports bikes didn't exist and the curved saddle tank was a thing of beauty. Then, in 1923 the SS80 was introduced, with JAP's new side-valve engine. It was available in whatever spec the purchaser wanted, with whatever

# Posh Totty



The SS100 was the fastest motorcycle anyone could have on the road. It was the most beautiful machine anyone would see, with incredible attention to detail. The tank had changed in shape slightly to be even more smooth and suave. The exhaust manifolds were finned to keep cool, the individually bent bars a thing of beauty, including the internal cables. Bizarrely, the Harley-Davidson forks were not up to the job, having been designed for use without a front brake, so George fitted a 5in Webb, which slowed slightly quicker than dragging your feet.

Later, Castle forks were fitted, designed by Brough Superior engineer Harold Karslake, or 'Oily' to his friends, which were an evolution of the old H-D ones and were made by Brampton for Brough Superior. Oily also has the pleasure of being cited as the creator not only of the dipping headlamp, but of the motorcycle sidestand. Oily, we salute you, Sir.

The SS100 sold well – with 69 being made in 1925 – a lot for a small company making expensive, bespoke machines in postwar Britain. But George's sporting aspirations created yet another model,



accessories they wanted. The bikes were bespoke, with the riding position and the curve of the handlebars set at the factory for the individual customer. But most importantly, it came with a certificate that it would achieve 80mph. The SS80 in various guises gave George the success he craved and the profit he needed for the next venture – the big one.

The SS100 was released in 1925 and itself was an evolution of ace tuner and daredevil Bert Le Vack's world record-breaking bike, which had an experimental JAP engine and recorded a top speed of 119.74mph. The KTOR was overhead valve, 980cc and had every possible racing extra, like a top-end oil pump, four cams and roller bearings. It made around 50hp, unheard of in 1924, but would cost £100 from JAP if a customer asked.

The production SS100 was offered with the slightly less stressed version of the engine, and complete with such luxuries as a Magdyno and lights, numberplates, pump and horn, it cost £170. A speedo was extra, but you had a choice of Coweys or Bonniskens, but these would be essential should you wish to test the certificated speed over ¼ mile of 100mph.



one that is now the crème de le crème; the Alpine Grand Sports.

The AGS had many small adjustments to help it be the best and they concentrated on helping it at the Austrian Alpine Trials, in 1926. George and fellow Brough racer, Freddie (or Gentleman) Dixon had great success the previous year and learned a lot. So the frame was adapted to give more ground clearance and it was stiffened at the headstock, the KTOR engine was detuned to make long-distance cruising more attainable, the seat was lowered, an auxiliary oil tank fitted so the fuel tank could hold more petrol, the gearbox was repositioned to lower the centre of gravity and they had a tiny café racer-style screen. The gearshift was stuck on the side of the petrol tank, and AGS had a special close ratio gearbox. They also had toolboxes fitted as standard. But, as always, the brakes were not improved, despite the mountain passes and hairpins.

By 1934 the SS100 had gone through numerous detail changes and for this year came with the JAP 8/75 v-twin engine. This was lavishly equipped, with two carbs, two magnetos, a pair of oil pumps and

## **'Oily' also has the pleasure of being cited as the creator not only of the dipping headlamp, but of the motorcycle sidestand. Oily, we salute you, Sir.**


stunning performance and the first of the Castle forks. Brough guaranteed it would top 110mph. Sadly, the overstressed JAP engine turned out to be unreliable, and just 10 of these firebreathers were built.

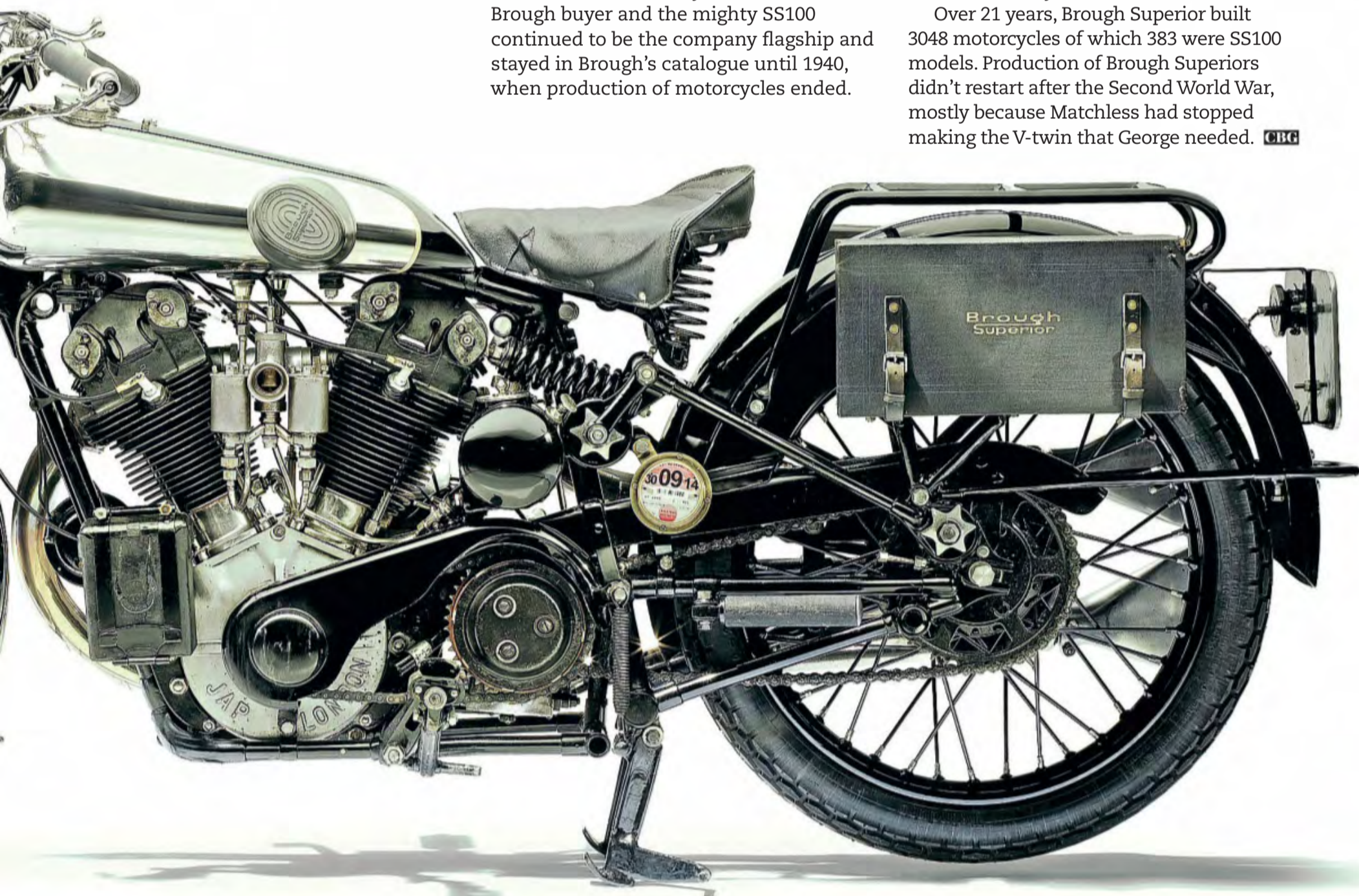
George decided on a change in engine supplier in 1936, with a Matchless OHV V-twin in place of the JAP. The Matchless mill came with 'square' barrel dimensions, hairpin valve springs and a twin carb arrangement. Two years later Brough responded to fashion and demands for comfort and fitted plunger suspension and a modern centrestand, rather than the rear wheel device used by most manufacturers.

The SS100 took something of a back seat at Brough Superior while George mucked about with a transverse V-twin mated to an Austin Seven gearbox on which the rider engaged first by hand and second and third with their foot, and then he created the Golden Dream, a shaft driven flat four. Such innovations were viewed with distrust by the well-heeled Brough buyer and the mighty SS100 continued to be the company flagship and stayed in Brough's catalogue until 1940, when production of motorcycles ended.

Infamous Englishman, Col Thomas E Lawrence, or Lawrence of Arabia as he was known, owned seven of them, four SS100s and he had one on order when he tragically died, while riding his SS100. He used to name them all 'George'. Brough's reputation for quality had secured for the company one of the most important roles it ever took on, when Rolls-Royce asked Brough Superior to machine crankshafts for the Merlin engines used in the Spitfire.

There's always going to be a lot of focus on the price of a Brough, and with the most expensive Broughs topping £350,000 that's understandable. But there are other ways of looking at it. In 1929, an Alpine Grande Sport cost £180, which is around £12,000 in today's money, around the same as a bottom of the range Harley cruiser. If you'd invested that £180 in a small London property in 1929, it would now be worth £350,000. And which would you rather have? A Brough Superior SS100, or a grotty little flat in Croydon?

Over 21 years, Brough Superior built 3048 motorcycles of which 383 were SS100 models. Production of Brough Superiors didn't restart after the Second World War, mostly because Matchless had stopped making the V-twin that George needed. 



New

# RETRO



## 2021 Triumph Bonneville range

Dave Manning looks at the newly-launched Triumph Bonneville range and takes a look at each model.

**M**OST MEN, WOMEN AND THEIR dogs know the rejuvenated Triumph brand has a parallel twin motorcycle styled and named after the ubiquitous Bonneville. Starting life at the Meriden factory, the bike that entered production in 1959 is not only the epitome of the British twin but, as far as many folk are concerned, was also the bike that dragged Triumph, kicking and screaming, from the Seventies into the Eighties.

That bike not only saw the end of the Meriden concern, but it was also a

Bonneville that has helped to support John Bloor's Hinckley Triumph revival (though ironically he didn't want a Bonneville at first) and, for 2021, there's a new range.

The first Hinckley Bonneville was launched in 2001, 11 years after the Hinckley Triumph was born, as a 790cc model and, for me, it was something of a disappointment. Sounding like a Honda Superdream and feeling like a castrated version of its Meriden forefathers, it was completely overshadowed by the Kawasaki W650, with only the name on the tank giving it some vital kudos

over the Japanese competitor.

But of course, that was 20 years ago, and I can happily report that in the two decades since, the Hinckley Bonneville is as improved as the original Bonneville was during its last 20 years at Meriden, if not more. Aside from the increase in capacity to an across-the-range 865cc in 2007, fuel injection replaced carbs in 2008 (purely to adhere to increasingly-stringent emissions regulations), and further capacity increases gave us the 1200cc T120 in 2016 and 900cc T100 a year later, at which point the crank configuration was also changed



from a 360° crank (with the pistons rising and falling together) to a 270° crank, giving a power output that is more similar to a V-twin than a traditional parallel twin. Strangely, during the presentation of the new models, the Triumph staff insisted on saying that these bikes had “the British twin sound”, yet the 270° engine doesn’t sound like a classic Triumph, BSA, Norton, Enfield or Matchless. Oh, the made up world of PR...

The two 1200/900 capacities remain the same for the 2021 models, with the T120, Bobber and Speedmaster using the recent ‘High Torque’ version of the 270° parallel twin, while the T100 and Street Twin are powered by the smaller 900cc version. As with so many other new bikes for 2021, the main focus has been in ensuring that they qualify for Euro 5 regulations, which essentially just means that the emissions have been strangled further (a reduction of about a third from the previous Euro 4 regulations) so there’s





been some necessary engine changes, but there are also some other changes to specifications too.

While the sales figures have been very positive indeed, the Bobber is perhaps the least Bonneville-like of the line-up, and despite the factory's spin on the style of bike, the truth is that it was American bikes that were being bobbed back in the Forties and Fifties to be able to compete with the lighter, more agile bikes being imported from the UK. So, while Triumphs may have instigated the bobber craze, their bikes weren't actually bobbers... but I digress. The '21 Bobber is updated with a larger fuel tank, a fat 16" front wheel (Triumphs never had that in the Sixties!), LED lights all round, and black engine details.

Using the same chassis and engine specification as the Bobber is the Speedmaster, the cruiser of the family, having the rigid-look frame with monoshock and essentially being a more clothed version of the Bobber, and capable of two-up riding. Like the Bobber, it has an improved engine response and suspension action, and a new seat for more rider (and pillion) comfort, with a conveniently

low seat height of 705mm/28in.

The original T120 Bonneville is the bike that has shaped the design of the resurgent Bonnies, and the current T120 is no exception – it's clear that the Hinckley staff want to retain the close resemblance to the original Bonnie of '59. To do so, the catalytic converter is hidden beneath the bike, leaving the traditional style exhausts befitting the look, although the new bike has reduced engine inertia to give a quicker pick up, allied to lightweight aluminium wheel rims, and higher spec Brembo calipers, all helping to reduce overall weight and improve performance. Not that this is designed as a performance bike of course (unlike the original), and the addition of cruise control as standard shows the target audience. Also new is the 3D-faced instruments, though the styling is traditional while the tech is modern.

The smaller-engined T100 is so similar as to be inseparable from the T120 if you saw them riding past, but the 900cc motor, while now producing 10bhp more than the previous model, is also available with an A2 licence kit, which can be subsequently removed when the owner has passed that test. Unlike its bigger brother, the T100

has a single front disc and caliper, but does have new cartridge forks to sweeten the handling.

The Street Twin is, essentially, a nicer-looking T100, also using the 900cc engine, and of late has been the biggest selling model in the family. It features new cast wheels, a new seat and side panels, and other styling tweaks. And is also available as the Gold Line limited edition version, which is hand detailed with gold pinstriping done by hand in the factory. And, with a production run of just 1000 worldwide, you'll probably not be seeing many down your local bike meet.

As is the way of the modern world – and bearing in mind that Triumph state that more than 86% of Bonneville owners have personalised their bikes – the Bonnevilles have an expansive (and expanding) range of official aftermarket goodies, from luggage to security, via centrestands, screens, seats and more. For prospective purchasers there's a digital configurator on the Triumph website to show how the parts change the look of the bike in question.

Since the launch of the new Bonnie two decade ago, 367,000 have been made, and their popularity doesn't show any signs of slowing down. For long term owners, the 10,000 service interval and two year warranty are a nod in the direction of durability and reasonable running costs, and with the range starting at £8200 (for the Street Twin), you get a fair sized bang for your buck!

The prices are: Bonneville T120 and T120 Black £10,800; Bonneville T100 Street Twin £8200; Street Twin Gold Line £8800; Speedmaster and Bobber £11,850.

With Triumph set to add more variety to the Bonneville line-up in 2021 – with the 1200 XC and XE Scramblers and Street Scrambler being due in April – then could it be that the Hinckley factory has the retro twin market sewn up? **CBG**



SRM



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— NORTON DOMINATOR 99 —

# *The pub yarn that became reality*

After hearing for years about his friend's father's bike lurking in a shed, Mike Peter was delighted to find it was real - but it took a lot of work to get it riding and looking like this

Words and photography by Stuart Urquhart







**O**N THE OPPOSITE PAGE YOU'LL SEE A PHOTO OF this splendid Norton's owner, Mike Peter – also known locally as 'Mike the Bike' (for obvious reasons). Also nicknamed 'Skinny', he's an off-road nut and cyclist, and fit enough to tackle the lung-sapping Fife Alps before breakfast. Mike's had more bikes than I've had porridge and currently he has a stable of 10 classics; including two lovely Norton Dominators and a rather salivating yellow Commando. By profession Mike's an offshore mechanic and when not servicing North Sea oil rigs, he can be found fettling or riding his many classics – bringing us neatly to the immaculate 1955 Norton Dominator 99 that features in this month's magazine. But by way of confession Mike wasn't always a fan of British bikes...

"I cut my teenage teeth on popular Japanese middleweights and British bikes were an anathema to me – only fit for the scrapheap! For years I'd given up listening to tall tales by my pint-pulling friend Allan about his dad's old British bike that was buried somewhere in the family shed.

"None of our bike gang had ever seen the bike; far less witnessed his dad riding it. We dismissed his stories as 'pub yarn' and heard no more of it once Allan's father had passed on," sighed Mike.

"Then years later I bumped into Allan while fishing for sea trout on the River Tay. Allan once again brought up the story of his dad's old British bike and posed the question as to whether I would like to buy it. Naturally, I politely declined; but my curiosity was aroused when he asked me to help him extract the bike from his dad's shed, so that he could advertise it for sale."

### **The shed café racer**

Several days later the lads met up and after locating the 'buried' motorcycle in a damp, dark corner of the family shed they dragged it out into the bright sunshine. Mike said he was astonished that Allan's old pub yarn was actually true... and although he was shocked at the motorcycle's dilapidated condition, it appeared to be completely intact. Covered in years of grime, Mike

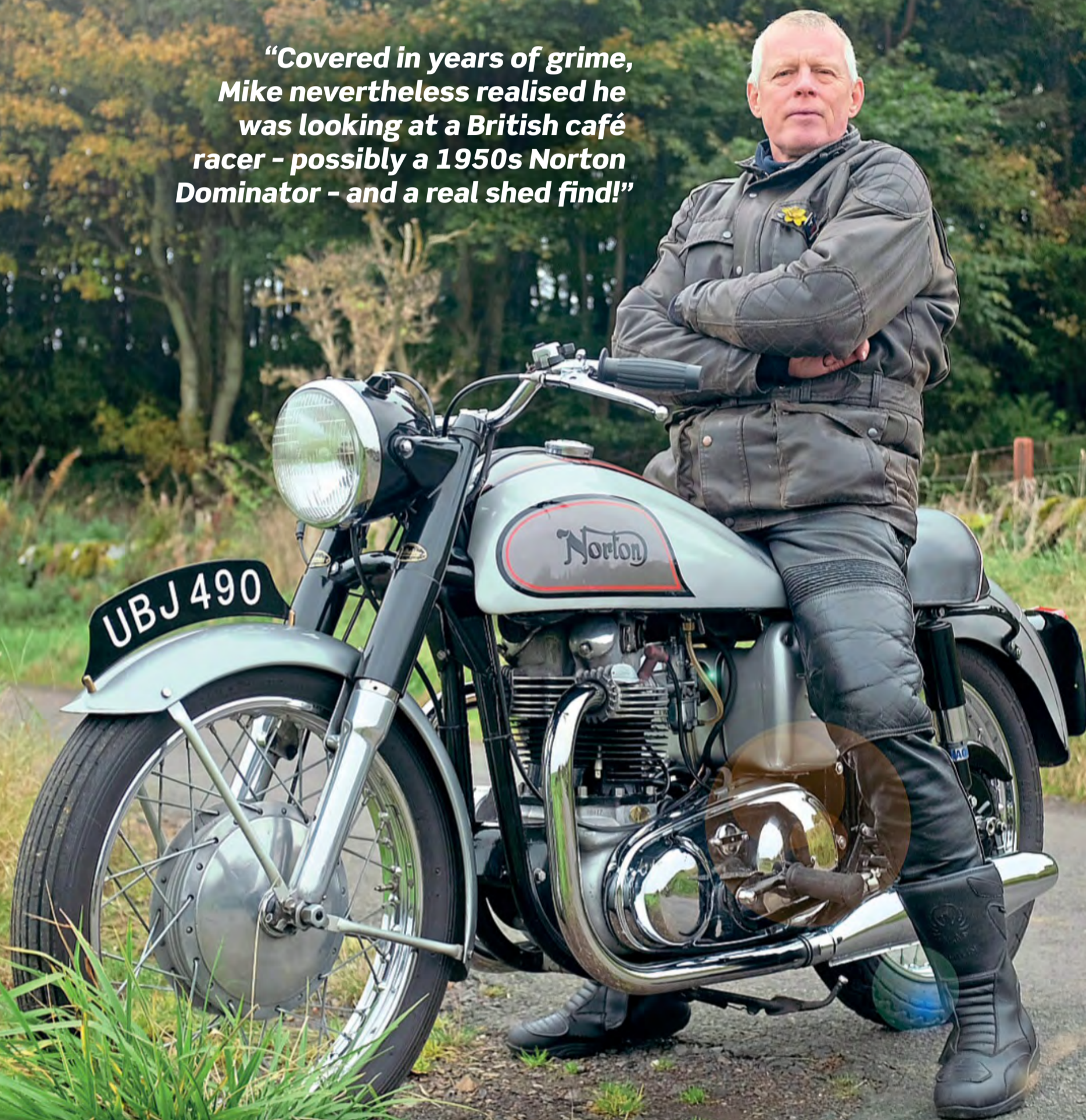
nevertheless realised he was looking at a British café racer – possibly a 1950s Norton Dominator – and a real shed find!

"Both tyres were absolutely flat and a quick peer inside the rust-encrusted petrol tank had us both gagging at the reek of rancid fuel," laughed Mike. "As I was more familiar with fettling bikes than Allan, I suggested we test his Norton for a spark. Imagine my surprise when one flashed across the rusty old plug as soon as Allan depressed the kick-start. Unfortunately the Amal carburettor proved seized solid and filthy, so I offered to take it home and rebuild it. A dejected Allan reluctantly accepted that starting up his dad's old 'pride and joy' would need to wait for another day..."

After two weeks offshore Mike returned to the job of starting up his friend's shed find. The restored carburettor was replaced, along with new spark plugs, fuel and engine oil. The tyres were then inflated and both lads were stunned when the old Norton fired up after Mike's second kick. But as the engine warmed, oil began weeping from the engine and clouds of smoke billowed from both exhausts! As Mike warmed the engine for a trial run, it wasn't long before the top end began to rattle and chatter. Undeterred, Mike pushed the incontinent Norton onto the road and managed several short runs up and down Allan's street before the reeking engine stopped the fun. Mike said Allan was overjoyed to witness his father's Norton running for the first time in over 40 years. Now 'sorted' and ready for sale the bike was wheeled back into the shed to await a new owner.

"I was quite thrilled by my test run – especially by how different the Norton felt when compared to my current crop of Japanese machines. As we chatted about its sale I heard myself asking Allan how much he wanted for it... I couldn't help myself, I was offering to buy it!" chuckled Mike. "But I soon discovered my old friend thought very highly of his dad's pride and joy and we haggled long and hard about its value. It was only when I promised to properly restore the bike and give Allan first refusal that we shook on a deal. Suddenly, I had a project Norton on my hands." ♠

***“Covered in years of grime,  
Mike nevertheless realised he  
was looking at a British café  
racer - possibly a 1950s Norton  
Dominator - and a real shed find!”***



## Trouble comes knocking

Wisely, Mike decided to run the Dommi first and sort any problems later. However he reckoned the top end 'chatter' required urgent attention so Mike invested in some imperial spanners and removed the head and barrels for a quick inspection. Worn valves and guides proved to be the cause of the smoking exhausts and visible oil smears inside the bores suggested they and the +60 pistons fitted were well past their best. Mike decided to use the Norton 'as found' until he could commit to a complete engine rebuild. This decision however, was rudely snatched from his hands...

"Not long after I'd inspected the bores an unhealthy knock developed from the engine. While out on a short run the engine suddenly locked-up with smoke billowing from the head. I suspected either a blown crank or a piston seizure, but without tools I had no choice but to attempt a restart. After allowing the engine to cool I managed a restart and limped carefully home on a faltering engine.

"Once I'd wrestled the engine from its frame and stripped it, I discovered a badly worn big end. I was also horrified to find that many engine components were quite knackered. I knew the engine required serious work and so I decided to send it to RGM for a professional rebuild – not cheap, but well worth the peace of mind! Meantime, I began to replace other worn cycle parts. Two months later my fully-reconditioned engine arrived in a wooden crate accompanied by a detailed receipt for all RGM's specialist work – including a balanced and highly polished crank, new bearings, new bores, standard pistons, plus much, much more. The sight of the glistening new engine inspired me to restore the Dommi to an equally high spec."

## No ordinary Norton

Thus Mike completely stripped the Dominator down to its component parts. The frame was sanded down and hand-painted using Japlac enamel – the high gloss finish is a credit to Mike's brush technique. The stunning petrol tank was professionally painted by Bike Paints of Cupar. Other cycle parts were painted to match the tank.

The forks were rebuilt using new stanchions, bushes, progressive springs, seals and rubbers. New steering head bearings and Hagon shocks were also added. Fortunately the original Dunlop rims polished



Polished head and valves; well you would, wouldn't you?



SRM bottom end



Above: 99 Transfer – oh yes, this is a 600cc

Above right: The pilot gets a handsome view

Below: Norvil belt Commando clutch conversion

up extremely well, to which Mike added new bearings, rim tapes, inner tubes and tyres. The dilapidated seat was replaced with one from eBay, but Mike bemoaned the seat's white piping, which faded within a fortnight!

The gearbox was stripped and rebuilt with new parts including bearings, a first gear cog (chipped tooth), gear selector, gearbox sprocket and seals. The Amal 627 carburettor (rare choke-type) was also completely overhauled (for the second time!). A new wiring harness, alternator and other components, including a solid-state regulator/rectifier joined the upgrades. Last job was to source a rear mudguard as the original was well past service...

"Unfortunately sourcing the correct rear mudguard proved elusive, so I contacted a private NOC advertiser who specialised in fabricating bespoke steel mudguards to pattern. When I rang the vendor his charming wife dashed my hopes with an abrupt apology, 'Sorry lad, but my husband retired from the trade!' Fortunately her hubby was close-by and bellowed down the line, 'don't fret son, I'll build you one – I need to detach myself from the TV and get off my backside!'

"Several weeks later a beautifully-fabricated metal mudguard arrived at my door. I had it powder-coated grey then painted it to match the rest of the bike.

"The bike was rebuilt over the bitter winter of 2010 – I remember the extreme cold, because tons of snow fell that blocked my garage door! Once the build was complete, I timed the ignition and added fresh fluids.



**“Fortunately her hubby was close-by and bellowed down the line, ‘don’t fret son, I’ll build you one - I need to detach myself from the TV and get off my backside!’ ”**



I was astonished when the Norton fired up on the second kick. I do remember that checking the engine oil return was a heart-stopping moment... I pushed it up and down the road in top gear with both plugs removed until oil returned – my wife thought I’d lost my marbles! Then I rode it round to Allan’s house and he was thrilled with the end result, lamenting: ‘I wish my old man could be around to see this – he would have wept with joy!’ ”

Mike says he is very pleased with the restored Norton. “It’s so smooth for a parallel twin and the handling is amazing. The 600cc engine has buckets of torque, and pick-up is excellent too. I absolutely adore the fabulous soundtrack!” Mike enthused. “The carburation is spot-on, but oddly the transmission has proved a little bit ‘harsh’ at times. However, friends still compliment me on its immaculate condition several years after its restoration.”

After eight trouble-free years, Mike decided to give the Norton a thorough service. Sorting the harsh transmission, crunchy first gear and fitting a Norvil primary belt drive and Commando clutch was Mike’s plan. But unfortunately when setting up the primary belt alignment, the belt tended to run off the clutch pulley wheel. After more work and much to Mike’s relief, the addition of a pair of spindle adjusters on both sides of the gearbox sorted out the belt alignment – a surprise bonus was the lighter Commando clutch Mike had fitted also tamed the crunchy gearbox of old.



### **I blag a ride**

Years of fussing and fettling is apparent when you sit astride Mike’s Dominator. First gear selects silently via a wonderfully light clutch – no crunching; no grinding gears; no drama. All controls fall readily to hands and feet and this motorcycle fits like a well-worn glove. I couldn’t be happier, because the A924 we were about to traverse enjoys a scenic climb up and over Moulin Moor – also reputed to be one of the smoothest and most thrilling motorcycle routes in Perthshire.

I’ve enjoyed many short runs on Mike’s Dommi, however this road test would be an exhilarating 26-mile ride consisting of tight chicanes, testing bends and wheel-launching mini-bridges that stride raging mountain torrents. A pocket version of Scotland renowned by Perthshire tourists it offers breathtaking views of Ben Vrackie and a picturesque descent past the Eradour Whisky Distillery into Pitlochry. A visit is highly recommended, as is a welcome stay at Valhalla Biker’s Lodge in Kirkmichael, only minutes from Pitlochry. ▶

Above left: Single Amal carb replaced seized original

Above right: Magneto was also rebuilt



The uninitiated Featherbed pilot will be convinced that invisible gyroscopic forces are at play, for Mike's Dommi personifies 'corners on rails'. You feel invincible, cocooned in a well set-up machine that will fly you anywhere in complete confidence. It's a magical ride that no other classic motorcycle can truly replicate – an experience that every biker should have on their bucket list!

**Above:** Mike hams it up for the photo, but is a handy rider anyway!

**Below:** The bike that turned Mike towards British bikes



Off-piste, this classic Norton simply burbles along with minimum effort. No doubt its modern belt drive and upgraded clutch contribute to the classy ride; but the same can be said of its wonderful and compliant engine, faultless carburation, excellent 'Roadholder' suspension, Hagon shocks, and sticky tyres...oh, and did I forget to mention that Featherbed frame?

Everything has been so well set-up that any rider, regardless of his or her skill, can simply 'hang on' and revel in its totally addictive ride. Handling as we've established is the Featherbed's forte, and as we purred along the deserted moor in the warming sunshine I wore a satisfied grin – swinging, rising and falling on my stomach-churning, fun-park ride.

The 600cc engine delivers smooth and continuous power. In third, there is a slight murmur of vibration through the handlebars at around 50mph, but the vibes soon evaporate as you push past 50 and snick into top gear. A slight gap between third and fourth gears is soon excused – as third is exciting for building speed, and all day long the Norton 'box proved faultless. Braking proved impressive too. In fact, the Dommi's controlled engine braking and confident handling is enough to maintain a smooth and mile-crunching gait along any remote, single track road. The classic upright pose is ideal for cruising and seat to handlebar ergonomics are such that you can easily slide into a racing crouch on the straighter sections of road. This Norton Dominator is the classic all-rounder. **CBC**



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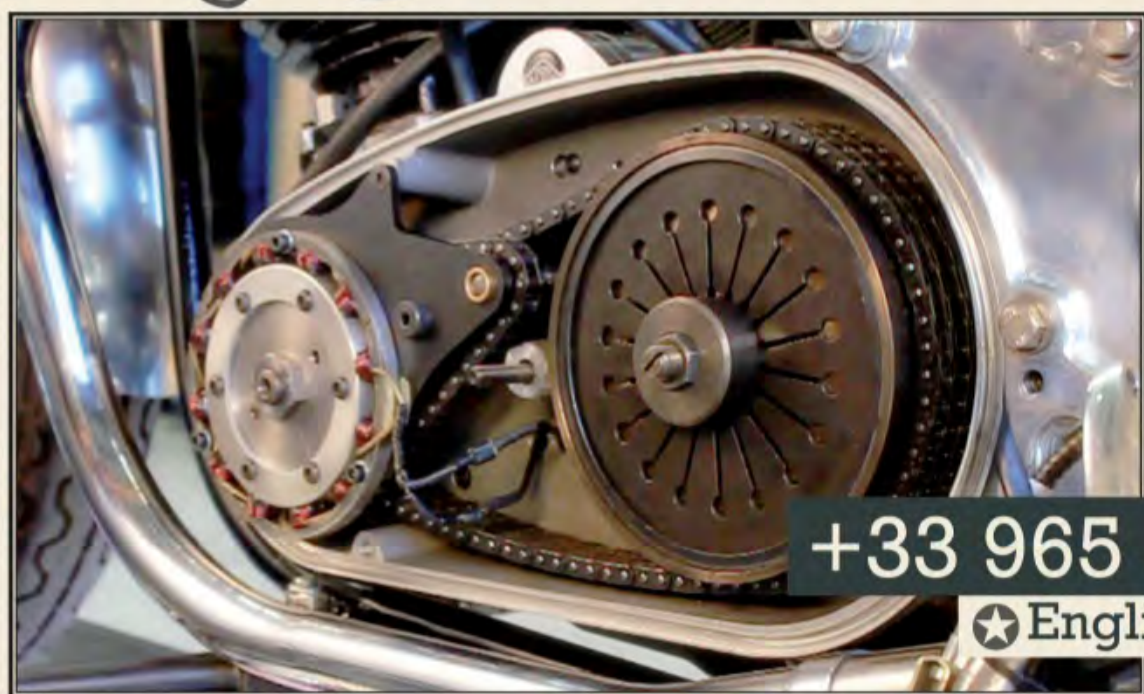
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## This month's star letter wins

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## BMW R38 - where did it go?

I was in WHSmith this morning, purchasing a card and picked up a copy of *Classic Bike Guide* with a feature on the BMW R26. Fortunately, it did not mention the inbuilt design feature - the frame breaking!

I know of circa seven this has happened to, just between the rubber stop for the kick-starter and the vertical tube supporting the rear swinging arm. My brother had this happen; the bike was about five years old, in about 1966. In the last 12 months an R27

came to my attention with a similar fault, too.

BMW did design a 350 version that may have been the R38, but the production was dependent upon an order from the German Government for use by Police and Army. That did not happen so it was abandoned. One was sent over here for testing, to MLG Ltd and Vic Doswell rode it in the Lands End Trial (No. 44 in the photo). I believe the other shot was on the A4 at Hounslow. just after the start?

Then Bruce Preston, a motorcycle

journalist who wrote for all the motorcycle press, took part in the IOM Maude's Trophy team; seven days nonstop around the TT Circuit. No. 37. That is a night trial somewhere?

Then the R38 languished in MLG's shop Goldhawk Mews Shepard's Bush and (YUC 900) just disappeared. No more is known of it to this day - or can any readers help?

**Robert Freeman**

DVLA Representative, the BMW Club.

## Feature-inspired oil change

After reading your fork overhaul articles, I decided it was time to change the oil in the forks of my bike (languishing in the shed). After carefully setting up receptacles to catch the old oil I removed the drain screws.

Then I called up my go-to supplier. "Have you got fork oils?" He replied: "I've probably got a few dozen; but you'll only need two for your old twin."

You used rubber grease in

the fork rebuild, there's also silicon grease, lithium grease, copper grease and so on. Back in the day it was just HP and LP grease. A feature on which grease is used for what would be most useful to us readers.

Thanks, keep up the good work!  
**Mark Bruce.**

*Thanks Mark .Next month has a great feature on petrol and after that we'll look at grease!*  
**Matt**

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## Honda CB450/500s

I've just read the report on the above bikes and I'm sure others have noticed the silencers on the 450 are standard and not Dunstalls!

I can remember only one choke lever and not as reported as being on each carb. Unless I've misread it the bike pulls well in lower gears – 9000rpm is stated as "that's when everything starts to happen". Well it's happened before that I suggest, as its red-line is 9k!

Lastly, Oli comments that the 500T was far less reliable than the 450; however, he reports that he didn't even have to clean the points on his thrashed model as a 20-year-old youth; confusing.

I have a 500T that Steve Cooper rode for a report in *Classic Motorcycle Mechanics* and have owned 450s in the day and since, and I'm not familiar with the unreliability issues he mentions. I've sorted the disc brake problem on my 500T; fitted a CL450 wheel and twin leading shoe brake;



brilliant.

Good luck with the RRS Matt, I still have mine.

**Karl Chadwick**

*Karl, hope your brake fix helps other CB owners - thanks. Oli*

*spoke to several specialists to get his information - as well as his own opinions and memories - apart from the revs, which we got wrong. Oli's now sulking in shame and I'm off to play with my BMW... Matt*



## Kiwi TR6C

It was so good to read the article on Allan Seggie's TR6C. I am lucky to have a 1970 USA version here in New Zealand. This one was converted into a 'Sunset Tripper' in LA in 1970. This entailed 3in over forks, Z bars, peanut tank, tiny seat and TT pipes. I am restoring it back to factory specs. It's a numbers matching, 10k miles bike. Google Sunset Tripper, it's a good read.

**Wayne Nicholson**  
Christchurch New Zealand

*Thanks, Wayne. You've now got me thinking of riding a Triumph chopper through New Zealand... Matt*



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**ARIEL** Square Four, two piper, Classic Bike Guide cover Feb 2020, reg 1949 (still on an original, not age related number) though 1950 frame & 1951 engine, immaculate, runs lovely, £11,750 Tel. 07508 481724



**BSA Super Rocket**, 1960, A10, as new condition, stored over 50 years, genuine 5000 miles, excellent runner, owned 20 years £8995 Tel. 07709 821221 Kent



**BSA A65** 1966, Special, lots of money spent, upside down forks, twin discs, rear mono shock, good engine and gearbox, £6000 oiro Tel. 01912 453396 Tyne & Wear



**BSA A65T Thunderbolt**, 1970 one of the last pre OIF models, recent improvements have been new primary chain, electronic ignition, silencers, seat cover & carburettor, £4950 Tel. 01189 403081



**BSA B44** Shooting Star, 1967, full restoration, looks beautiful, engine rebuilt by RTS, lots of receipts, thousands spent, road tax exempt, £5200 Tel. Brian 07479 470445 Email. brianjfielding1@gmail.com



**BSA GOLDSTAR** DBD34, 1956, Eddy Dow parts, alloy tanks, RRT2 gearbox, £11,500 Tel. 07484 151681 Suffolk



**BSA GOLDSTAR** 500, 1955, steel tank, close box, belt drive, alloy rims, s/s spokes, Mk2 carb, good condition, £14,950 Tel. 07772 743177 Notts



**DUCATI 916 BP** 1997, 24,000km, one owner from new, lots of history, very clean original condition, QUB carbon belly pan (+ originals) new tyres & Oberon slave cylinder, £9000 Tel. 07733 328368 Surrey



**FANTIC CABALLERO** 50cc moped, UK reg from new, TX 94 pedalled model, 1977 R reg, V5, restored the Fantic two years ago, everything works, very rare 70's sports moped, £5495 Tel. 07970 111468 Sheffield



**GREEVES** 1965, 250 twin, East Coaster in black and silver, vgc, nice little ride, some history, MoT exempt, £3900 Tel. 07811 548881 Devon



**HARLEY-DAVIDSON** 1948, Pan head, starts up & drives great, fenders looks original, all mechanical & electrical parts works perfectly Email. davidautomotocyclepower@gmail.com Sweden



**HARLEY-DAVIDSON** FXS, 1979, 1340cc, historic vehicle, Bespoke forward controls comes with originals, same owner last 20 years, £5500 Tel. 01493 749198 Norfolk



**HONDA** 70cc, 1979, very low mileage, all original condition, no MoT or tax, third owner from new, £1475 Tel. 01453 750227 Gloucs



**HONDA 400/4** 1975, tidy clean bike, 37,000 miles, on Sorn, MoT, tax exempt, reducing collection Tel. Peter 07850 972670 Norfolk



**HONDA BROS 650** 1988, new disc, water pump, regulator, chain & sprockets, gel seat, hagon, high bars, quiet engine, 53,000km, £2500 Tel. 01613 039604 Cheshire



**HONDA C95** 1965, 150 twin, under 6000 miles, excellent restored condition, tax and MoT exempt, happy to answer any questions, £4000 Tel. 07856 052018 West Yorkshire



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 78 Z1000A2 Black.....£8995 to be confirmed.  
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**HONDA CBX1000** 1980, mint & original condition (never been restored), low mileage (only 39,000km), part of collection since 2012, recent service & new tyres Email. s.ricci@nctm.it Italy



**HONDA CD200** Benley, 1980, 28,000 miles, MoT Jan 2022, carb rebuild, new tyres, cables, coils, leads, caps, points, battery, £400 Tel. 07443 480492 Kent



**HONDA EXPRESS** 1980, original condition, runs well, no MoT, tax, £700 Tel. 07522 983224 Essex



**HONDA NTV 600** very good original condition, owned 16+ years, owners handbook & service book, lots of recipients paperwork etc, MoT Tel. Brian 07479 470445 Email. brianjfielding1@gmail.com



**HONDA XL250RH** 1987, RFVC engine, rare machine with twin carburetors, vgc, only 300km since total restoration, UK reg with number plate showing BSA, MoT until July, £4950 Tel. 07702 001509 Sussex



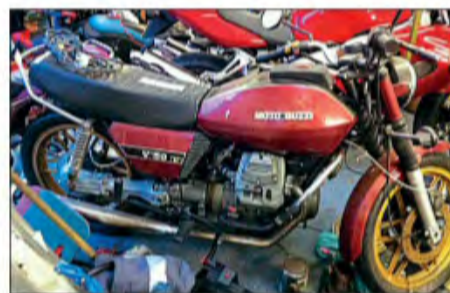
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**MOTO GUZZI Brevia 1200**, 2015, 2 valve, 6200 miles, Guzzi luggage, rear rack, centre stand, MoT Sept 2021, new rear tyre, a real beauty, £4100 Tel. 07938 168468 Notts



**MOTO GUZZI V50** 1980, 493cc, maroon, 41,578 miles on clock, has been sat in garage for 8 years, so will need a bit of work to get it running, £700 ono Tel. 07577 895248 Ross-shire



**MOTO GUZZI V50** 500cc, 1982, 37,000 miles, clean condition, Monza tank & seat, good tyres, stainless brake hoses, MoT Nov 2021, £2750 p/x Tel. 07876 704268 Norfolk



**MOTO MORINI 3 1/2 Sport**, 1978, 2 owners, nice original un-restored condition, starts runs well, good tyres etc, new cambelt, fitted with flat/straight handlebars, £4850 may p/x Tel. 07876 704268 Norfolk



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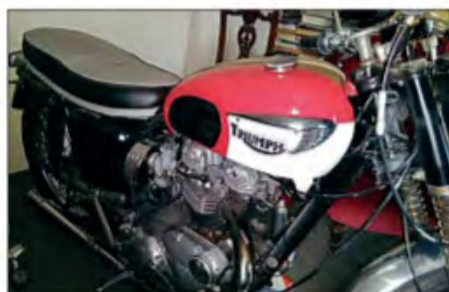
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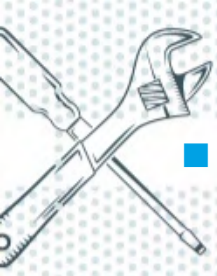
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# Part 3

# BMW R100 project

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY MATT

Matt's BMW was meant to be tucked away. Awaiting its turn on the bench – but excuses keep being heard and BMW parts keep emerging...

It's not perfect, but after more than one hour Matt's leg is looking shiny!



**I** SHOULD BE WORKING ON OTHER THINGS. THE NORTON, the Hondas, my other BMW; the house, for heaven's sake. But the 'new' R100S fills my head with thoughts of long journeys, fulfilling its original brief; to take its pilot, passenger and luggage far and away, in style, speed and safety.

### FAIL

As I said last month, the plan was always to hear it run first, to see if there was anything glaringly wrong. But the carbs were seized solid and the electrics, which largely live under the tunnel of the fuel tank, seem to have attracted moisture (the tank still had petrol in after 27 years standing) and are riddled with rust. Needless to say, regardless of fiddling and even with rebuilt carbs, nothing was alive. Disappointed in my failure, I decided to strip the bike without getting it started, as I need to paint the frame and I've always wanted to rebuild a boxer engine. Which may, indeed, be a decision I regret.

### RESTORATION PROCEDURE

Many times before the idea of restoring a bike, or car, has been to strip it, taking notes and photos to help the rebuild, catalogue and store said parts, then to rebuild parts as you put it back together again. In reality, my restos usually win at the stripping stage, but then the pile of parts don't get catalogued, but are distributed to various sheds, outhouses and parts of the house; for years. Then, surprise surprise, I attempt to rebuild the bike and can't find anything. Maybe my true vocation should have been a scrapyard owner.

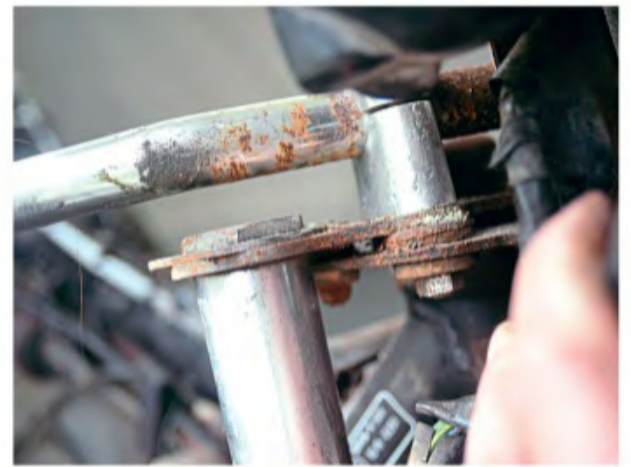
Due in part to space, time, money, impatience and the position of the moon I'm doing this bike differently. As I take parts off, I'm repairing/ renovating/ rebuilding them. The carbs are all ready to rock and now it is the time of the front end, starting with the forks and wheel.



36mm socket needed grinding flat...



... That's better for those slim fork tops



Ugly top yoke, handlebars and clock mount are most un-BMW



'bar risers are disintegrating



Making sure the bolts don't round off



Steering nut wasn't budging

### TIGHTNESS - THE TELLER OF TRUTH

One thing that has struck me with this bike is despite the 65,000 miles it has covered, the majority of nuts and bolts are untouched and of the correct, factory torque. It's a wonderful pointer to the fact that only those of competency have been here before. This bike has not been a 'fiddler's' machine. I will try to break the habit of a lifetime and continue this trait, which is a lot easier than the Norton that sits next to the BMW, as I have spare stainless metric nuts and bolts and both a UK-published Haynes manual, an American Clymer manual and a BMW factory one, too – so no excuses Hull!

### WAR ON THE FRONTLINE

The handlebars, which are unique and a rather unusual shape on the RS, are no longer available from BMW. And because of the acute angle, are hard to locate. Mine are original with a knurled-over end and good chrome, which should clean up. I would look at alloy ones to reduce weight, but I have yet to find any. The risers are alloy and one has badly corroded, trying to mimic the Norfolk coastal erosion – so I'll look for one of those. The switchgear looks alright, the wording is coming off, but all switches

seem to work and the wiring doesn't feel too brittle.

The top yoke nut and fork top caps screw down to hold the top yoke; a most un-BMW piece of ugly steel plate (which is too thin to hold the forks rigid on a 'sportsbike' but you cannot see once the rubber pad is in place). The central nut and fork tops are 36mm, and held to a tight, 78lb ft. I had to buy a 36mm socket, which thanks to the 5mm thickness of the fork tops, had to have the flanged sides machined down to prevent it from slipping. Well, I say machined; it should have been, but it wouldn't quite fit in my lathe chuck so I used an angle grinder! Then the top yoke nut needed heat to come undone. You know the feeling when a bike is fighting you?

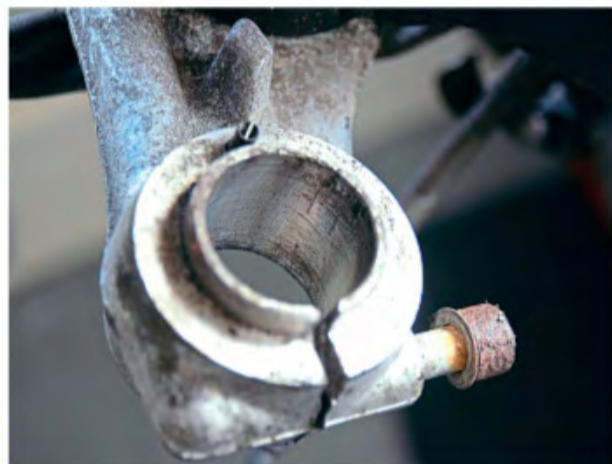
But it did the trick. Loosened from the clutches of their top nuts, the forks refuse to come out of the bottom yoke. Oil? No. gentle persuasion with a screwdriver in the expanding gap? No. Bugger; just get the soft mallet. With top caps back in, this did the trick, but felt wrong. And I had been told the fork gaiters had been replaced – though I never asked when. But they felt nice, so I'm guessing just before it was laid up, so little chance for UV rays to stiffen them up. They have a hollow locating pin, which acts as a breather, so they don't groan like an old smoker as the forks move.



Heat was required - and worked



Disgusting!



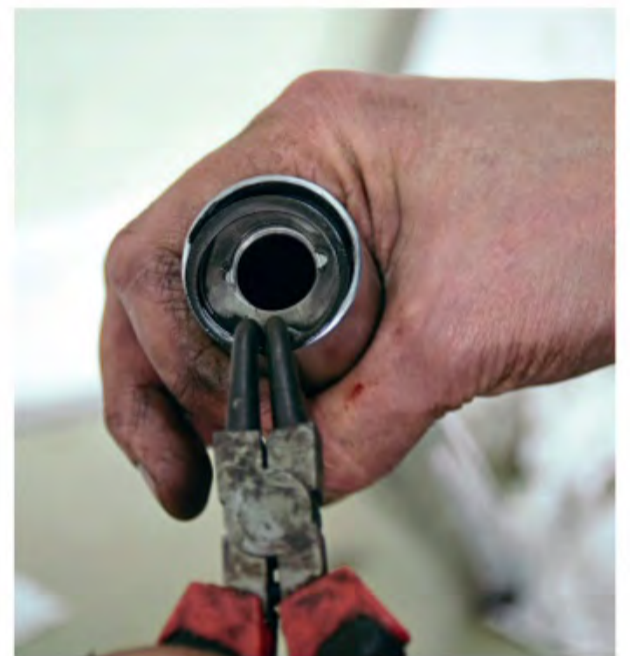
Bottom yoke is alloy and much nicer



Oil was dirty, but free from bits



Nut, washer, end cap, bump stop and fork lower



Circlip holds the damper in - but needs special tool

### FORK CANDLES

The chrome was in good nick apart from one rusty spot at the end of the travel on the left leg, just below the bottom yoke. I'll clean it and try to Superglue it, as it should only get near the seal under very hard braking. Otherwise, all looked good.

Next the rubber bung at the bottom was prised off, revealing a 13mm nut that holds the damper rod to the fork bottom. With that undone, the 36mm socket came to play again to undo the bottom nut, so the damper and tube could be removed. A rubber donut pops out (the bump stop) so make sure that looks alright. The oil looked clean if dark, so another good sign. I thought of taking the damper apart, but it needs a special tool with two prongs to undo the damper from the station, and as the action felt fine, I cleaned up with some brake cleaner and gunk, then left it to soak.

The fork lower was fine, if horribly dirty. And I've been taken by the 1980 'Exclusiv Sport' special edition, which limited to 80 bikes worldwide (50 to the USA apparently) was silver with blue stripes in the style of the yellow/orange red stripes on my bike. Though my bike's stripes are painted, whereas this 'special edition' is just vinyl don't you know... Oh yes...

Gloating aside, as mentioned before, they had

polished fork lowers, final drive casing and the ribs on the rocker covers. But looking at books, internet and even an original feature sent in by R90s owner, Peter Simms (thank you, Peter, a very interesting and informative read), I cannot see if the casting texture on the parts were rubbed down to smooth and then polished, or just polished and left as is. After all, BMW kept their alloy as relatively grey in finish as standard, so polishing would have stood out. Only bikes that have been (overly) restored have a smoothed finish that I can see. The most attention to detail I usually show is petrol or diesel at the pumps; so this is all new to me. Thank heavens I'm not into concours...

Any how, I taped up the ends of the lowers and used glass bead to get the finish clean and uniform. 60,000 miles of brake dust and stone chips had left their marks, so it was nice to see them come out looking good, if matt in finish. Next I took them to a 6in brass wire wheel on a bench grinder, which brought the finish back to a lovely shine - where it could get to the alloy. A 6in wheel won't get into the nooks and crannies, so a Dremmel tool with brass wire end finished the job nicely.

That looked good and hadn't taken much time. But it wouldn't last, so I got to the mops and soaps with a drill to clean up and polish the legs properly. I want



Fork lower taped up before blasting

*“It’s a wonderful pointer to the fact that only those of competency have been here before. This bike has not been a ‘fiddler’s’ machine.”*



Blast cabinet is quickly earning its place



Before and after shot



Brass wire wheel on 6in bench grinder



Before and after wire wheel

to expore polishing further as I know I’m not doing it correctly, but I followed the basic instructions and went from coarse mops and soap down to the softy softy mops and finally the old Autosol.

Initially, I couldn’t see the difference, even though I’d spent around 40 minutes on each fork lower. But when you compare, you realise it is smoother, more shiny and more protected. I may yet do them again, then I’m going to use 2k lacquer to give them some protection – then they really should shine. I’m not looking forward to the final drive though...

#### AND FINALLY

I am really pleased with the forks being straight-forward and looking good. I think I need new polishing mops and be stricter with cleanliness to get a better result – I also could do with a more powerful grinder – but we all think we need better tools. There are new fork seals in and once in the bike, I’ve got some of Rock Oil’s best to pour in. Just keep an eye on fork oil levels, as there was a misprint in early manuals which was adjusted in later books. The springs look fine and equal in length, so I’ll use them and look into new or progressive ones if I need. I’m not into modifying things just because everyone else does.



➤ Different mops and soaps make a big difference



New fork seals once everything is clean



I'm pleased with that!



Damper rod and bump stop back in play



Take notes and photos to get spoke pattern correct



BMW wheels seem to be straight-forward to lace



Those rims will clean up - once the tyre comes off

### FRONT WHEEL

This looked terrible, with rusty (chromed-plated originally I think - you can still see some flaking off) spokes and flaky hub. But the spoke nipples all look fine, so the alloy rim looks in great shape with no corrosion. In fact, with a little polishing, it came up beautifully - I may one day have a shiny bike! With a couple of straight edges I took some measurements to be able to strip and rebuild the wheel. I also took photos and notes of the spoke pattern, but the BMW wheel is really quite straight-forward compared to some, like Rudge!

I was already with the wire cutters and tyre levers - but I could not get that tyre off. At least 27 years on that rim has got it all comfortable and in no rush to be taken off. So I'll have to wait until I can get it to a friend's shop with a hydraulic machine - and a project bike's wheel is not exactly essential travel... But I know that's an evening's job all waiting. Sometimes it's the small things that hold you up.

### NEXT MONTH

The calipers and master cylinder get a clean-up and service - and hopefully the wheel gets built. **CBG**



Spoke cutters big enough? Spirit level and ruler for getting an exact offset for the rim and hub

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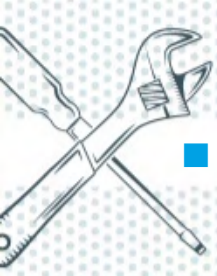
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# How to paint Part two

## Preparation (the boring but essential part...)

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY Matt, with great help from the chaps at Ashtons Classics bodyshop, (01362 692271 ashtonsbodyshop.co.uk)



Wet and dry paper, cheap and when used wet lasts ages. P2000 is the grit - this is very fine



150 grit from an orbital sander works by hand as well, red Scotbrite pad roughly 400 grit. Both useful

**B**ACK AGAIN? YOU MUST BE SUCKERS for punishment – but welcome! Last month we took a look at the basics of painting and if it was something that you could or would want to do at home. Economics mean that to attempt any more than using aerosols for small work means a large outlay, space and time to practice – but it's by no means impossible. And if you get together, or have an interest in cars, tractors or other, larger toys, then it can really become a very useful skill to have.

So you've looked at the cost and whether you have decided to paint your parts or not, they will need preparing. We touched on this last month, so let's see more closely what's involved. But like we warned last month, it is laborious, and cannot – I repeat cannot – be skipped, or your bike parts will end up looking like an old hag on a Spanish beach...

Firstly, what are you painting? Our example here is a rear mudguard from a



Small dents on the lifting handle - ignore, fill or weld? This time we left the lower ones and filled the top one



Filling unwanted drill holes with weld



It's all about feel

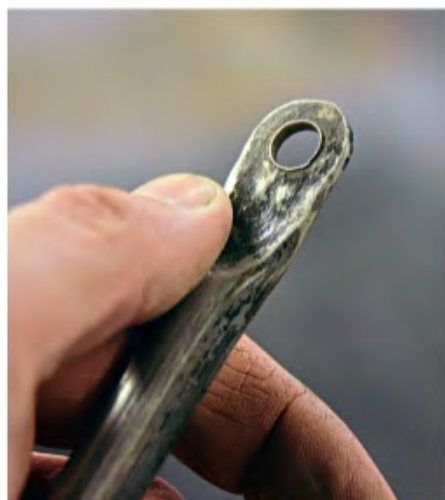
1931 Sunbeam, a Model 90, no less. It had fallen over in a van against another bike and taken a couple of nasty two pence piece areas of paint down to the metal. Argh!

Now Sunbeam were famous for their beautiful finish and the parts would have been individually dipped in enamel, or Japanned. This would mean the whole part would need to be stripped so the paint we put on doesn't react and cause mayhem with the finish. But on closer inspection, it was obvious the mudguard was a replica and a recent one, too. No problem; but what did they paint it with?

Most professionals would use a basecoat and lacquer, but this one had uneven stays and brackets on the piss, with metric nuts and bolts holding it all together. The stays were also painted on the mudguard; clearly not good quality work, so could they have used cellulose? The paint on the underside of the mudguard didn't even have any primer, so to be safe, it all had to come off; only then could we be sure.



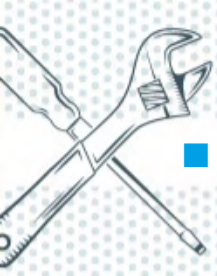
It all comes in handy at some point!



Mudguard stays needed finishing



Using a block really helps, even on a curve



### Don't rush

I took many photos on my phone before the stays, numberplate and stand holder were taken off, so I could be sure everything would go back together. Once it was clear this rear end was a replacement, and a recent one, I knew it would be tricky to see what went where. This is especially important when everything is freshly painted, as you don't want to scratch anything! The stays had a longer flat on one end, to hold the mudguard, and the 'bridges' they bolt to are just bent pieces of steel which I have re-bent. They were also bent, so I noted that – but you cannot mark them, as they are all to be rubbed down!



Just needs grinding and a little filler

### Rubbing down and what to use

Oh, choices, choices. There are many different ways to rub paint, filler, lead loading and metal down. For metal, files are the best, but most of the time you'll use other methods. Most are broken down by 'grit', where the lower the number, the more coarse – or rough it is. So an 80 or 120 grit is really rough, will rub down paint quickly, but will leave a rough finish. 240 or 400 grit will take longer to rub things down, but will leave a smoother finish, whereas 800-1000 grit is really fine and anything higher is akin to polishing.

Start with a rough grit and work down – for a finish that is to be covered with traditional cellulose aerosol paint, 800 is a good grit to finish on – anything more rough will leave lines. If you're using 2k (two-pack – which has a hardener added) filler primer with a gun, you can get away with as low as 150 grit, though 400 is better.

The cheapest is wet and dry paper. This can be used dry, but is best and lasts longest wet. The more you use it, the finer it gets. Use it with a rubber or cork block and you'll get a good finish, albeit after quite some time.

If you have a compressor you can use an orbital sander and discs. These do the same job but are used dry and I use the

discs by hand as much as on the sander. 150 grit is a good level, then finish with wet and dry paper by hand as an orbital sander leaves circular scratches.

Scotchbrite pads are similar to washing up sponges, and I use the red ones, which equate to roughly 400 grit. Use them wet or dry and they leave a good key to a painted surface for paint to grip to.

### Our mudguard

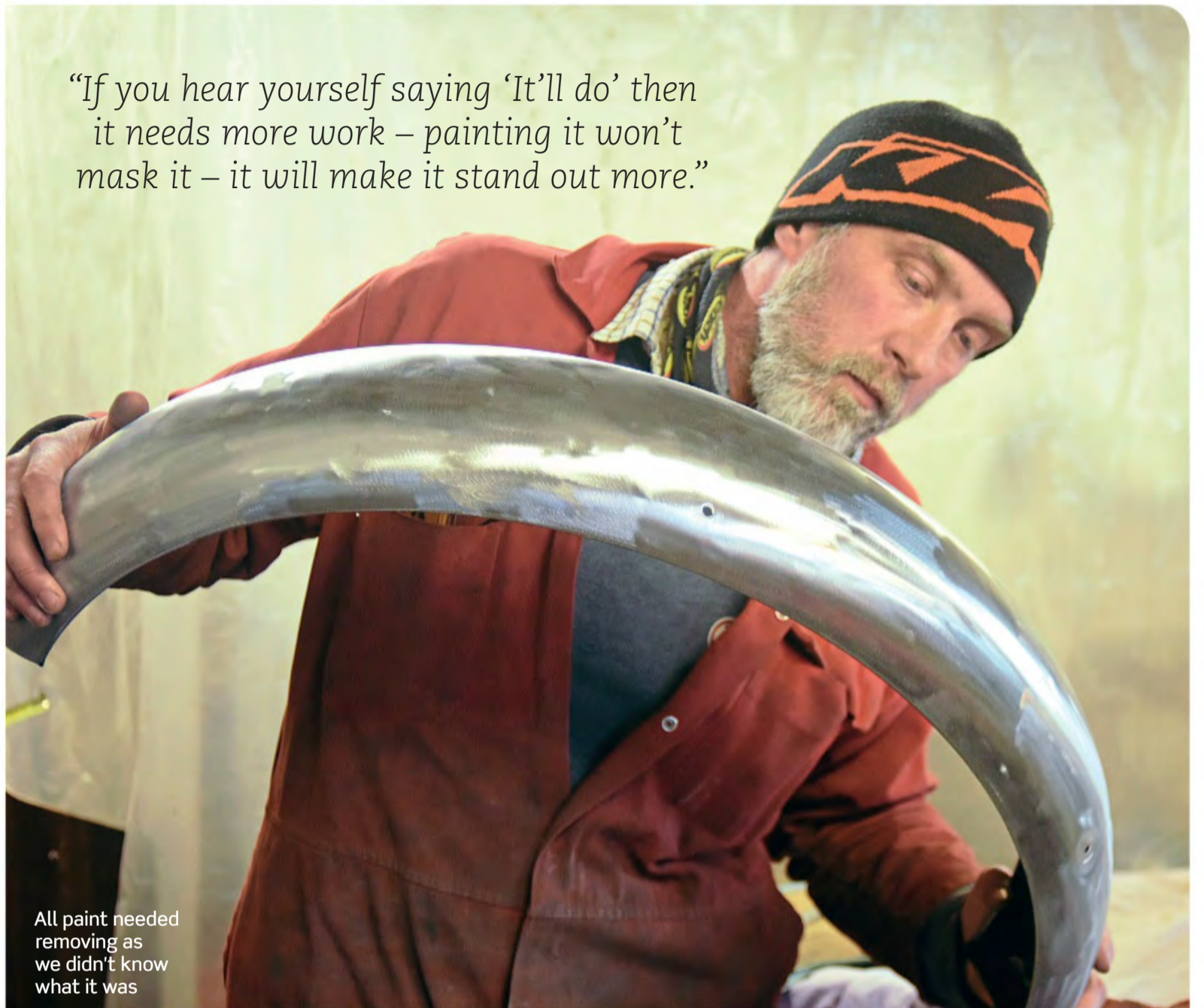
If we knew the paint was 2k (two pack) we could have rubbed the surface down with a block and 240 or 400 grit to get a rough finish the new paint would adhere to, this would also help show any dings or imperfections more easily. I did start filling the dents and dings, but thought better of it – there really is few things worse than spending all that time prepping, only to see the paint bubble or react.

This all seems a little drastic for two small areas of damage, but a touch-up would be easily spotted and what to touch up with? The Sunbeam is an expensive bike which is in beautiful condition elsewhere, so it's best to do our best. Norton Blaze discs in a grinder made short work of getting the paint off without attacking the metal, then 150



Wire wheel was quickest to remove old paint

*“If you hear yourself saying ‘It’ll do’ then it needs more work – painting it won’t mask it – it will make it stand out more.”*



All paint needed removing as we didn’t know what it was

discs and a block took the small areas down, like the front lip and the edges. The underneath was buffed up nicely with more 150 discs by hand – this doesn’t need to be quite so immaculate and the stays and ‘bridges’ were rubbed down by hand, or with a brass wire wheel on the bench grinder. I then used 150 grit to improve any sharp edges.

### Filler? You dirty girty!

Using body filler is not a dirty technique – despite the nonsense you hear from certain biking circles. In the old days, you could fill dings, dents or joins by lead loading; this is where you melt lead to use as a filler. Lead loading has its place in restoration, including fuel tanks, but it is more difficult than using body filler and there really is no need. Our mudguard had some dings, so a cushion – one of nanny’s, that she used to have on her driving seat of her Morris – or a dolly held in the vice were used with a dressing hammer to get the worst of the dings out. Ideally you’d get all the dings out and a couple we did, but you still use a small skim of the dreaded filler to make sure the repair is completely invisible. Especially as it is going to be painted black, which really shows any indentations up. ▶

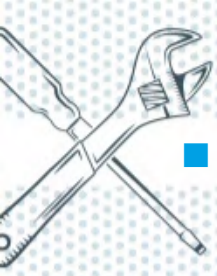


It gets tiresome



If unsure check in a different light – you’ll find more dings and dents





If you know the paint is the same as you're using, it can just be flatted down and doesn't need taking off completely

Our mudguard also had some holes in that were not being used – I have no idea where from – but they needed filling. So I popped the MIG welder out and filled them, using very short bursts and building the weld across the hole. This way helps minimise heat and therefore distortion. It needed grinding down, but the hole is filled with metal, which will be more hard wearing from the underneath. A skim of filler on both sides finished it off.

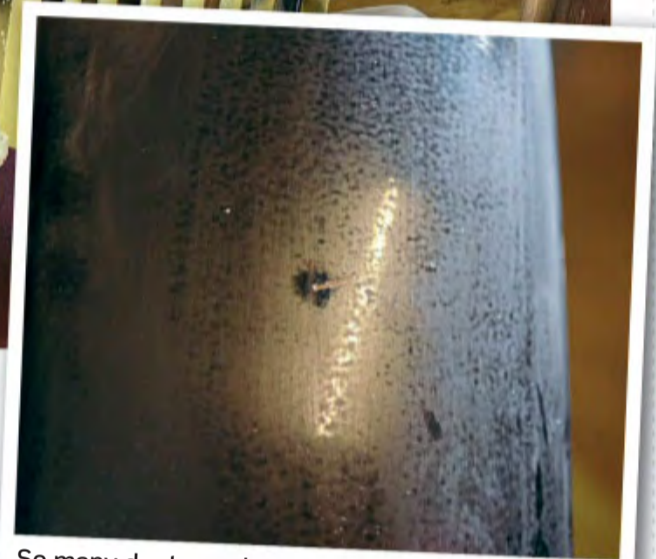
**Take care of your feelings, man**

Rubbing down mudguards is a pain, as they are curved both ways! And using a block seems illogical, but it does help to follow the contours. Without sucking

eggs and showing you how, filler will wear away with rubbing down quicker than the surrounding metal, so a block is essential – most of the time. Sometimes you need to put a little extra pressure on a small point, or follow a tight curve, so using the shape of your hand is best. It just takes time and practice. Filler dust is rather nasty stuff, so if you can do it outside and wear a mask. But also close your eyes and rub your fingers across the filled sections to see if and where more rubbing down is needed. If you over rub, then it's not the end of the world – make up some more filler and if you're in a hurry/ bad mood/ late, then add a little extra hardner – you've less time to use it, but it'll be ready to sand in much



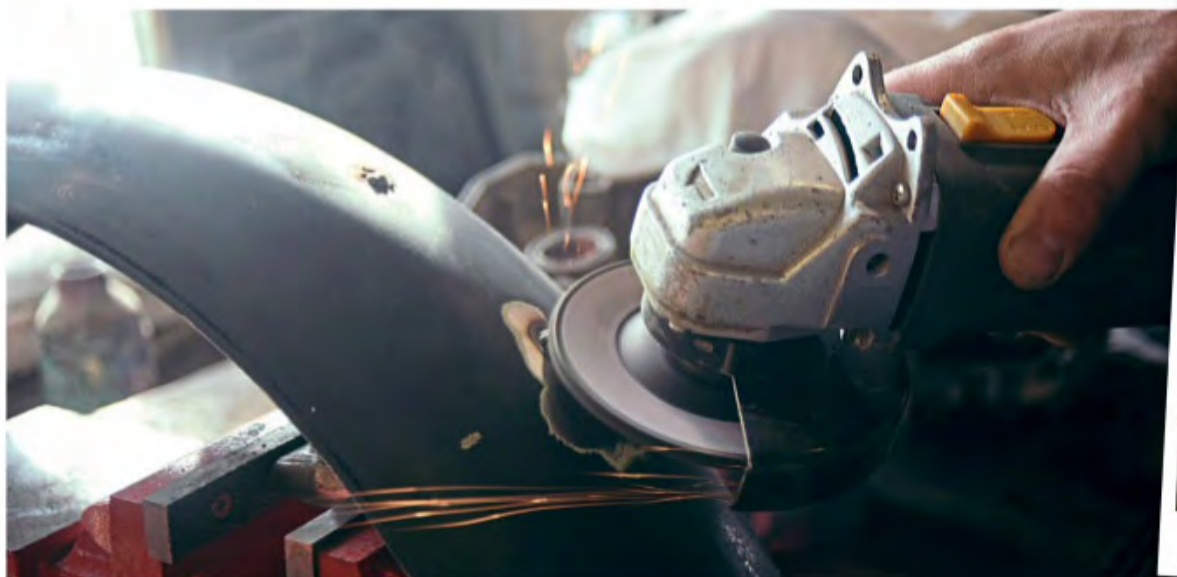
The more hardener, the less time you have to use it!



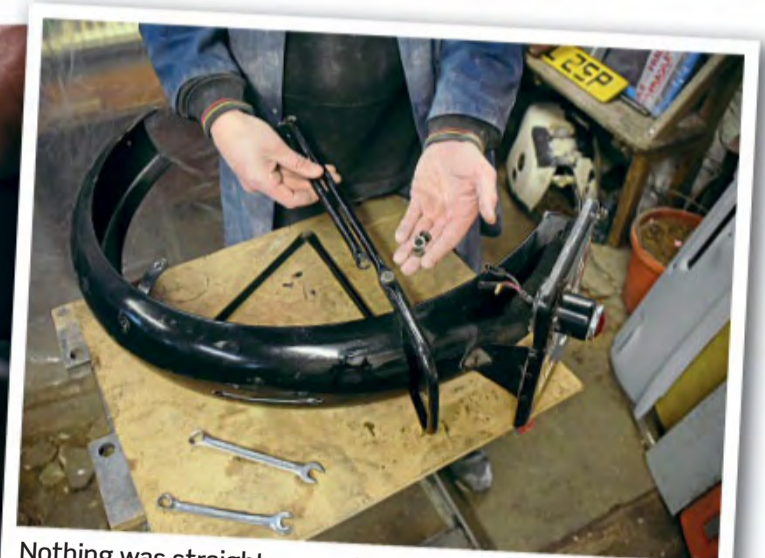
So many dents are hard to see

less time. If you hear yourself saying; 'It'll do' then it needs more work – painting it won't mask it – it will make it stand out more.

It's not rocket science to prepare a piece for painting, nor does it cost much and involve expensive machinery; but it does take time. And the most important tool is your fingers and time – feel if it's smooth and don't rush it. Next month we put all this hard work to test and paint! **CBG**



Too harsh for rubbing down, but perfect for the welds



Nothing was straight, so we took notes and photos



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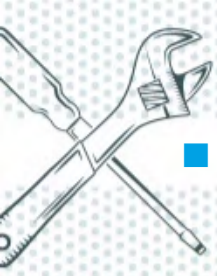
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# Project Norton

This month on the 1957 ES2, we have mainly been sorting bits and bobs

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY AND PROCRASTINATION BY Matt

**G**UTTED. LAST MONTH I REVIVED the dynamo with new bearings, brushes and a thorough clean. But the dynamo parts I hadn't got are proving elusive – the 'specialists' don't have them, I don't trust anyone on eBay anymore and there are no autojumbles!

It's just the Bakelite end, one long, thin bolt to hold it all together and the expanding ring you tighten up to cover the brushes. I've a number of someone Neville knows, so I'll give them a ring when we're allowed out again.

Elsewhere, I thought I'd start at the front and work backwards. I'd spent some

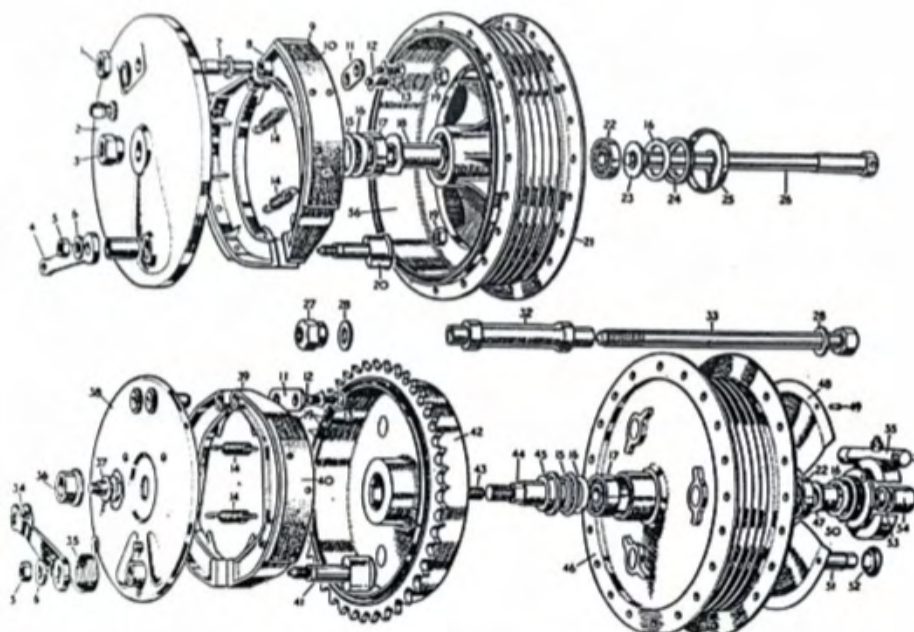
time on the BMW and was losing track of what to do on the Norton. And as I was painting, I thought the mudguard and stays would be perfect. Except, and I should have guessed this; nothing fitted. When I bought the bike it had a nice, powdercoated new fork brace, which I fitted. But it will not fit with the mudguard. And while there are four stays, two long and two short, the bike should have a front stand and two stays. I swore quite considerably.

The mudguard is fine and I have never used the BSA front stand, so I bent the stays into shape and cut and welded the fork brace so it fits under. I then took a look at the bottom of the fuel tank. It's been rubbed down on top, but the bottom, while solid, was a little flaky. So I took it outside and bead blasted it with a cheap little blaster from Laser Tools.

It's all right and did a good job, but I had to refill it five times just to finish the nooks and crannies of the tank and not being in a blasting booth, the glass bead was wasted.

Above: Mudguard came with four stays but should have a front stand. Going to use the stays as I have them

Right: How many parts for just an axle?





Diving into the unknown!



Laser Tools blaster did what was needed but doesn't hold enough media



New points and a clean-up, but Neville says it works and to go with the magneto and see how I get on



Right: Greasing nipple heads lightly to prevent rust

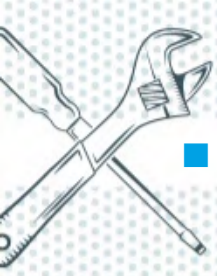
Below: A little air in the tube helps it not to get trapped by the levers

But it did the job! I then got all the parts primed, but for some reason it reacted/ was too cold/needed more thinners and finished looking like underseal, so I'll have to rub them down again...

The delivery man brought my Avon tyres! I still can't see how the profile of the rear Safety Mileage will do anything other than put me in the hedge, but they work, have always worked, look great and with modern compound, should be better than ever. I've got to buy some new shocks, but with a straight frame, new bearings throughout, new wheels, new tyres and rebuilt Roadholder forks, it'll be the best-handling bike out there!

The Avons were looking so good, I decided to fit them, but they will also protect the rims from too many scratches from hanging around waiting to be used. I've seen too many rusty rims, so being new, I carefully smeared a thin layer of grease on the nipple heads and where the rim is folded round, leaving a gap. I then wiped off any excess, to prevent the tyre





Axle parts, axle parts, axle - how many?... Lockdown hair looking - erm - frankly dreadful. Note to oneself: buy a mirror



from turning on the rim. The new rim tape went on, followed by a thick mix of washing up liquid to aid fitting. A couple of tyre levers, a piece of carpet, some Fairy and a plastic rim protector are all you need; though I did use a foot as well. And I didn't nick the tube this time, so success. Then it was time to work out the contents of the axle - the open bearings have shims and felt O rings, as well as the spacer. My new bearings were sealed, so I didn't worry about the felt. All came up nicely, but I lost the photos - sorry.

**'Just get it going'**

Neville can't believe it's taken me so long to get so little done. He has built three specials in the time I've taken to get this far, so he gave me a right rollicking and told me to 'just get the bloody engine going'. He's right, of course, and now the head is on there is little to get in the way. My idea was always to strip everything, repair or replace what was needed and therefore have what is effectively, a brand-new bike. But as Nev pointed out, by trying to do this, it'll never get done. So while the magneto was going to get stripped, instead it has just been checked and cleaned up by Neville. I will get it rebuilt and I want to know more about how they work and how they go wrong; but

when the world is closed is not the time.

Looking at getting it running led me to a large element I haven't touched: the gearbox. Again with Nev in my ear, I have decided to check it over, make sure it engages all gears correctly, clean the outside and put it in the bike. I tried the two shafts, it has a nice action and seems to engage all four gears nicely. But I'm going to drop it over to Nev to have a feel of it too, and if he feels any issues then we'll pull it apart. But for now, it looks like something not to worry about. Some good news?

With the BMW coming on nicely, I am going to give the Norton my full attention this month. Let's see if that helps move this project on! **CBG**



Gasket compound on the 'box' - 'We've been apart before, haven't we?'



My ratio of pinching inner tubes is 50/50...



New gearbox sprocket on the shopping list



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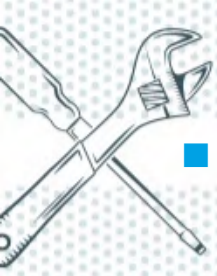


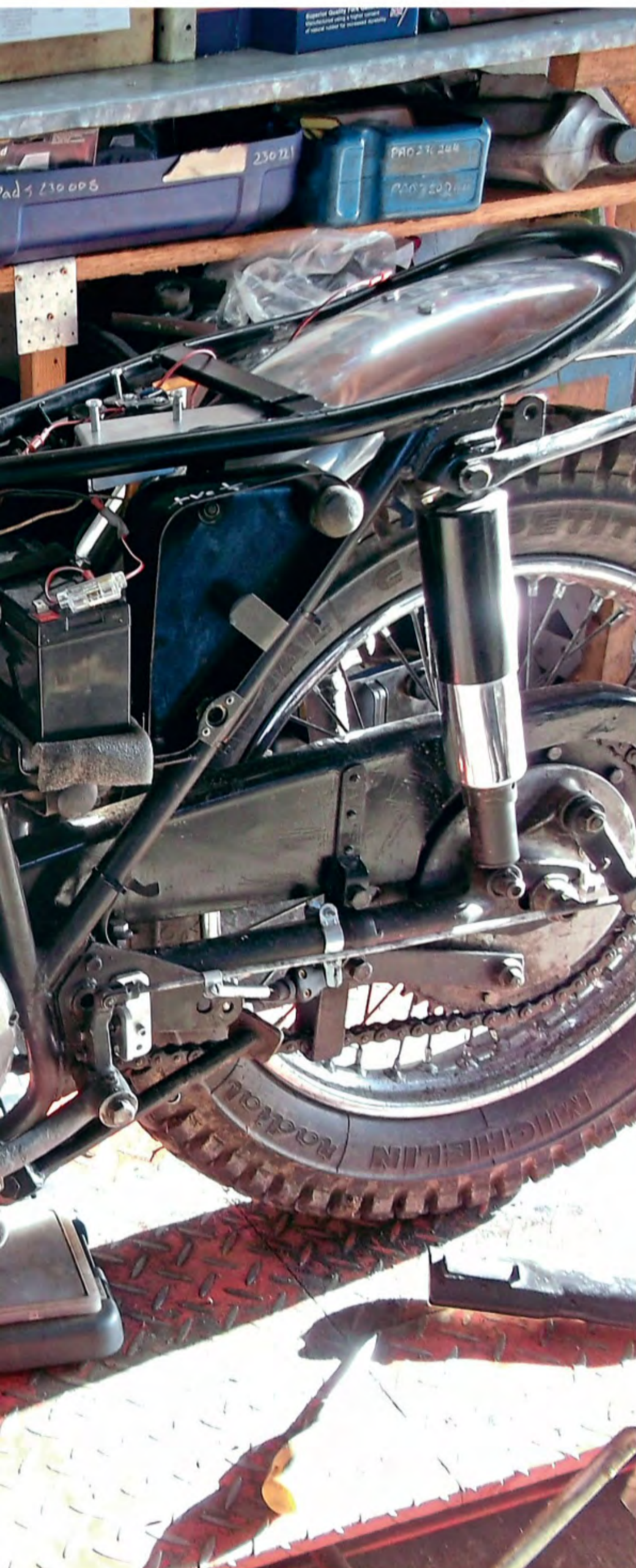
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# Don't create when making joints

Soldering wires can solve hard-to-find electrical issues and make a strong connection for years to come. Hutch shows you how

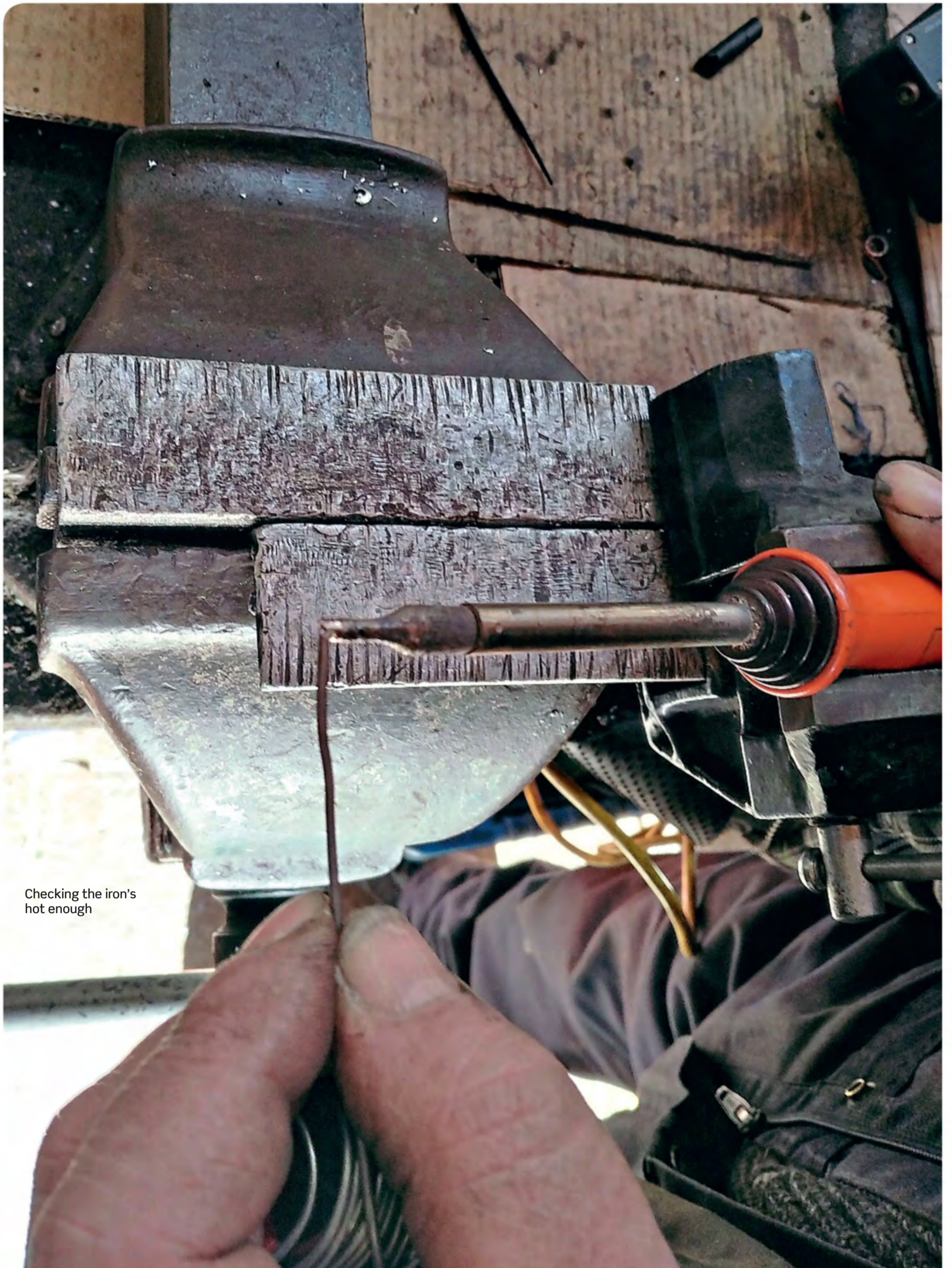
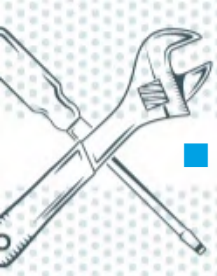
WORDS AND WISDOM BY Hutch

PHOTOGRAPHY, TEA AND CALMING WORDS Shelley

**A** NICE, RIDEABLE-CONDITION, BSA B44 TURNED up at the workshop with some running problems. It started and ran okay until hot when it lost its spark; after the usual carb/ignition and charging investigations and work, it ran much better but was still a pig when hot. As the usual suspects – coil, points and ignition wiring had all been replaced (the original wiring circuit was in the expected, crackly insulation state for something of that age) some further looking was needed. Eventually, the remaining problem seemed to come down to a soldered dry joint in the earth wire, seemingly held together more by the heatshrink over it than the actual solder.

I made a comment recently about not wanting to get involved in the 'which type of connector is best' argument and that all are good if done properly; my view remains. Even the simple screw clamp chocolate box type connector which are much criticized and, it can't be denied are ugly, however, I once worked for a company that used them by choice on road vehicles that were expected to do half-a-million miles a year as they were the most reliable and easy to do properly.

Soldered joints are always my preference when joining/extending wires and the wiring should not need to be split again, although it has to be said that they are not, apparently, ideal for computer controlled (cambus) type systems where the soldered joint will very slightly raise the resistance; but not a problem for the old nails most of us work on. ▶



Checking the iron's hot enough



Cleaning tip



Tinning wire



Tinned wire

Soldered dry joints are pretty easy to identify as the solder is usually dull and they have less mechanical strength if you pull on them.

All forms of soldering (electrical/plumbing/Tinmans) need a clean base material to solder onto; you can't just rely on the flux to do all the prep for you. With soldering electrical wires, if you strip back the insulation and the wire has the 'black death', cut the wire back further to clean metal, or replace completely if possible.

Although I see it often I would add that twisting two, or three, wires together and then blobbing some solder over the top is not a soldered joint. I try to solder as I was taught as an apprentice and not change the process, as this is where problems happen.

First take the ends of the wires to be soldered and strip back the insulation half an inch or so, look to make sure the bare wires are clean and not full of dirt and corrosion.

Get the soldering iron hot enough to melt solder on it, I use flux-cored electrical solder and am fortunate to have been donated some superb ex-BT soldering irons; melt a little solder on the tip of the iron to make sure it's hot enough. Heavier wires may need a larger iron.

Clean the iron of excess solder, you can use sponge for this, although a flick of the wrist suffices, and clean the tip – depending on the state of the tip I may pass a file lightly over the tip of the iron so it is clean and not loaded with solder.



Fit heatshrink



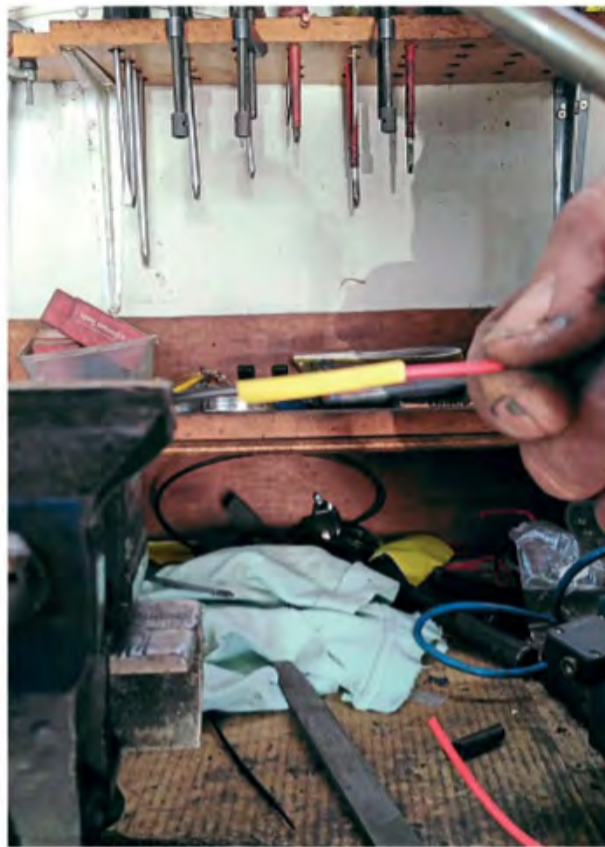
Soldering wires together



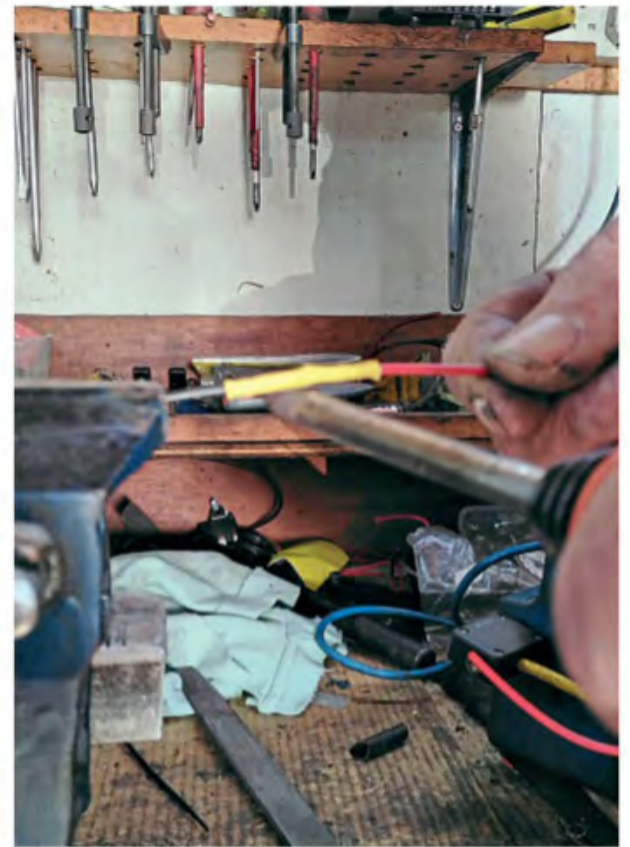
Holding joint until solder solidifies



Testing joint for strength



Fitting heatshrink over joint



Shrinking heatshrink onto joint

Hold the wire/s to be soldered, one at a time, I use a very small vice for this where I can and then I 'tin' the wire. This means coating the wire with a covering of solder, don't create! (It's not a bloody sculpture!) i.e. don't melt some solder on the iron and then wipe it on the wire. The action is to sandwich the solder between the wire and the iron and melt the solder onto/into the wire.

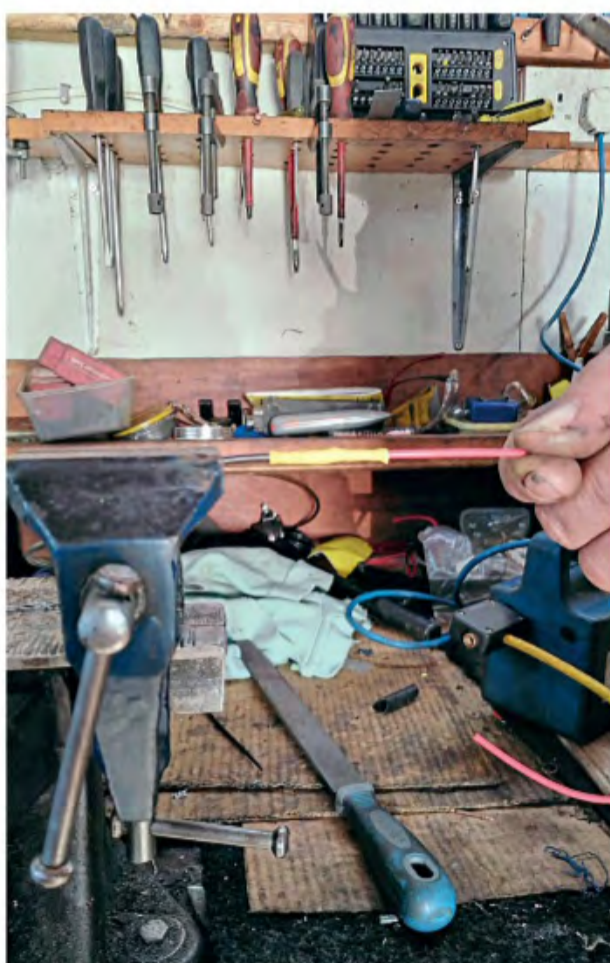
When you have two tinned wires that are shiny with newly solidified solder – if they are dull clip back and start again or re-tin – put down the solder, you won't need it again.

Slip a length of heatshrink over one of the tinned wires, if you are using it, and along the insulation a bit.

Holding the two tinned wires still, together and parallel with each other, use the iron to melt the solder on the tinned wires so that it runs together. Continue to hold the wires together until the solder solidifies – seconds.

Give the newly soldered joint a good visual inspection, looking for a bright – but not dry joint, that goes along the whole length of the short joint, and give it a good tug to check it is mechanically sound.

Once happy, slide the heatshrink over the joint and shrink with a heat source; a lighter, hot air blower, I use the shaft of the soldering iron. Hopefully you will then have a mechanically and electrically sound joint. **CBG**



Finished joint





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*“Making it work was easy. Making it work well enough to ride it was also easy, if a little more long-winded and more expensive. Think tyres, brakes, battery”*

**Q**UESTS ARE ALWAYS WONDERFUL THINGS, don't you find? Set a goal and head off towards it. The goal can be sensible or it can be of the infinite improbability variety; both can be pure entertainment in their own ways. And as actually riding old motorcycles is something of a minefield these days, I decided that I needed a quest. A simple one, because I suspected that the answer was already ensconced in The Shed, and had been lurking in there for quite some time. Biding its time. Its time is now, I decided.

The quest involved locating, purchasing, prepping and actually rendering roadworthy a decently lightweight old bike with an electric start. Life is far too short to waste in explanations, but I can reveal that my judgement was clouded by the potential resurrection of an electric-started Norton twin. I should rephrase that: A Norton with an electric starter. The difference may be subtle, but it is important. And it couldn't be a Commando or a rotary, which limits the field somewhat, as you will appreciate. But a quest is not a quest if it is not also a challenge, so I dragged an elderly Norton ES400 Electra from the damp of ages and set to.

These are great little bikes, as you may already know, and have only recently suffered from folk discovering this happy fact and buying them up at prices ranging from the merely optimistic to the seriously surprising. The Shed Electra has languished therein for at least a decade. Maybe more. And memory suggests that it should run, that it had in fact run before I stored it away. Memory can lie, of course. And memory failed to remind me that I'd fitted it with a new set of exhaust pipes at some point. The chrome must be good, because they'd not gone rusty.

Making it work was easy. Making it work well enough to ride it was also easy, if a little more long-winded and more expensive. Think tyres, brakes, battery. The latter was important because of the quest: the electric starter needed to work.

I've ridden enough Commandos to be aware of all the 'electric assist' jokes, and instantly observed (it is a skill) that rather than the

notorious Prestolite item some Norton optimist specified for the Commando, the rather less beefy Electra uses a Lucas item. Add your own joke here. I did what you would expect and checked that everything worked by whirling the motor round with the spark plugs removed. Everything worked. The engine however did not start. This was not much of a surprise.


Back from a zap (well...) down the lane, I switched off and took a deep breath. Pressed the red button. Enormous noises issued forth, something like a giant playing dominoes with shipping containers, and the engine started itself. Amazing. Aren't modern batteries wonderful things? The Electra has room for a pair of accumulators, but I fitted only one. Goodness.

The Electra has never started itself since. I blame the battery. Only a fool would fit only one.

I decided to seek another allegedly self-starting classic. But which? After months of negotiation I actually bought one, unseen, as is the lockdown way, from a total stranger. Why? Because I'd somehow forgotten that back in the mists of antiquity, or the classic haze, call it what you like, I'd entirely forgotten that Harley-Davidson once owned Aermacchi. Did you know that? Of course you did. Did you also know that right at the end of production of their sweet and neat 350 flat single they converted it from four to five speeds, moved the gearshift to the left and... and... fitted an electric starter? How could a chap resist such a treasure when someone offered him one in full working order? I knew you'd understand.

New battery (intended for a ride-on lawnmower, remarkably), fresh fuel and air, switch on and kick. First kick, off it roared. It's very loud. Zoom around the lane, return and check out the starter motor. Click, it goes. Click click. And I do dislike left-foot kick-starts. Clicking is easier than kicking, I find.

There's a moral. Never mind this motivational quest nonsense. If you want a nice lightweight motorcycle with a working electric start – just buy one. Return it to the dealer if it does not work. Be stern.

I wonder whether fitting a second battery would inspire the Norton? Hmm... 

**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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