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## Suzuki

VS1100, GSXR1300, GV1200, GSF1200, GSXR1100 (G-WT), GSX1100F, GSX1100E (T-G), GS1100 (G, L), GS1000 (C, E, G, L, S), GSX1000 KAT, TL1000 (R, S), RF900R, GS850G, VX800, GSXR750 (F-WV), GSX750F, VS750, GT750, GSX750E (T-F), GS750 (C, E, GL, T), GS650 (GT, GL, E, KAT), GR650, GSX600F, RF600R, GSXR600, GSF600, GSX550E, GT550, GS550 (E, L, M, KAT), T500, GT500, GN400, GS400E, RF400R, GSXR400 (ALL MODELS), GSX400FW, IMPULSE, GSF400 BANDIT, GT380, T350, GT250, X7, GSXR250, COBRA, GSX250, GS250T, GF250, GS250W, GSF250, RG250 (MKI, II, III), GN250, RGV250, GT200 X5, GT185, DR125, RG125, GN125, TS50X

## Yamaha

VMAX, FJ1200, 1200VENTURE, XS1100, FJ1100, XV1100, XV1000, TR1, FZR1000, YZF1000 (ACE, R1), XV920, XJ900, XS850, TDM850, XTZ750, XS750 (D, SE), FZX750, FZ750, YZF750, XV750, XJ750 (SECA, MAXIM), FZX700, XS650 (ALL MODELS), XJ650 (MAXIM, SECA, TRBO), XT600, SRX600/400, XJ600 (F, S), FZ600, FZR600, XJ550 (SECA, MAXIM), XZ550, XV535, SR500, XT500, XS500, RD500LC, XS400 (D, SE, MAXIM, SECA, YICS), XJR400, RD400 (C, D, E, F), FZR400 (R, RR, 3TJ, 1WG, SP), FZ400, RD350 (A, B, LC, YPVS, FI, FII), RZ350, RD250 (A, B, C, D, E, F, LC, YPVS), TZR250 (1KT, 2MA, 3MA, 3XV), XS250 (SE, YICS), FZR250 (R, RR, 2KR, 3LN), FZ250 PHASER, YDS7, SR250, SRX250, XT225, RD200, SR125, DT125 (R, LC I II III), TZR125, RD125 (DX, LC I II III)

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PHOTO: Rod Gibson.

I used to think that bikers were an oppressed minority. This month I've been speaking to people who have had problems with DVLA, with parking restrictions, and with bad spares suppliers. It's hard sometimes to escape the conviction that us poor motorcyclists bear the brunt of every draconian law; of every petty restriction that can be foisted upon us to stop

us enjoying our simple, harmless hobby.

But, there is another side to it. Not too long ago I was camping at one of the major bike rallies, and had retired to my tent in the early hours to get some well needed kip after a long day's ride and long evening's party. Thirty minutes later my peace was shattered by the sound of a group of idiots obviously preparing a

bonfire – in the middle of a group of tents full of sleeping people at 3am.

When the fire sparked up, I lay sleepless in my now flickeringly illuminated tent, listening to the sounds of drunken revelry not three feet away, and wondering if I would be consumed in an accidental conflagration. This is what I call anti-social behaviour, and if I'd had the means I





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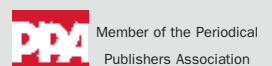
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would have emerged naked from my sleeping bag and issued the lot with ASBOs on the spot.  
On the roads I've seen young lads on modern sports bikes pulling mammoth wheelies in heavy traffic, scaring the car-driving public and building huge social barriers between bikers and non-bikers. And I've felt embarrassed to be seen on two wheels...

So, I'm afraid, when it comes to joining riders' rights groups I'm a bit of a non-starter. If we want to avoid being oppressed we need to first stop oppressing, and I'm damned if I'm going to campaign for the right for idiots to behave badly, simply because we all ride bikes.



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PHOTO: Chris Pearson





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# stock AND FOUR smoking barrels

Kawasaki's H1 triple was always a fearsome machine, so what happens when you add another cylinder to take the capacity out to 666cc? Triples fanatic Roger Ramm recruited the legendary Allen Millyard to help him find out.





“HE PURCHASED THE H1 FROM NEW BACK IN JULY 1973, AND ROGER’S IS STILL THE ONLY NAME ON THE LOGBOOK.”







At first glance, Roger Ramm's machine is just another nice 70s bike, albeit well put together and very well maintained. Many will have passed by without giving it a second glance, as it can take some time, and a close inspection, for the brain to register the extra pipe and cylinder. Once the full extent of the work that has been carried out has sunk in, then one can fully be in awe of the end result.

Roger, having carried out most of the work himself, was determined to bring the H1 into the 21st century by adding modern brakes and the extra third of a power plant without losing the original looks and style.

He purchased the H1 from new, back in July 1973, and Roger, then 19, is still the only name on the logbook. It was two-tone green back

then and lasted for all of six weeks before a combination of youthful exuberance and the bonnet of a Morris Marina saw the potential demise of his pride and joy. Luckily the machine was rebuilt, after much deliberation from the insurance company, (the Marina didn't fare quite so well) and eight months later, Roger and the H1 were reunited on the road.

The broken arm and leg that Roger suffered, bouncing off the Marina, didn't dampen his enthusiasm for the triple and he set about tuning it to further enhance the already staggering performance. Sprinting became an obsession in the mid-70s and the 500 speedily made its way up the quarter for four years, recording a best time of 12.19 seconds, with a terminal speed of 119mph.

During this period, many of the stock parts were junked in an attempt to save weight and increase performance. Among these parts were several very hard to find pieces like exhaust pipes, airbox and the grab-rail, something Roger was to bitterly regret 30 years on. Roger also used the bike as regular transport during the 80s before laying it up and neglecting it for well over a decade. Two years ago, Roger finally found time to take stock and have a look at the 500 that languished in his workshop. "It was in a terrible state," he admits, "after all of the good times it had given me,

## DANCE WITH THE DEVIL

Although visually exciting, the big differences in the bike are discovered once riding it. The extra weight is immediately noticeable, as is the width, although the latter doesn't ever become a problem when cornering as the casings are still some way from the Tarmac. However you do appear to have a lot of metal in front of your shins. This presents itself as a problem only when trying to kick-start the extra-wide engine. The kick lever is no longer directly under your right foot and requires more of a sideways push from your legs rather than a much easier vertical shove. Thankfully it does fire first time and the lever can be folded out of harm's way. The engine is responsive and very smooth, a testament, if one were needed, of Mr Millyard's expertise at welding engines together as well as Roger's mechanical abilities.

The clutch is a heavy thing to get the hang of and, thankfully, once on the move, you don't need to trouble it too much. Not quite as cumbersome is the throttle, it requires slightly more effort to twist the grip but, it has four carb slides to lift instead of the three

found on the original version.

Open the taps and the engine is most unlike a Kwak triple, the crank has been re-phased to create a 90-degree firing order. This despatches four separate bangs to the rear wheel with every revolution of the engine, making for a staggering power delivery from way down low in the rev range. Producing 74bhp at 9800rpm, the total power is up by nearly half from the standard H1 figure; this is largely attributable to Roger's porting and pipe design with a great ride being the result. The 666 Kawasaki goes as well, if not better than it looks.

Equally impressive is the chassis's ability to keep it all in check. With Kawasaki triples never among the world's greatest handling machines, the potential for bad handling would have been immense, what with the gains in weight and power. This H1 has been effectively tamed, chiefly by the substantial swing-arm, and now toes the line obediently. A Kawasaki steering damper also chips in with a bit of extra stability for the front end. This was always bad enough with three pistons pushing it along, imagine

what the front tyre would be doing now, with four of them kicking in, were it not for the damper.

Just looking at the pictures will tell you how good the front brakes are, you don't bolt equipment like that onto a bike without superb results. The Kawasaki master cylinder gives a good feel, while the six-pot callipers react to any movement at the lever, dissipating the energy built up by the engine effectively and swiftly. Roger has chosen to leave the rear wheel as Kawasaki meant it to be. The drum stopper matches the front anchors well, further modification is just not necessary.

The cackle that the four pipes produce is sweet enough at low speed, and positively addictive once the power band is reached, developing nicely into a raucous cacophony as the bike rapidly disappears in a cloud of blue haze. Surprisingly, just pottering about is a doddle too, despite the bike's pretension of the opposite.

Riding behind the camera car at reasonable speeds, often a major problem for early piston-ported two-strokes, proved to be no such

challenge for this engine. It cruised along nicely, always willing to go should the signal be sent down those four throttle cables to the asthmatic Mikuni flat slides. The open carbs do cause a small cough as the Kwak clears its throat, but that just gives you a little time to get ready for the off. The 666 Kwak is as easy to ride as a two-stroke ever could be, with a strong pulling engine and hardly a sign of a power band to battle with. Of course it does have a step up, but the transition onto this is a smooth as a modern machine and not at all like a stroker.

Looking around the bike reveals that all concerned with the creation of this beast know their collective stuff, in particular Roger, who dreamt up the concept and made a large proportion of the components.

The end result is a very professional-looking and factory-finished machine. Looking closely at the casings however might prompt one to change the bike's name, personally I prefer 'Elton' to (Roger's preferred) 'Damien', as even very close inspection fails to reveal the join.





**SPECIFICATION**  
**KAWASAKI 666**

POWER	
engine	Four-cylinder, air-cooled, piston port two-stroke
capacity	664cc
bore & stroke	60mm x 58.8mm
carburation	32mm Mikuni flat slide
max power	74bhp @ 9800rpm
torque	49ft-lb @ 7000rpm
ignition	Dyna S electronic
transmission	Five speed, wet clutch
starter	Kick

**CHASSIS**

frame	Steel tube twin loop cradle
front suspension	34 mm telescopic forks,
rear suspension	Hagon hydraulic shocks, four-way spring pre-load
front wheel	110/90 x 19
rear wheel	110/90 x 18
front brake	292mm EBC disc Pretech six-piston calliper
rear brake	177mm single leading shoe

**DIMENSIONS**

wheelbase	1415mm
fuel capacity	3.3 gallon (inc 8 gallon reserve)
top speed	We didn't go there

**CONTACT**

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



this was how I had repaid it.”

Around the same time, Roger caught sight of the four-cylinder H2 owned by triples club member John Edge. “That H2 was the best bike I had ever seen,” he admitted. “It was simply superb, Allen Millyard had done the work to the engine and I wanted one, and immediately I knew what to do with the 500. A quick calculation revealed the resulting capacity to be as near as damn it 666cc and that was it, I was sold on the idea of a four-cylinder machine.”

The next step, getting Allen Millyard to take the job on, was the easiest. He just needed reassuring that it wouldn't end up as a piece of workshop junk, and that Roger was capable of tackling the rest of the work required to fit the extended Kwak lump into the frame. Four weeks later the completed casings and crankshaft were returned to Roger's workshop for the fun to begin. Thankfully, Allen had provided lengthy notes on what to expect when it came time to put it all together. Various parts were ordered or sent off to the relevant suppliers. Hagon built the wheels and supplied the rear shocks, while drawings were sketched for a new box-section swing-arm to be fabricated. Four, 32mm Mikuni flat-slide carbs were acquired and the basic jetting guessed at by Allen's Performance of Nottingham, the price of the carburettor parts alone adding up to a shade under the cost of the bike in 1973.

With the motor now considerably wider on the left side by around a third, the casings needed squaring up in the frame by moving it several inches to the right. This in turn meant the all-







important chain alignment would be out by the same amount; Roger fabricated a lengthened output shaft for the gearbox and supported this with an outrigger bearing support attached to the left casing. The result is a perfectly stable piece of engineering, more than capable of supporting the huge strains seen at this point of departure for the engine's power.

Further complex engineering work saw Roger machine each barrel to allow the fitting of a 1mm spacer to raise the porting. During this operation the lathe grabbed one cylinder and threw it across the workshop. Roger feared the worst – that he had lost a valuable and scarce middle pot – but thankfully the gouge made by the lathe was shallower than the job he was trying to do, so the barrel wasn't scrap.

Originally the ignition consisted of a four contact breaker set-up, powering a brace of Suzuki GT380 coils, but this proved troublesome and has since been upgraded. Sparks for the four pots are now provided by a unique custom-made Dyna S system, this gives a whopping spark almost good enough to weld with. Mark Hutton of A&H performance cycles of Ash in Hampshire is the guy responsible for much of the trickery, and Roger is quick to praise his high standard of workmanship and proficiency. Lubrication is taken care of by an oil pump taken from an H2, these have four outlets as standard so can provide oil to all the cylinders without modification. A special throttle cable had to be made, with five cables now leaving the junction box to provide actuation to the four carbs and the oil pump.

With most of the serious stuff taken care of, it

was time to start thinking about aesthetics. A pair of Prettech calipers were made to fit the standard fork legs, complete with the '666' logo machined on the outer faces. The six-pot calipers grab a couple of EBC floating discs originally intended for a Z1. All that was missing to finish the cosmetics side of the bike was a grab-rail, the exact part Roger had disposed of so many years previously. The hunt began, but, to no avail, until triple guru Rick Brett of RB spares uncovered one and duly presented it for inclusion in the project. "The way Rick gave me it you would have thought it was a gold bar," laughed Roger, "a gold bar would have been considerably easier to find," he added. The paint job, also provided by RB spares, is beautifully applied, being based upon the scheme from the early 350cc triple. The end result is an eye pleasing mix of both modern and old.

Gazelle exhausts of Cardigan, Wales built the lovely stainless steel pipes to Roger's own design. Once again a top job has been carried out and the finished job is in keeping with the rest of the machine. The silencers are easily detachable, enabling the full-on, 70s unsilenced, sound to be recreated should circumstances permit.

Surprisingly, considering the guesswork involved in the carburation and other set-up matters, the completed four-cylinder machine struck up first kick following the build. Much work followed the initial euphoria however, Roger claims, "tons of jets were consumed getting the jetting correct, and once it was running something like, the clutch gave up the ghost." Once uprated with heavy-duty plates and springs the clutch has not given cause for concern again.

“THE CACKLE THAT THE FOUR PIPES PRODUCE IS POSITIVELY ADDICTIVE ONCE YOU REACH THE POWER BAND, DEVELOPING NICELY INTO A RAUCOUS CACOPHONY AS THE BIKE RAPIDLY DISAPPEARS IN A CLOUD OF BLUE HAZE.”





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Our monthly directory of motorcycle owners clubs and their secretaries. Please write in or Email [vdawson@mortons.co.uk](mailto:vdawson@mortons.co.uk) if you wish your club to be included. National clubs only, no branches. Sorry, we do not give out telephone numbers.

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# STAFFORD 2005

This year's Classic Motorcycle Mechanics show at Stafford promises to be the best ever. Attracting over 30,000 visitors last year, the show is now in its 12th year and continues to go from strength to strength as the biggest show in the UK dedicated to bikes from the 'modern classic' era.

Expect a strong Japanese presence at the show as the VJMC and many one-make clubs present the very best bikes from the Far East. European bikes including some of the most desirable Italian exotica will be on show, and lovers of older Brit classics will have plenty to drool over too. This year's guest of honour is racing legend and LC fan Niall Mackenzie, who will be making a number of personal appearances and presenting trophies on the Sunday.

The Stafford autojumble has the reputation as one of the largest and best in Europe, and, if you're planning to go shopping for a bike to add to your collection, the Bonhams Auction is the place to pick up a rare bike from any era.

Tickets are on sale now for £8.50 for adults, £6 for OAPs and £2 for the under 15s. Call the ticket hotline on 01507 529300 or book online at [www.classicbikeshows.com](http://www.classicbikeshows.com)



Stafford's legendary autojumble is one of the largest in Europe.



## Don Leeson

It is with deep sadness that we have to report the untimely death of Don Leeson, while racing at The Isle of Man, on Friday 2 September 2005. Don will be sorely missed by all those who were fortunate enough to know him.

His commitment to the VJMC was second to none. More recently Don held the position of club secretary, a role which he relished and, like everything he did, made his own. The club would not be what it is today without his extraordinary passion for all things motorcycling.

The VJMC pass on deepest condolences to his partner Jay and his family. His passing will leave a huge void in all our lives and throughout the motorcycling world. Our thoughts and support are with you at this time of sadness.

Malcolm Linsley, VJMC Chairman



## NEW SISTER TITLE FOR MECHANICS



Mortons Media Group, publishers of Classic Motorcycle Mechanics, have now added Motorcycle Sport & Leisure to their stable of biking titles. Billed as 'the thinking motorcyclists magazine', Motorcycle Sport & Leisure can trace its roots back to the 60s and has its focus aimed clearly at practical biking including long distance riding and long-term road tests. Mortons Publishing Director Malcolm Wheeler commented: "There is a great deal of synergy between the readers of Motorcycle Sport & Leisure and our current stable of classic titles." You can obtain a copy of Motorcycle Sport & Leisure in your local newsagents, or by calling Mortons on 01507 529300.

## Festival of 1000 bikes

2006 marks the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Vintage Motorcycle Club Ltd who will be reintroducing the Festival of 1000 bikes into the classic calendar over the weekend of 8-9 July 2006 at the famous Mallory Park circuit in Leicestershire.

This event, supported by Mortons Motorcycle Media, is reverting back to its original home of Mallory at which the first event

was held in the early 80s.

James Hewing, chief executive of the VMCC said: "Both members and non-members will get the opportunity to use their own machines on the Mallory Park circuit in dozens of sessions over the entire weekend."

Trade stands and many other attractions promise to make this event one of the most exciting during next year.



## IN BRIEF

### WINNERS!

Lucky winners of tickets for our Eurojumble Competition were:

- Keith Chrimes, Birmingham
- Alex Sheath, Southampton
- B Jones, Wimbourne
- Stewart Begbie, Lancashire
- Andrew Earl, Liskeard
- Mark Netley, Lancing

They each receive a pair of tickets to attend the Eurojumble, and enjoy a great day out on Mechanics!

### 21ST ANNIVERSARY FOR GPZ900R

In celebration of its 21 years service, the UK GPZ 900R Owners' Club is organising a John o'Groats to Land's End run. Last year's successful 20th birthday celebrations, held in conjunction with the German GPZ 900R Owners' Club, were the catalyst for organising the End to End run. The event will begin on Friday 30 Sept at John o'Groats and finish on 2 October at Land's End. GPZ 900R owners can join and leave the procession at different locations. There will of course be a hard core of owners who will aim to complete the entire 950-mile route. Everyone is welcome to join in for all, or any part of the event, and further information, including route specifics, campsite details and timings is available via the GPZ 900R website at [www.gpz900r.co.uk](http://www.gpz900r.co.uk) or direct from Craig Davies on 01380 860641.

### FOOTMAN JAMES EXPAND SERVICE

Specialist vehicle owners and enthusiast club members have proved loyal customers of Footman James since it was established over 20 years ago. Staying true to its heritage, Footman James now has plans to broaden its expertise and earn bigger discounts for policyholders looking to bring all their insurance under one roof. Footman James' policyholders are now able to take advantage of preferential rates for home insurance, travel insurance, modern car and motorcycle insurance, caravan insurance and even wedding insurance, cutting out the time and hassle involved in cherry picking several different policies from different brokers and insurers. For further information contact Emma Bicknell at Footman James on 0121 561 6245.



Bikes from the Aircooled RD club at the show.



Superb Suzuki T350 was one of many bikes in attendance.

# Calne Motorcycle Show

The small Wiltshire country town of Calne was packed with an estimated 3000 bikes of all shapes, sizes, models and ages on Saturday 16 July. The town Rotary Club held its increasingly popular annual Motorcycle Family Fun Day, raising money for local charities. Many local vintage, classic and modern owners clubs attended, mixed in with the trade stalls.

The VJMC presented a small line-up of bikes, they were joined by members of the Aircooled-RD club. Notable among the solo entries was a Suzuki T350 in fine standard condition. Even a small group from the scooter club displayed multi-mirrored scooters, riders dressed in full Mod regalia. A pig roast kept the crowds fed and two rock bands played in the town centre. Next year's show is on 23 July 2006.



Chris Bennett with his RD400E at Calne Town Hall

WORDS/PHOTOS: Derek Freegard

## EC licensing nightmare

New proposals look set to make it much more difficult for people to take up motorcycling after 2011. The European plans are contained in the 'Third Directive on Driving Licences', a complex directive, which covers many aspects of vehicle driving and riding licences.

Proposals for motorcycling are among the most draconian ever seen and discriminate particularly badly against people who wish to take up motorcycling either for commuting purposes or for leisure and touring. Key proposals include:

- Minimum age for riding bikes larger than 125cc likely to rise from 17 to 19
- Direct Access to larger bikes

not allowed until 24 (currently 21)

- New categories of motorcycle riding licences creating several two-year 'steps' between bikes of different engine size
- Riders required to complete extra riding tests between 'steps'

Europe has proposed these wide-ranging changes in the name of road safety, but has ignored road safety evidence, which shows that experience gained while riding – and not the age of access to motorcycles – is a key factor. A second test of basic skills is also viewed as largely worthless to a motorcyclist who has already gained riding experience.

The European institutions have also ignored the key fact that well over half of all motorcycle accidents are caused by other road users – people will still be legally allowed to drive any car of any power or size that they can afford after passing a single driving test at age 17. The proposals are set to become UK law in 2011.

"We hear a lot these days about how the Government is using its influence to ensure a fair deal for UK citizens as part of its EU Presidency," commented MCI's Craig Carey-Clinch. "It's time that ministers put their money where their mouths are and make sure that we get a fair deal for motorcycling."



# First Ducati sport classics ARRIVE

Deliveries of Ducati's SportClassic range are expected next month, but the first limited-edition batch of Paul Smart 1000 V-twins is already sold out. The SportClassics recall the Bologna factory's V-twins of the early 70s.

The Paul Smart 1000 is styled on the Desmo 750SS, a works prepared version of which was raced by the Kent ace to victory in the Imola 200 in 1972. It's one of three SportClassic models, the others being the Sport 1000, styled on the original 750 Sport and expected to arrive later this year while the touring GT1000, similar to the softer 750GT, will be available from May next year.

Ducati decided to offer the classic range in January 2004, following the production of styling exercises to gauge opinion.



**Naked muscle:** Ducati's Paul Smart 1000, a classic V-twin styled along the lines of the 750SS that won the Imola 200 race in 1972, reaches dealers in October.

Engines are unconnected with the original V-twins, which had bevel-driven overhead camshafts: each uses the 992cc air- and oil-cooled 1000DS unit from Ducati's Multistrada. With belt-driven

overhead camshafts, it is derived from engineer Fabio Taglioni's 500cc Pantah V-twin of 1977. The six-speed desmodromic engine, developing peak power of 92bhp at 8000rpm, is mounted in a tubular welded trellis-style frame with twin-shock rear suspension and tension-spoke wheels using light-alloy rims. Front suspension is a modern inverted telescopic fork with twin 320mm Brembo brake discs.

Prices had not been announced at the time of going to press but Ducati UK spokesman Luke Plummer said the Paul Smart 1000 would be about £9000 while the Sport would be about £8500 and the GT £7500.

■ *Read about the 1978 Ducati Desmo 900SS, a works developed version of which Mike Hailwood won the Isle of Man TT F1 race that year, in this issue: page 48.*



**Yellow peril:** Second model in Ducati's SportClassic range to reach the UK is the Sport 1000.

## Weird or what?

Drag racer John Regan took these pictures of this remarkable special at the recent Hoghton Tower Sprint near Preston. "The bike was built by a guy called Simon Foster," reports John. "He came across a works Krauser sidecar engine and thought it would make a good sprinter. He built a frame for it, even blowing out his own expansion pipes, to make this monster."

John reckons the only problem is the bike's power and torque curves which "resemble heart monitor graphs you see on Casualty; it gives over 100bhp, but



the power band is only about 1000rpm wide, with nothing at all either side. It's OK if you have a chair on and a fat slick tyre to spin up, not so much fun as a solo, though it is entertaining to watch."

## IN BRIEF

### RARE VELO ON SALE AT STAFFORD

The motorcycle collection of the late John Logan Thompson will be sold by Bonhams at The Classic Motorcycle Mechanics Show, Stafford, on 16 October. Highlight of the collection is the ex-Les Graham 1947 Velocette KTT MkVIII, a machine previously believed lost, which has unexpectedly resurfaced. Les Graham won the first ever 500cc World Championship in 1949, riding for AJS, before joining MV Agusta. An eight times Grand Prix winner, he was killed at the Isle of Man TT in 1953. Graham used the MkVIII KTT while 'freelancing' during the 1951 season, taking him to victory in the 350cc class at the Swiss Grand Prix at Berne that year. John Logan Thompson was a keen devotee of the Velocette marque and his collection contains no fewer than nine of the Hall Green singles.

### £172,000 RAISED FOR HEATHCARE AT DONINGTON

The 13th annual Riders for Health Day of Champions at Donington Park, on 21 July, raised a record-breaking £172,000 for Riders' programmes. The highlight of the day was the main auction, which saw the stars of MotoGP working with a huge crowd at the main stage to raise over £62,000 in just a few hours. The money raised at these events will make a huge difference to Riders for Health's life-saving programmes in Africa, supporting health workers to deliver vital health care to remote and vulnerable communities. More information on Riders For Health is at [www.riders.org](http://www.riders.org)

### MOT FEES RISE

The MoT fee for motorcycles has been increased in proportion with the time it actually takes to perform the test, following sustained lobbying by the Retail Motor Industry Federation (RMI). The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) announced the new motorcycle test fees on 1 August. For motorcycles up to 200cc, the new fee will be £23.80 – up from £15.20. Fees for outfits rise to £30.40 from £24.85 and trikes up to 450kg rise to £30.40 from £29.



IN BRIEF

**'MOTOR BIKERS' UNWELCOME AT WATERMAN**

Ian Lloyd emailed us a flyer distributed recently at the Waterman in Hatton, Warwick; the popular meeting place for many bikers in the midlands. Following some refurbishment, the new management now says, "we need to consider the future of the Wednesday night gatherings in light of concerns expressed by local residents and the car parking needs of our regular customers... any future restrictions may cause disappointment to some motor bikers" (sic). Of course, it would be presumptuous of any 'motor biker' to consider themselves a regular customer, who apparently only ever drive cars. "Looks like the writing is on the wall," remarks Ian.

**BUG FRIENDLY**

The **BUG 2 Biker-Friendly Stop-Offs Guide** and its website [www.bug2bikerfriendlystopoffs.co.uk](http://www.bug2bikerfriendlystopoffs.co.uk) highlight watering-holes at which motorcyclists can be assured of finding room at the inn. It has now teamed up with Orchard Ovens, importers of Valoriani Italian wood-burning ovens from Tuscany, who are sponsoring the category of Best Biker Beer Garden. Details of how to enter are detailed on page 69 of the **BUG Guide for 2005** which can be bought from [www.bug2bikerfriendlystopoffs.co.uk](http://www.bug2bikerfriendlystopoffs.co.uk) So, if you want to give your favourite biker beer garden a boost, tip off the landlord.

**CASUALTY RATE FALLS**

Interest and enthusiasm for motorcycling is still strong in the UK, and there are approximately 3.5-million people who have motorcycle entitlement on their licence. There is also good news for motorcyclists that riding a bike or scooter of any type is getting safer. Department of Transport figures show the number of powered two-wheeler (PTW) casualties fell by 16 per cent in 2004 (585 deaths) compared to 2003. Although powered two-wheeler (PTW) traffic fell during this period it resulted in a further improved casualty rate per mile.

# Honda day at Brooklands



WORDS/PHOTOS: Dave Barton

The West London Branch of the Honda Owners' Club organised the Honda Day and invited other Honda clubs to attend. Rain showers did not prevent well over 300 machines attending a gathering to celebrate 40 years of Honda Motorcycles at the Brooklands Museum on 14 August.

Every model, from CB72s to

CBX and Fireblades were in attendance, with members from the CBX Riders' Club, Classic Honda Club, Goldwing Owners and the VJMC. On display were examples of the original 'nifty fifty' C100, C114, CB160, CB72 (250cc) or a 'Tiger Chasing' CB77 (305cc) with all these machines from the 60s era.

Today's machines covered the CBR1000RR, CB600F 'Hornet' a 'Blackbird' and the 'Goldwings' – in a class of their own with almost 30 'wings' attending the event, lining the entrance and making a very impressive display.

**SHOW RESULTS**

<b>class A (pre-1980)</b>	1 CB750K6, Mick Logan
	2 CB500F, Pete Goodger
	3 CBX1000, Glenn Warby
<b>class B (1981-1990)</b>	1 XBR500, K Dare
	2 CBX1000, Dave Ferns
	3 VFR750FJ, Andy Young
<b>class C (1991-2000)</b>	1 CBR1100, G Seymour
	2 CBR1000, Keith Burkill
	3 ST1100, James McCulloch
<b>class D (2000-2005)</b>	1 CBR900RR, Ian Woodlock
	2 Valkyrie, Will Curtis
	3 ST1100, Micky Maw
<b>class E (Custom)</b>	CB750F1, Alan Eastes
<b>CB400F 'Richard Edelstein' Trophy</b>	1 CB400F2, Jeff Appleyard
	2 CB400F, Brian Shipperlee
	3 CB400F2, H Jenkins
<b>Goldwing</b>	1 GL1500, Paul Painter
	2 Interstate, Roy Laver
	3 GL1800, P Russell
<b>Goldwing Trikes</b>	1 GL1500SE, Mick & Sheila Asbury
	2 GL1200, Ron Colman
	3 GL1500, R Baker



# FAMOUS BMWs

The Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum in Pickerington, Ohio, has unveiled its newest exhibit, 'BMW: The Mastery of Speed', a celebration of the Bavarian marque's sporting heritage.

The exhibit features seldom seen and historically significant machines from nearly every decade of the company's 80 years of motorcycle production, from a

1927 overhead-valve R47 twin to the recently introduced K1200R in-line four sport bike.

Also featured is a valuable, never-before-shown collection of trophies and cups on loan from BMW's own archives in Munich, Germany, as well as memorabilia and historic images from BMW's Mobile Tradition division.

Located on the campus of the

American Motorcyclist Association in Pickerington, Ohio, the Motorcycle Hall of Fame honours those who have contributed notably to the sport, and three major exhibition halls showcase the machines and memorabilia that have shaped motorcycling.

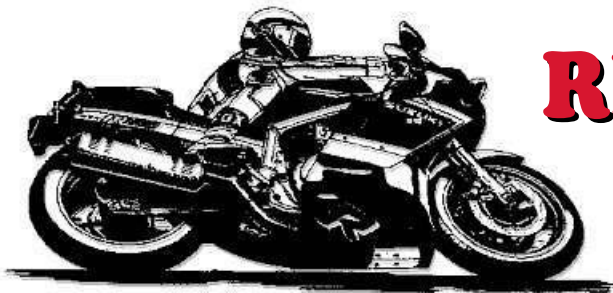
For more information, call (614) 856-2222, or visit the museum's [www.motorcyclemuseum.org](http://www.motorcyclemuseum.org)



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It made it under its own steam, but had to be vanned back home.



This stunning collection of FS1-Es had models from every year of production.

The VJMC show at Lotherton Hall has grown into one of the key events on the classic Japanese calendar. Rod Gibson went along to the 10th annual show.

I have to admit it: this was only my second visit to Lotherton Hall, perhaps a shocking admission for a such a long-established fixture on the classic Jap scene. But, then again, as VJMC chairman Malcolm Linsley pointed out, the show has been attracting successively higher numbers each year; and, like many other folks, now I've discovered the Lotherton show I'll be going back year after year from now on.

In 10 years Lotherton really has grown into something special, with one of the most impressive displays of classic Japanese bikes coupled with an extensive range of specialist traders and breakers. Holding the show

outdoors is a risky business in our mixed climate, but last year's torrential rain storms never threatened to make an appearance and the day had that quality of a sunny English summer that makes you glad to be alive and biking.

Arriving early in the morning aboard a slightly sick Katana project bike (see page 76 for the full sad story), we were soon inundated with visitors and well-wishers on the Mechanics stand, and it was a real pleasure to be able to put faces to names I'd only seen on emails or letters. One of the great benefits of a show like this one is the ability to do on-the-spot research, and my thanks are due to all who

### LOTHERTON HALL RESULTS

CATEGORY	MODEL	OWNER
Long distance	Honda Silverwing – 337 miles	Skippy Allen
Best trallered	Suzuki GT750	Phillip Ryan
Best rat bike	Honda CD175	Paul Ager
Best original	Honda 500/4	Sam Sparr
Best special	Yamaha RD350LC	Craig Hopkins
Best Honda	1 CD 90	Chris Dodd
	2 350 K4	Gordon Mottershaw
	3 CBX 750F	Andrew Whiteley
Best Yamaha	1 DT 400	Mark Tyson
	2YL 1E	Andrew Mastin
	3 YR 5	Paul Gley
Best Suzuki	1 GT250K	Ken Groatbanks
	2 AP50	James O'Sullivan
	3 GSX-R	A Barker
Best Kawasaki	1 KH 400	Mark Tyson
	2 KH250	Dave Windle
	3 Z1	Chris Martin
Best Yamaha FS1-E	1 Nick Sykes, 2 Andrew Swain	
	3 Dave Morris, 4 A Hartley	
Best Honda Goldwing	1 S Chambers, 2 G Houserman	
	3 M Trollape	

The John Downing Trophy for best restored bike

HONDA CB77, presented by Ray Pickard

The Trudy Wyld Trophy for best in show

HONDA TL125, presented by J Cliffe



A real family event. Lotherton has something for everyone.





Mark Tyson took trophies for both best Yamaha and best Kawasaki.



A warm welcome always awaits visitors to the Lotherton Hall show.



Two-stroke or four-stroke, – they're all on show at Lotherton.



This TL125 owned by J Cliffe won the Trudy Wilde Trophy.

asked after my health when I was caught lying on the ground beneath a collection of mint Suzuki Kettles. I was simply refreshing my memory for the rebuild of our project bike and, once I'd figured out what bits I'd lost from our project, I was able to take a quick tour round the autojumble and get everything I needed within a few minutes. My thanks are due to Mick Hopson, the GT750 specialist, who not only offered specialist advice but also donated an old set of carbs I needed for spares. Many thanks, Mick.

I also finally managed to catch up to the Katana Owners Club, who for some reason were relegated to a far corner of the field –

perhaps they were simply trying to keep their lovely collection of standard bikes as far away from my own hybrid as possible! Club chairman Fossie had organised a collection of rare and interesting Kats, including a very rare 250cc twin-cylinder model and at least one mint GSX1000SZ.

Step forward Roy Firth, of M&R Motorcycle Benches, whose original bike has covered only a handful of miles since he bought it new. Roy has now added a second GSX1100SZ to his collection so he has a bike to ride and one to polish!

Ducking back to the VJMC stand, I was pressured into making some remarks on the PA

system when the microphone went decidedly dodgy, and I was left doing a fair Norman Collier impersonation (remember him?) waffling madly in the hope the sound system would behave itself. Alas, I managed to kill it completely, and Malcolm and Brian had to gather the crowds tighter around the stand to make the trophy presentations.

Our thanks to the VJMC for their hospitality in inviting us again this year for a cracking day out. And, if you haven't yet been to Lotherton Hall, I suggest you mark the date in your diary as soon as it's confirmed. See you there next year!



Philip Ryan's GT750 is a tastefully assembled hybrid of early GT750K mated to a twin disc front end.



Show winners included classics of all capacities.





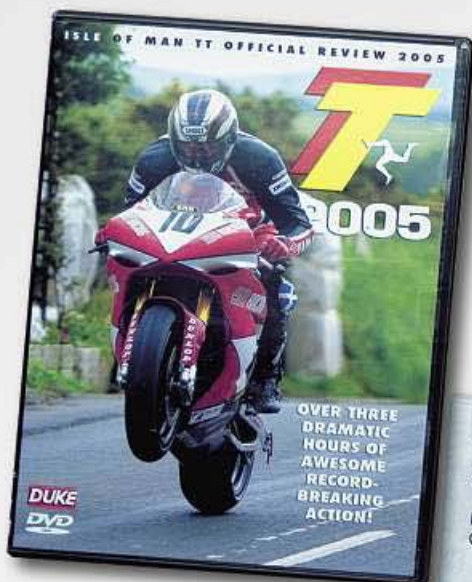
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**THUNDERSPRINT DVD**

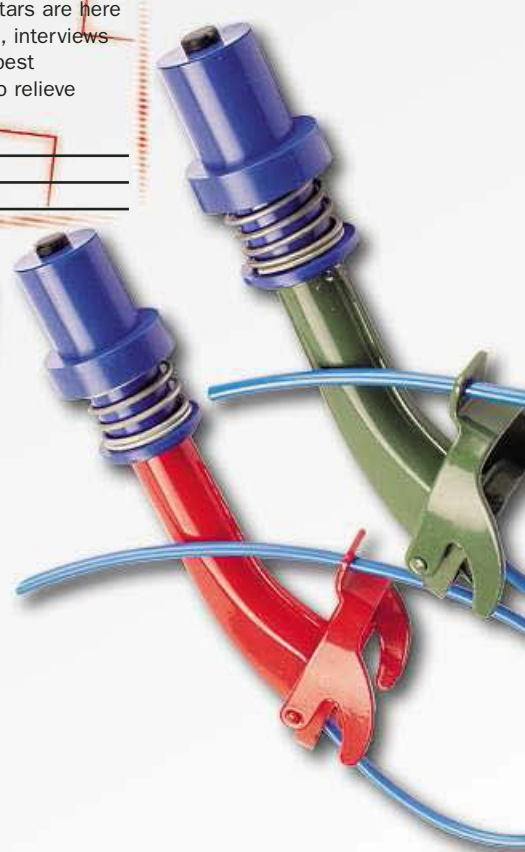
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If you were at this year's Thundersprint you'll want a copy of this DVD. If you weren't, you'll want one to see what you missed. With lots of footage of race action from the world's smallest racetrack in Northwich town centre, celebrity interviews and a trip around Northwich in the cavalcade, it's a great evening entertainment.

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web: [www.thundersprint.com](http://www.thundersprint.com)





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**FROST TANK REPAIR** £24

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# The rebuild



WORDS/PHOTOS: Rod Gibson

Last month Rod started the reassembly of our project Kettle. Now the wheels can go on to the chassis, and the engine begins to take shape.



1: First I'm going to finish mounting the forks, then I can get the wheels fitted. Like many Japanese bikes of the period, the GT750 has its headlamp mounted to the forks by means of two chromed brackets which slide over the stanchions, and are then sandwiched between the two yokes. As the left-hand bracket was accident damaged, owner Roy has opted to fit a new pair. The yokes have rubber cups both above and below them, and chromed steel shrouds which cover the bottom yoke. On this bike I've added taper roller head bearings, so the yokes will be further apart than standard; so I've had to fit an extra O-ring around each leg to secure the headlamp brackets.



2: With both brackets and all the mounting rubbers in place the top yoke can go on. A little waggling is required to get it all to fit, but once it's engaged with the steering stem and both stanchions I can fit the top stem nut and wind it down to seat the yoke. At this stage I'll adjust the head bearings, then finally loosen each fork leg pinch bolt in the bottom yoke and position the top of the stanchion level with the top yoke before nipping up all the pinch bolts. Note the rubber bushes for the clock mountings.

### SPECIAL THANKS

M&R Motorcycle Benches	01924 235740
Kennedy Motorcycles	01422 382809
VJMC	PO Box 14, Corwen LL21 9WF.



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3: Slotting in the front wheel is easy now, with just a little attention to the pictures I took at the stripdown to make sure the spacers and speedo drive gearbox are all in the right position. The wheel spindle can be bolted up into the wheel first before the whole assembly fits into the fork legs and is secured by these two clamps. Note the lovely shiny new disc.



4: I've already assembled the clocks onto their new mounting bracket, now I only need to drop in the two mounting bolts and tighten them up to fit the whole caboodle to the top yoke. The correct mounting bolts are shouldered, so when tightened fully they leave some movement in the rubber bushes to isolate the clock from vibration.



5: Handlebars next, so I'll have something to steer the rolling chassis around with later. I'll be connecting up and bleeding the front brakes too, to make it easier to get the bike down off the bench and move it around the workshop. I may as well fit the clutch lever and switchgear now, then the handlebar grips can go on too. This is a new left-hand switch; lovely.



6: I've already rebuilt the calipers with new pistons and seals, so now I can drop them over the new discs and bolt them up. And of course, it's at precisely this point that I realise the old Kettle should have its calipers in front of the fork legs, not behind them, so it's backtrack a few steps to swap the fork legs around. D'oh. The powder coating on the caliper bodies not only looks good, it should be a lot more durable than the original painted finish.



7: By modern standards the front brake plumbing on the Kettle is hideously complex, and it takes me a while to sort through the parts list to figure out exactly what should go where. The hose unions pass through a rubber bushing on each side, and each rubber bush is held to the fork leg with a pressed steel bracket. For some reason I've ended up with some duplicate parts here, which complicates the issue somewhat, but that's because I've had all the original bits replated and Roy has supplied me with new replacements too. I've sorted through them all to make sure the best parts get fitted to the bike.



8: It's a bit premature really, but at the back end I'm now bolting on the chainguard. There's a couple of reasons I like to assemble parts which are handy, rather than wait until I need them; firstly it reduces the pile of bits in boxes, leaving less clutter to sort through when looking for something specific. Secondly it gives me advance warning if something is missing, or for some reason doesn't fit as it should. And it temporarily makes the bike look a bit more complete, which is good for morale!



9: And good morale is what's required when a setback presents itself. Temporarily refitting the freshly painted fuel tank, I now discover that the bottom yoke pinch bolts are going to clout the tank on full lock. For some reason the lockstops allow the steering to rotate a few degrees too far. This is a mystery, as I didn't notice anything untoward when I examined the original bike, but everything is correctly fitted and the problem won't go away, so some kind of a solution is required.



10: After making a lot of phone calls, and asking anyone who may have any insight into the problem, I'm getting no further. Time is marching on and I need to keep the project moving, so a radical solution is required. Stripping down the front end after some very careful measuring, I take the top yoke round to Richard Williams Engineering and get the lockstops built up with weld, then take it back to Triple S for powder coating again. That works, but it's an odd one and I'd be interested to find out why it was necessary. The best, and most likely explanation I've come up with so far, is that the bike has been crashed in the past and repaired with a different bottom yoke, possibly from a GT550.



11: That's it for the rolling chassis for now, time to take a look at the motor. The top of the crankcase had a chunk broken out of it by the generator cover mounting, so I've used a plastic metal compound to build it up before dressing it off with a hand file. Alloy welding would have been better, but would have taken more time and money, and would never have looked as neat. As the surface isn't load bearing and the repair will be hidden by engine paint I'm happy to take this option.



## INSIDER INFORMATION

- Note that the first 'J' model has wider top and bottom yokes to accommodate the four-leading-shoe drum front brake. In fact the whole front end is the same on the 750 and 550 J models apart from different coloured headlight mounting brackets.
- There are five different types of clocks for the GT750 series, make sure you get a matching speedo/tacho/temp gauge if buying spares. The 'gear position diode' is unique to the 750; although fitted to the 550 and 380 the 750s 'mounting tabs' are offset differently to the 550 and the 380, which are the same, so beware if buying at an autojumble.
- A combination of things could affect the steering clearance; the standard clearance between the top yoke pinch bolt and the tank is only 3-4mm. I had this problem on one of my bikes, which also had taper bearings. I machined the top yoke allowing the bolts to sit a few mm deeper and skimmed the face of the bolts. The GT550 bottom yoke is the same as the 750 apart from a tapped hole on the back/rear right-hand face for a brake pipe clip. You can see the casting 'boss' on the 750 but it isn't drilled. The 380 is also exactly the same, just slightly smaller bores for the smaller diameter forks.
- The internal 'breather' pipe mentioned at step 14 connects a hole in the casting where the water pump sits to a hole on the edge of the water pump impeller cover. The 'pick up' point is between the 2 outer O-rings on the water pump body, and any seepage of oil or water will be 'exhausted' under the bike. If you notice large drops of oil or water (or both) emulsified under the centre of the bike this is where it will probably be coming from. It is still OK to ride the bike, but it indicates a water pump oil seal problem and is best remedied ASAP.
- The crank oil seals harden if the bike isn't used regularly. If the seals are worn, pressure from the crank forces gearbox oil through the worn seal next to the drive gear on the crank, forcing oil out of the gearbox breather (the cast 'chimney' under the oil pump cover). Oil will flow out of the drain hole just below the oil pump cover. When buying a bike make sure this hole has not been 'bunged up' by unscrupulous sellers. Take the bike for a run before buying and accelerate hard in first, second or third gear, then check for oil coming from this hole.
- Note the number 13 crankcase bolt (going by the numbers cast on the bottom of the cases) must have a copper washer. This bolt is 'open' to the gear box and will allow oil to leak if not fitted with a copper washer.
- It's important to align a 'dot' on the kick-start pawl with a 'dot' on the kick-start shaft, so that the hole in the kick-start shaft faces upwards to gather oil. If this is correct there is another 'dot' on the end of the kick-start shaft that aligns with a 'dot' on the kick-starter lever. This dot should be at 12 o'clock. This alignment is often overlooked as the kick-start will work in any position, but will not gather oil for lubrication.

Dave Walker, Kettle Club.



12: Scrubbed up, degreased and shotblasted, the crankcase halves can now be sprayed silver. I use a VHT engine enamel that is a pretty good match for Suzuki's original factory finish. You can get good results just scrubbing and degreasing cases before spraying them, but the shotblasting takes off all the muck and corrosion and allows the paint to key to the surface better.



13: The second batch of Bright Zinc Plating arrives back at the workshop. This is a surprisingly cheap process, if you can find a good firm to do it, and more than adequately restores the original factory finish to fasteners, spacers and spindles. On the Kettle I've even remembered to re-plate the gearshift and kick-start shaft ends, which is a tiny detail that will help finish off the appearance of the rebuilt engine.



14: Before rebuilding the motor, the Kettle engines have this internal oil pipe fitted inside the lower crankcase. In normal service it would probably never get disturbed, but as we've stripped the cases for blasting it needs to be refitted. Incidentally all the oilways and drillings in the cases have been cleaned out and blown with compressed air, and all the threads (even the ones which were masked up) have been cleaned out with a finishing tap.



15: There's a couple of bits and pieces to assemble into the crankcases before I can put them together. This is the gear selector mechanism, which follows conventional Japanese design practice. The rotating drum (bottom) will be rotated by the selector shaft via the ratchet mechanism visible at the lower left. The three selector forks engage into their relative slots in the drum, so the rotation of the drum is translated into sideways movement of the forks, which in turn move the gears to the correct position on the shafts.



16: The bottom end layout follows conventional practice, with the rebuilt crank assembly at the front, and the input and output gear shafts laying behind it. At the very rear of the engine is the kick-starter. The unusual bit is, of course, the small cross-shaft you can see aft of the crank. Driven by the large white nylon gear, this shaft runs in two ballbearings and has a skew gear for the tacho drive and another skew gear for the water pump.



17: The crankcases go together easily and, pausing long enough to make sure all the shafts turn freely, I can begin assembling some of the peripherals. I've fitted the oil pump and its feed pipes, and here I'm dropping in the tacho drive gear assembly. This is retained in the crankcase by a single pinch bolt once fitted. Note the O-ring at the top which acts as an oil seal.





18: Next, the water pump. I've turned the bottom end upside down on the bench to make the pump body easier to fit, and made sure it's turning freely before offering it into the crankcase. Again, note the O-rings that act as seals on the pump body. The body is notched, and will only fit the correct way. Once it's fully home a circlip secures it in place.



19: Again, I've checked to make sure everything rotates correctly before proceeding; as the crank is turned over the water pump shaft should now rotate. Next I can fit the impeller to the end of the water pump shaft and secure it with a circlip, before fitting the impeller housing with a new gasket.



20: Flipping the motor back over, I'm fitting the starter motor. This may have to come off again later to get access for the SRIS pipework, but as I'm not intimately familiar with the GT750 engine I'm taking my time with the assembly and consolidating my learning curve about how it all fits together. The best way to approach any job like this is to take your time with it, and make sure you fully understand what each part does before moving on.



21: At this stage it makes sense to place the bottom end into the frame and bolt it up, as the rest of the engine can be built onto the bottom end in situ. The Kettle has four main engine mountings, each one using rubber bobbins and a spacer sleeve. I've also used new stainless engine bolts supplied specially by Inox Fasteners. Now I'm fitting the kick-start return spring, and I can check the kick-starter turns and returns correctly before moving on, being careful not to damage the pistons, of course.



22: At the right-hand side of the engine now, I can refit the generator rotor. This simply clamps up onto a taper on the crank, and one tip I have picked up over the years is to lap the tapers together with a little grinding paste before assembly. Kawasaki triples, in particular, used to shear Woodruff keys as the rotor came loose on its taper. The secret is that the key only locates the rotor in position; the integrity of the taper surface is the bit that actually transfers the load. The GT750 rotor can fit in any position, and doesn't use a key.



23: Roy has located a brand-new generator stator, which takes the sweat out of cleaning up the old one. This slots over the rotor and bolts up to the crankcase with three long screws. Note the piece of wire protruding from the brush holder, this is holding the brushes back in their holder to make the stator easier to fit. Once bolted up I can pull the wire out, and the two brushes will spring outwards to sit on the commutator. The brushes must be in good condition or the bike may not charge correctly – these are, of course, brand-new.



24: At the other side of the engine I'm going to fit the inner timing cover. Firstly this short drive shaft has to be located correctly in its bearing in the cover. This shaft drives the ignition system, so it must be keyed to the crank. The notch you can see at the top locates with a peg on the starter clutch, and be aware that the shaft and starter clutch must be a matching pair. Some shafts had the drive notch in a different position, and if you mix and match them you may have serious problems timing the ignition.



25: Now the inner timing cover can be fitted over the starter clutch and clamped up to its new gasket. This may look like a complex set-up, but in service the whole ignition system can be removed as an assembly and laid aside without disturbing the timing, useful if rapid access is required to the starter clutch or water pump drive gear. I bet it was a boon at the trackside in the Kettle's racing heyday.

## CONTACTS

Kettle Club	01883 340422, <a href="http://www.thekettleclub.org">www.thekettleclub.org</a> .
Genuine Suzuki spares	Robinsons Foundry 01227 454366
Crank rebuild	SEP 01509 673295
Powder coating	Triple S 01274 562474
Stainless fasteners	Inox 023 8058 6805
Reboring	Serco Engineering
Bead blasting (for paintwork)	Reg Webb 01329 288812
Paintwork	R&K Body Repair 023 9252 4292
Reproduction striping kit	Sunrise Graphics 01253 711862
Wheel rebuilding	Paul Jackson 01422 378100
Rechroming Chrome Restoration Services	01785 212878, Vernon Moss
Tyres	Associated Tyre Services
Alloy polishing	M&G, Halifax 01422 831916
Zinc plating	: Simms, Halifax
Oils and brake fluid	Millers Oils 01484 713201
Spark erosion	Kelland Precision Tooling Ltd, 01422 370715

## NEXT MONTH

**ROD FINISHES OFF THE MOTOR, AND THE BIKE BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE... NOVEMBER ISSUE ON SALE OCTOBER 19.**





WORDS: Chris Pearson PHOTOS: Stevie P



# The **Boxer** with **teeth**



BMW's were gentlemen's touring mounts, until the R90S arrived and shook everyone's preconceptions about shaft drive tourers.

Riding the R90S for the first time will dispel for ever any preconceptions about the BMW breed. It looks like a staid tourer, it sounds like one too, but within seconds the full potential of the design smacks you in the face and makes you pay attention. It happens to me every time I cock a leg over one. On the way there I moan about 'bloody bee emm' this and 'bloody bee emm' that, and on the way back I keep repeating, 'I wouldn't mind one of those in the garage'.

Quite surprising is the compactness and narrowness when you sit on the Beemer. What looks like a very big bike as you approach it becomes nothing more than a powerful middleweight once you are sitting on it. The 'bars are hardly wider than your shoulders and the foot-rests, offset to match the cylinder spacing, incredibly close together, around five inches further in than anything the Japanese have to offer. Even the large-capacity tank isn't in any way bulky, achieving its five-and-a-quarter gallon capacity with length and height rather than width. This instantly endears itself to the rider sitting fully on the centre line of the machine, making the bike feel balanced and

not at all the capacity it is.

At low speed the bike is so easy to keep upright there is hardly a need for that comforting foot down; certainly, turning the bike around on a narrow B-road for the photo shoot could be performed like a trials bike, feet up all the way. The engine configuration helps no end in this aspect with very little weight above mid-shin height.

Once on the move, little changes. The big German twin is agile, lithe and, above all, fast. OK, you can't go rushing around in a ham-fisted manner or the bike will get upset with you. There is simply no point trying to run to the apex of a bend with the brakes on, for instance. The front suspension is too soft and compliant to handle such abuse, while the engine is a bit on the lazy side to cope with the late downshifts required for this technique. Far better to work in unison and make small suggestions to the bike. Get the braking, downshifting and turning done well in advance, then try to go through the apex on the gas – that way the whole plot tightens up nicely and you will be exiting the corner at a far higher speed than an equivalent Japanese machine.

Braking is positive and effective, although some feel is lost as the front lever pulls a cable that, in turn, actuates the master cylinder deep under the petrol tank. This doesn't afford the kind of feedback usually associated with hydraulic systems, but it works nonetheless.

Gear shifts need to be positive – no half-hearted touches on the lever, a real prod is required to get the Boxer engine to shift ratios.

Once the engine revs are correct, the gears will shift both effortlessly and without the clutch; get it wrong and it is as if you are trying to throw a breeze block with your left big toe. More difficult than going up the box is coming back down again.

The engine speed must be accurately matched to the rear wheel speed to make this a smooth affair; mismatch either and the bike will let you know in a way that only trying to shift large engine components before they are ready creates.

As soon as riding harmony has been established between you and it, the Beemer is a cracker, and every aspect of the experience is a delight. The pulsation of the two huge cylinders smoothly pumping against each other to calm the vibes is reassuring. It is possible to overwhelm the rear suspension, especially on bumpy roads, as the combined shaft drive/rear brake hub just sits there as unsprung weight; a small price to pay for such a luxurious ride at all other times.

Once the travel has been soaked up, the chassis is a tight and positive package, the swing arm moves on roller bearings and the shaft drive introduces no flex into the rear end. Accuracy is built in at the factory and, with no chain adjusters to alter anything, remains there throughout the bike's life. It comes as no surprise why the R90S has such a loyal fan base: it is fast, smooth and will keep going all day long. Owners report travelling 800 miles a day and still feeling fresh at the end of the journey.

## RACING SUCCESS

The /5 series BMWs had had some racing success in the hands of Helmut Dahne and Hans-Otto Butenuth, both of whom managed fourth places in the Production TT. But it was 1976 before Dahne and co-rider Butenuth delivered a TT win for BMW on an R90S in the 1000cc production race.

The Americans had taken the R75/5 to heart, and US distributors Butler & Smith commissioned Rob North to produce frames for their R75 race bikes campaigned by Reg Pridmore and Kurt Leibman in AMA racing. The launch of Superbike racing in 1974 opened the doors for Pridmore to take a Butler & Smith R90S to a production race win at Ontario, finishing so far ahead of Yvon DuHamel's Kawasaki

John McLaughlin's Daytona winning R90S.



that DuHamel thought he'd dropped out.

The Butler & Smith bikes were

developed by New Jersey tuning ace Udo Gietl, who fitted shorter rods and barrels to increase cornering

clearance. The 995cc engines had a compression ratio of 12.2:1, used 36mm and 40mm valves and had carbs bored to 40mm to produce an estimated 100bhp at 8300rpm. The chassis was extensively modified and used a monoshock arrangement, offset to allow wide racing rubber, and the bikes were capable of a top speed of 146mph. John McLaughlin won at Daytona in 1976 on a Butler & Smith R90S, and the bikes remained competitive in the superbike series until 1978, with John Long bringing one home in third place at Daytona and finishing third in the championship that year. Stuart Beatson subsequently went on to win the Battle of the Twins series on one of the bikes in 1983.



**OWNER'S TALE: SHAUN THOMAS**

model	1976 R90S
owned since	2000
price paid	£1800
present value	£3500
mileage	22,000
condition	very tidy
owner	Shaun Thomas proprietor Rainbow motorcycles, Rotherham



I had my first R90S aged 21 (sadly it was a company bike). The R100S had just replaced the 90S and my boss said 'get that 90S PDI'd and you can have it as your company bike until you find a buyer'. That was 12 January 1976, a beautiful winter's day. I prepped the bike myself and proudly rode off home that evening. You can imagine my dismay when, on the 13th, my birthday, I looked out to see a foot of snow on top of the bike. Never mind, it took ages to find that elusive customer to buy the bike. Since becoming a BMW dealer 17 years ago, I had been looking for a good 90S. I found mine through Miles, now one of our technicians. It is a very original French bike which, with just mild restoration, has since served me well.

I felt it fitting to use it to ride to the dealer launch of the K1200S at

the Nürburgring last year; after all, the new bike is very much a Superbike. I believe that the R90S was the first bike that had the Superbike moniker attached to it. My colleagues thought I was crazy but the old girl can still lift her skirt and buzz along at a genuine 100mph for hour after hour. I spent two days riding the K1200S around part of the Nürburgring GP circuit and also enjoyed four laps of the Nordschleife too. When I got back on the 90S I was sure that my fun-loving colleagues had disconnected the brakes, let down the tyres, loosened the spokes and steering head bearings and attached a brick to each throttle cable. Looking around the bike, I realised that Superbikes have come a long way in the last 30 years! The 90S was just her usual self and, after an hour, I was 21 again!

**WHAT GOES WRONG**

With a design of such longevity, one would not expect much in the way of common faults. The R90 boxer engine is a tough old lump. As the law of sod dictates: the bike with the most comprehensively equipped toolkit is the least likely to need it. The R90S kit is oversubscribed with sockets and spanners aplenty, all wrapped up in a snug tool roll complete with its own BMW-badged towel to lay them out on in the unlikely event of a roadside malady. For the pedants, the tool marked 'Hauptbremszylinder' is required to adjust the free play in the brake master cylinder.

R90S owners will admit to a few weak points. Rear crank seals can leak, and the factory continued to modify the seal throughout the production run to cure it. The tell-tale sign is an oil weep on the top of the sump casting, below the gearbox. The carbs need frequent attention to keep them in balance, and lower pushrod tube seals can weep oil on the crankcase. Total electrical failure can result from the live connection rotting off the bottom of the starter relay, under the left side of the fuel tank.

Like all boxers of the period, the R90S eats batteries, so be prepared

to fit a new one every couple of years – an operation that requires some dismantling amidstships. The alloy exhaust collars screw on alloy threads on the cylinder heads – not a clever design, and it's easy to damage the heads when removing the front pipes. Shatter the old exhaust collars off with a chisel to save the threads on the heads if they're reluctant to shift, and use plenty of copper slip when reassembling.

The standard steel exhaust system is good for around three years use before the rot breaks through from the inside out. Stainless steel pipes are easily available and rectify this completely.

The R90S has no cush damper within the drive train so something has to take the knocks, and the rear output splines that transfer power from the rear drive unit to the wheel hub can wear with excessive mileage. Smear petroleum jelly into the splines each time the wheel is out to keep excessive wear at bay. The gear



**OWNER'S TALE: ADRIAN NURNEY**

model	1975 BMW R90S
owned since	1986
price paid	£1500
present value	Not for sale
mileage	54,000
condition	Mint
owner	Adrian Nurney



I bought the R90S in May 1986 for £1500 with 15,000 miles on the clock. I got him out of bed (in Oxford) at 6am to answer the ad. He didn't hold it against me and promised first refusal on seeing the machine. A queue had formed outside his house in case I didn't want it. Present mileage is 54,000 which includes many touring trips: South of France twice, Italy, Germany and a couple of years living in Spain with my fiancée, Susan. If the sky is clear I use it!

It is insured for many years with Carol Nash (about £120 fully comp) at an agreed value of £6000. If I lost the machine it would cost me this to locate and restore another, so a recent offer of £7000 didn't tempt a sale. The machine would probably fetch £4500-£5000 in the specialised Press but what price 20 years of

ownership and the memories – and I don't need the money! I have just completed a 1200-mile round trip to the BMW biker party in Garmisch, and the bike handled sustained 90mph cruising with not a problem. I met various Germans who couldn't believe the 13-hour journey down and 10 hours of rain to arrive with groups of people gawping at an extremely dirty (to me!) machine and enthusing at the apparent cleanliness. The bike has never let me down and always brings me home wherever I am. The clutch was replaced by lighter, post-81 parts. This, to me, is an essential mod, because the machine is so much easier to live with in modern traffic, and is significantly quicker in acceleration on overtaking.







change selector return spring has also been known to have an early bath, although the mileages mentioned when this is likely to happen would see most Jap sports tourers forgetting the bath and searching for a bed for the night.

### TUNING TIPS

The lighter clutch assembly, taken from the 1981 spec Boxer engine, greatly helps acceleration and general low-speed riding, although it does require the gearbox output shaft to be replaced. Most R90S owners have opted to have the heads converted for trouble-free unleaded fuel use, and many also sport some kind of electronic ignition in place of the contact breakers, with systems being made by Boyer Bransden, Lucas Rita and Piranha.

There was nothing wrong with the old points system; it is just one less thing to worry about on long journeys, as well as reducing the demands placed on the battery at start up. To smooth out the clunky gearshift problems the later 'Kinematic' gear lever can be fitted, giving the rider a greater leverage over the transmission internals.

“UP UNTIL THE R90S, FAIRINGS BELONGED FIRMLY ON THE RACETRACK, OR RESEMBLED BARN DOORS BOLTED TO THE FRONT OF POLICE BIKES AND STODGY TOURERS. THE R90S WAS SLEEK, ELEGANT AND FUTURISTIC.”

### DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Despite repeated success on the racetrack, by the late 1960s BMWs image had moved firmly to the conservative, and their bikes were seen as genteel gentlemen touring motorcycles. The launch of the /5 series in September 1969 gave the brand a new impetus, but compared to far eastern exotica they still lacked the sparkle that would kick them forward into the superbike era. Behind the locked doors of the BMW boardroom a plan began to take shape for a new flagship bike to headline the upcoming /6 series, and maverick designer Hans Muth (later of Target Design and responsible for Suzukis Katana project) was given an R75/5, a budget and a free hand. In the meantime the engineers at the Spandau factory had opted to

increase the bore of the biggest boxer to 90mm, producing a capacity of 898cc for the R90/6 tourer. Upping the compression ratio to 9.5:1 and fitting a pair of Dell O'rto slide carbs resulted in an engine which would make 67bhp at 7000rpm, a 63 per cent power hike from the original R75/5. The new engine was passed to Muth, and fitted into the restyled rolling chassis to become the R90S.

Muths styling touches had brought the bike bang up to date, with a new and larger sculpted fuel tank and elegant tailpiece, both of which would later see service in the /7 series. But the most radical departure from the common or garden road bike was the addition of a dedicated nose fairing. Up until the

R90S, fairings belonged firmly on the racetrack, or resembled barn doors bolted to the front of Police bikes and stodgy tourers. The R90S looked sleek, elegant and futuristic. It had the performance to match too, and while it didn't burn rubber like a Z1 it soon gained a reputation as a high quality, stylish sports bike. The colour schemes were pretty radical too; an airbrushed finish in either 'TT Silver Smoke' or 'Daytona Orange', which made every bike unique. The R90S launched a rash of replica aftermarket nose fairings which were bolted willy nilly to everything from Fizzys to Kettles. It changed the fortunes of the company and ushered in a new breed of boxer twins, paving the way for their continued success today.





#### THE OPPOSITION

The closest rival came from Italy in the shape of the Moto Guzzi 750S3, soon to be the LeMans. In fact the Guzzi layout is almost identical to the BMW, only the angle of the cylinders separating the two designs.

Guzzi's V-twin gives more ground clearance and is easier to cast as the sportier ride, but cramps its rider in a crouch behind the cylinder heads that can be too uncompromising for serious long-distance, high-speed work. And the Beemer was no slouch on the racetrack, with an enviable race-winning pedigree.

BMW fans would claim that

Bavarian quality control tips the scales in favour of the R90S every time. I find the BMW more responsive and actually quicker to ride than the Guzzi, but the wallowing suspension pushes it back to second place through the twisties. You pay your money and you take your choice.

Many original ideas found in the Boxer design were widely imitated. Yamaha, for instance, used an identical shaft drive set up in their new range of sports tourers, while the handlebar fairing became both the norm for the next generation of sports machines and much copied by the accessory market.







## SPECIFICATION

### BMW R90S

#### POWER

engine	Air-cooled four-stroke opposed twin ohv
capacity	898cc
bore x stroke	90mm x 70.6mm
compression Ratio	9.5:1
carburation	38mm Dell'Orto PHM with accelerator pumps
maximum power	67 hp (49.3kW) at 7000rpm
maximum torque	76 Nm / 56ft-lb at 5500rpm
ignition	Bosch contact breaker
transmission	Five-speed dry clutch shaft final drive

#### CHASSIS

frame	Twin steel loop
front suspension	36mm Boge telescopic fork
rear suspension	Twin shock adjustable spring pre-load
front wheel	3.25in x 19in
rear wheel	4.00in x 18in
front brake	260 mm ATE one-piston caliper
rear brake	Simplex drum brake of 200mm / 7.87in diameter

#### DIMENSIONS

wheelbase	1465mm
weight	498 lbs
fuel capacity	5.27 gallons (inc 0.5 gallon reserve)
top speed	124mph

#### CONTACTS

<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/R90SWORLDNET>  
[www.motobins.co.uk](http://www.motobins.co.uk)  
[www.motorworks.co.uk](http://www.motorworks.co.uk)  
[www.bmwcc.co.uk](http://www.bmwcc.co.uk)





# classic **mechanics** motorcycle event guide

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**25 September 2005:** NSA Sprint, Honington, Suffolk. Details from 01255 508120.

**1-2 October 2005:** The South East Motorcycle Show; 12th year at The Kent County Showground, Detling, Kent.

**1-2 October 2005:** Classic Bike Race of the Year, Snetterton. More information from MotorSport Vision Ltd, Brands Hatch, Fawkham, Longfield, Kent DA3 8NG. Tel. 01474 875 206, fax 01474 874766, email laura.stevens@motorsportvision.co.uk web www.motorsportvision.co.uk

**2 October 2005:** The 2nd Autumn Japanese Bike Ride-In, Show & Jumble, Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, Leamington Spa, Warks. More details from Andrew Greenwood, PO Box 1254, Huddersfield HD4 6WY. Tel. 01484 452002, fax 01484 452006, web www.classicshows.org email classicshows@btconnect.com

**7-8 October 2005:** The Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum annual Hall of Fame weekend, on the campus of the American Motorcyclist Association in Pickerington, Ohio. The weekend honouring the Class of 2005 begins on Friday 7 October with an evening reception at the Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum. Festivities continue on Saturday 8 October with the 4th annual by-invitation-only Concours d'Elegance featuring over 100 rare vintage motorcycles. The Hall of Fame weekend concludes with the induction dinner and ceremonies on Saturday evening. Attendance to all events is open to the public with reservations required for the museum reception and the induction. For more information, call (614) 856-2222, or visit the museum's website at [www.motorcyclemuseum.org](http://www.motorcyclemuseum.org)

**9 October 2005:** NSA Sprint, Waterbeach, Cambs. Details from 01255 508120.

**9 October 2005:** The 8th Staffordshire Classic Bike Show & Bike Jumble, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Uttoxeter, Staffs. More details from Andrew Greenwood, PO Box 1254, Huddersfield HD4 6WY. Tel. 01484 452002, fax 01484 452006, web www.classicshows.org email classicshows@btconnect.com

**15-16 October 2005:** The 12th Classic Motorcycle Mechanics Show sponsored by Central Wheel Components, Stafford County Showground. For tickets or more information call 01507 529300, or book online at [www.classicbikeshows.com](http://www.classicbikeshows.com)

**15 October 2005:** Yorkshire Speed Hill Climb and Sprint Championships, Cadwell Park (provisional). Including: vintage, post-vintage, classic, post-classic and modern, solos and three-wheelers. For details contact Peter Hillaby, Auto 66 Club, The Circuit Office, Oliver's Mount, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO11 2YW. Tel. 01723 373000, fax 01723 373111, email [office@auto66.com](mailto:office@auto66.com) or check the website at [www.auto66.com](http://www.auto66.com)

**30 October 2005:** The 7th South of England Classic Motorcycle Show, South of England Showground, Ardingly, W Sussex. More details from Andrew Greenwood, PO Box 1254, Huddersfield HD4 6WY. Tel. 01484 452002, fax 01484 452006, web www.classicshows.org email classicshows@btconnect.com

**6 November 2005:** The 15th Malvern Classic Bike Show, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcs. More details from Andrew Greenwood, PO Box 1254, Huddersfield HD4 6WY. Tel. 01484 452002, fax 01484 452006, web www.classicshows.org email classicshows@btconnect.com

**20 November 2005:** The 5th Newbury Classic Car/Bike Show & Car/Bike Jumble, Newbury Racecourse, Newbury, Berks. More details from Andrew Greenwood, PO Box 1254, Huddersfield HD4 6WY. Tel. 01484 452002, fax 01484 452006, web www.classicshows.org email classicshows@btconnect.com

**27 November 2005:** The 9th Staffordshire Classic Car/Bike Jumble, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Uttoxeter, Staffs. More details from Andrew Greenwood, PO Box 1254, Huddersfield HD4 6WY. Tel. 01484 452002, fax 01484 452006, web www.classicshows.org email classicshows@btconnect.com

**13-14-15 January 2006:** Bikesport Live, The Millennium Stadium, Cardiff. Billed as the ultimate motorcycle experience, featuring a mix of Tarmac racing, live arena action, stunt shows, stage shows, 'trade zone', and two fantastic evenings of top Supercross action. For further information contact [media@bikesportlive.co.uk](mailto:media@bikesportlive.co.uk) Extreme Sports Promotions 01992 571640 or email [bsl@exp.co.uk](mailto:bsl@exp.co.uk)

**11-12 February 2006:** Classic Motorcycle Show: Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet. H&H Auctions, will be hosting an auction, with viewing to be held in the Exmoor Hall on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12. For tickets or more information call 01507 529300, or book online at [www.classicbikeshows.com](http://www.classicbikeshows.com)

**22-23 April 2006:** The 26th International Classic Motorcycle Show, sponsored by Central Wheel Components, at the County Showground, Stafford. For tickets or more information call 01507 529300, or book online at [www.classicbikeshows.com](http://www.classicbikeshows.com)

**19-21 May 2006:** Spring Eurojumble, Netley Marsh near Southampton, on the A336 between Cadnam and Totton (M27 J1 or J2). For tickets or more information call 01507 529300, or book online at [www.classicbikeshows.com](http://www.classicbikeshows.com)

## STRAIGHTLINERS DRAG RACE MEETING

**9 October 2005:** Straightliners Drag Race Meeting at Elvington, North Yorks.  
Classes for all types of bikes including Run What

You Brung – simply turn up, sign on and ride. More information from Trevor Duckworth on 01484 718164 or [www.straightliners.co.uk](http://www.straightliners.co.uk)



Our Katana makes its last outing of the season at Elvington on 9 October.

> If you have a rally, jumble or bike night planned, send us the details and we'll include it here.

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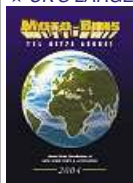
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## 1> KAWASAKI GPZ900 & Z650

"Two of the best," emails Pete Biggin. "They're both very good, and for different reasons. The GPZ900R still packs a punch and is easy to live with, as for the Z650 – did air-cooled fours get any better? Both my bikes are not quite original but the mods are period and practical."

## 2> HONDA CB500T & YAMAHA XS400SE

Ian Cox, of Goathland, North Yorkshire, owns this pair of four-stroke twins. "The CB500T was bought new in August 1975, and I still have it, and ride out when I can – it's really enjoyable. It's only done about 16,000 miles from new, and has never been dismantled for anything other than routine servicing. It always seems a pity that people dismantle bikes for no good reason and then throw them into boxes at the back of a shed. Ride on instead! The 1983 XS400 SE Yamaha is used daily during the summer months as transport to work. It's largely original, but has just had a beautiful new seat cover made, which has restored its dignity no end (thanks Peter). I am gradually restoring it to its former glory over the next few months."

## 3> HONDA XL500R

Brian Hiscock is a dyed-in-the-wool fan of Honda's XL500R trail bikes. "I have owned one of these forgotten warriors for the last 15 years and use it both on- and off-road regularly. If used for sensible green lane outings and not as a faux enduro mount they do not suffer unduly – after all it is what Sochiro made it for. My current mount is an original English model, but I know of several more and they have all come from Italy."

## 4> KAWASAKI Z650

"There are a few 650s here in sunny Bordeaux, none as far as I know are luminous candy red," emails Richard Dennis. "I bought this bike from its one and only previous owner, the guy had it for 26 years. The Z now has 51,000km, Marzocchi shocks, dyna coils, Newtronic ignition, Raask rearsets, a Marshall 4-1, and an oil cooler off a ZR7. It's a great all-round ride, and it takes me to work almost every day. It'll do 5.5-7.0 litres to 100km and a top speed of somewhere around 200kph (but we're not supposed to know that), and it does fine two-up as well. My usual weekend trip is an easy, rather too many straights, 70km-or-so to the beach, where all the posers have coffee and everyone watches the surfers and all the wonderful people on the shore."



### 5> SUZUKI T500M

"Just to say how much I enjoy reading Classic Mechanics, which I've been getting through the post for a few years now," says John Mackay from Teeside. "This is my T500M which took me a year to restore (my first restoration). I rebuilt it to look like the T500J I had in the 70s. Apart from a few teething problems to start with she runs great now, though it would have been cheaper to buy a restored bike. Everything from top to bottom has been re-chromed, with stainless steel nuts and bolts, and a powder coated frame. I hope you and the readers like it."

### 6> YAMAHA TDR250

Gordon Smith has just rebuilt this TDR250 Yamaha. "It is not completely standard, but I have improved it considerably in the handling, braking, and performance departments. I bought it 14 months ago as a tatty runner. It was then totally rebuilt (including a complete engine rebuild). I did over 500 miles during the first week it was back on the road." The bike has been aired at both the North-East RD Owners' Club and the Aircooled RD rally in Derbyshire.

### 7> HONDA CB900F

Martin McCloy owns this tidy Honda CB900F. "The bike is a 1982 CB900 Honda I acquired a few weeks back. It is an American import and appears to be in very good condition. I am told the Yank 900 has a slight restriction, which I plan to rectify. Now that my Suzuki Tempter is off the workbench this could be my next project, although I don't know if I could be bothered just yet – Oh sod it! Where's my spanners?"

### 8> HONDA VFR750

Show pic: Honda pictures 009.jpg

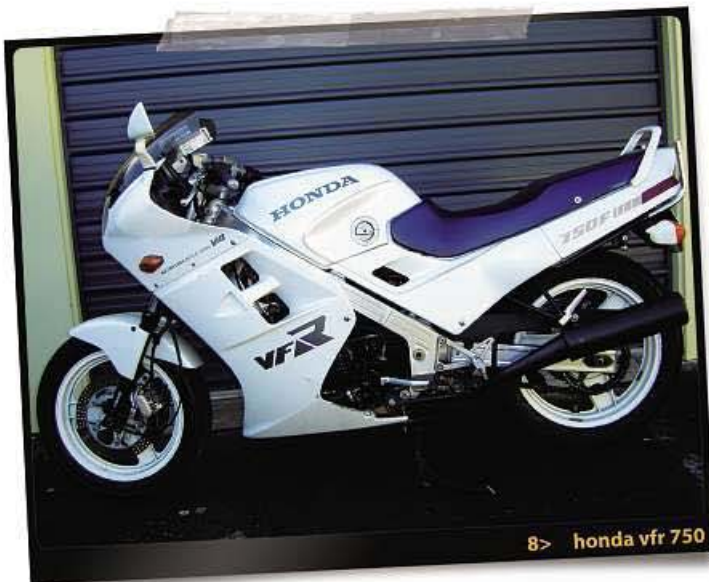
John Tanswell from Plymouth, New Zealand, owns this tidy 1985 Honda VFR750G. "I have restored both a Kawasaki H1B and Z900 in the past. After reading the Buying Bikes feature on the VFR 750 in the Dec 2004 issue, I thought that I'd like one of those. Low and behold, if one wasn't advertised in our local rag in January. It was mine for \$2000 NZ (about £750). The bike has travelled 86,000km and is very original, right down to the tool kit and owner's manual. I've replaced the exhaust system and the other side of the fairing needs a little repair work, but other than that it runs like a new one. I'm going to get the fairing tidied up and have it repainted (in original 'pearl white' of course) ready for next summer. Please keep up the good work."



5> suzuki t500m



6> yamaha tdr250



8> honda vfr 750



7> honda cb900f

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## WIN A NITRO FLIP FRONT HELMET

Flip-front helmets have rapidly become very popular, and make lots of sense for all round, everyday use. This Nitro F317VZ helmet is designed to reduce the wind noise you sometimes find on other flip-fronts, and has a single button release system to hinge the helmet open when you stop. Each month, in conjunction with Apex

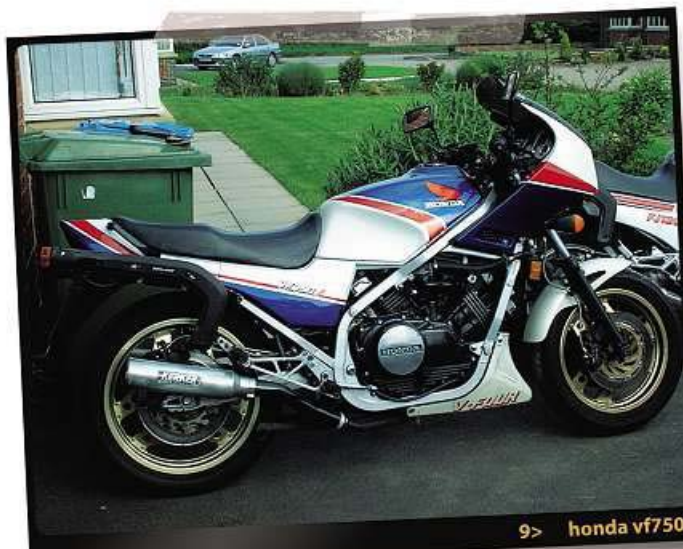
Motorcycles, we give away a Nitro flip-front helmet for the best bike submitted to Show Us Yours. If you're not lucky enough to win one, you can still pick one up for a bargain price from Apex Motorcycles in a range of sizes and colours. Call Apex or see their website for more details.

Rod Gibson



AP265998





9> honda vf750f



10> honda cb200



11> yamaha rd250lc



12> suzuki katana 750

### 9> HONDA VF750F

This is Liz Welburne's Honda VF750F. "The bike has covered 38,000 miles, with Liz having had it since early 1992," writes husband Dean. "Since we acquired it, it has been mechanically 100 per cent reliable, the only problems being a CDI unit (replaced for £20) and blown collector box. The bike has done numerous European tours and was Liz's main bike until last summer when it was joined by her Fazer 1000. It is standard apart from the Kerker exhausts (taken from my FJ1200 system when its link pipes got ground though during cornering at the Nurburgring) and it occasionally wears a Krauser luggage system. The only other work of note (other than taking it apart and cleaning years of neglect from it when we bought it) was the bodywork, which was resprayed a few years ago by Merlin Coachworks of Durham."

### 10> HONDA CB200

Frank Harrison has fond memories of the Honda CD200 he used to own as student in Leeds. Now living in Germany, Frank has just acquired this CB200. "Since buying it in January, paying 350 euros incidentally, all I've done is a service and replaced the battery, plug caps, petrol pipes and throttle cable. I then undersealed the mudguards. It got quite a few admiring comments at the TuV inspection, but I don't really take it too far currently as the charging system seems a little temperamental. It has a couple of dings and dents, if you look close enough, notably in the petrol tank due to broken lock stops, but I put all this down to patina, which is the excuse ex-editor Bob Berry used for not repainting/repairing things as I recall. It shares the garage with my 1994 Triumph 900 Sprint, but there is a queue forming of various other bikes in various states of disrepair, so hopefully this will not be the last you hear from me."

### 11> YAMAHA RD250LC

"Having owned bikes every year since I was 16 (I'm now 34), I fancied reliving my youth and sought out a 250LC," writes PC Matty, by email. "My current collection includes a Suzuki TL1000S, a Yamaha TY250 and the legendary Honda CR500, yet I was still drawn to owning another Elsie. Having owned several different types of RDs in my teens and early twenties I just had to have one more. This is a good clean bike, with plenty of original parts still intact, and hopefully by the end of the year it will be back to standard. It's the best £1200 I have ever spent; the LC bug has well and truly returned."

### 12> SUZUKI KATANA 750

This is Phil Giddings' GSX750 Katana, imported in 1982. "I'd only had it on the road for a week when someone offered me a GSXR600 as a straight swap! It's a great bike to ride and always draws attention. As far as I know the only non-standard parts are the Predator exhaust, the forks (which are a temporary fix until the originals are re-bushed) and the luggage rack!"

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Over 140 entries in our 16th October Stafford County Showground auction already confirmed, including:



The ex-Les Graham, 1951 Swiss Grand Prix winning, Velocette KTT Mk VIII. Estimate: £16,000 - 20,000



ex-George Brown, 1946 Vincent-HRD 'Cadwell Special'. Estimate: £35,000 - 45,000



A Vincent-HRD Series - A competition special, constructed using the Cadwell Special's original engine, 'TT17'. Estimate: £20,000 - 25,000



1928 McEvoy 1,000cc v-twin, powered by JAP's legendary 'KTOR' racing engine. Estimate: £28,000 - 34,000



1903 Excelsior 550cc with Wicker Sidecar. Estimate: £10,000 - £12,000



1904 Quadrant 3hp. Estimate: £8,800 - 9,500



1916 Harley-Davidson 988cc. Estimate: £12,000 - £15,000



1920 Martinsyde-Newman 680cc. Estimate: £10,000 - £12,000



ex-Hugo Karlsson, Swedish TT winning, 1928 Sarolea 494cc OHV. Estimate: £10,000 - £14,000



ex-Gunnar Karlsson, Swedish TT winning, 1928 Rex 350cc OHV. Estimate: £4,000 - 5,000



1954 FB Mondial 125cc OHV Competizione. Estimate: £17,000 - 20,000



A selection of 18 restoration cases from one collection, to include a Brough Superior SS80 and an SOS.

## A Sale of Collectors' Motorcycles and Related Memorabilia

The 12th Classic Motorcycle Mechanics Show Stafford County Showground  
16 October 2005

## A Sale of Collectors' Motor Cars, Motorcycles and Automobilia

The Yorkshire Events Centre, Harrogate  
22 November 2005 (Entries Invited)

Entries included in the John Logan Thompson Collection, to be sold at 12th Classic Motorcycle Mechanics Show, Stafford, 16 October:

1962 AJS 7R - Estimate: £5,000 - 7,000  
1952 Douglas Trials - Estimate: £1,500 - 1,800  
1950 Douglas Trials Rolling Chassis - Estimate: £500 - 700  
1953 James Trials - Estimate: £500 - 700  
1953 Matchless G80C Trials - Estimate £1,300 - 1,800  
1950 Norton 500T Trials - Estimate: £3,000 - 3,500  
1961 Norton 500 Manx - Estimate: £10,000 - 12,000  
1934 Norton Inter Racer - Estimate: £6,000 - 8,000  
1929 Rudge Special - Estimate: £800 - 1,200

1929 Scott Squirrel - Estimate: £2,000 - 3,000  
1933 Triumph Tiger 70 - Estimate: £1,500 - 1,800  
1949 Triumph Thunderbird - Estimate: £2,250 - 3,000  
1946 Triumph Tiger 100 - Estimate: £2,800 - 3,200  
1956 Triumph Tiger 100 - Estimate: £2,800 - 3,200  
1957 Triumph TRW - Estimate: £800 - 1,200  
1975 Triumph Trophy Trail - Estimate: £1,500 - 2,000  
c.1935 Velocette KTT 'MkVI Replica' - Estimate: £4,000 - 5,000  
1936 Velocette KSS - Estimate: £1,800 - 2,000

1938 Velocette KTT MkVII - Estimate: £3,000 - 4,000  
1947 Velocette KSS - Estimate: £2,000 - 2,500  
1947 Velocette KTT MkVIII - Estimate: £16,000 - 20,000  
1950 Velocette MAC - Estimate: £1,500 - 1,800  
1952 Velocette MAC - Estimate: £1,500 - 1,800  
1964 Velocette Venom Clubman - Estimate: £2,500 - 3,000  
1967 Velocette Venom Thruxton Estimate: £5,000 - 6,000

For further details of how to take part in our next event or to discuss, in confidence, any aspect of buying or selling motorcycles and related memorabilia at our auction sales please call our London office or your local representative:

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## OBITUARY

### IN MEMORY OF A GOOD FRIEND

On Friday 2 September 2005 a giant of motorcycling was taken from us while racing at The Isle of Man. Don Leeson will be sadly missed by not only the VJMC but by everyone who had the good fortune to come into contact with him. He could sometimes seem cantankerous, but he worked tirelessly to uphold the beliefs of the club and was instrumental in making the club the success it is today.

I knew Don for some 12 years. On first meeting him it seemed difficult to get to know the man, but once he became your friend he would do anything for you. He also upheld his beliefs with everything he did on behalf of the club as he strived tirelessly to exceed people's expectations, often to his own detriment. Having taken over as VJMC secretary four years ago, he would very often travel miles to attend shows and motorcycling events not only in this country but further afield to promote the VJMC.

His hobby and passion was motorcycling and in particular Suzukis, with a love of the two-stroke machine on which he was a renowned expert. He attended many race meetings as a competitor and as with everything else he turned his mind to, gave 110 per cent.

In recent years Don became something of a dab hand at farming and, as with everything in his life, this became a passion as he and his partner Jay tended to the needs of their animals. The committee of the club were often enthralled by his new-found knowledge, and he often told humorous stories which would have us all in fits of laughter.

But that was Don Leeson; a very quiet unassuming individual who would quietly and professionally go about his business. The respect he gained over the years from his peers is second to none, and he will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. He leaves a huge void throughout the motorcycling world.

On behalf of the VJMC I pass on our heartfelt condolences to his partner Jay and his family, we will miss you Don as you ride off into the wide blue yonder.

Malcolm Linsley,  
VJMC Chairman.

# A penchant for the tiddlers

This month Steve Cooper talks to Chris Merrett; a VJMC stalwart, colourful character and all-round nice bloke!

Mr Merrett has been into his bikes for some 34 years and started off with a little Suzuki M12; quite topical really as these little fellows are now being restored as people appreciate what advanced and reliable bikes they were for their time. Cursed by the heinous moped laws Chris took to the streets on an AP50 and confirms that it was a real feisty little beast. Sorry guys, but if Chris rates the AP over your Fizzer I'm not going to argue.

The Merrett riding stable currently consists of three Honda C100s, three ST70s, a Suzuki A100 and a 325 Suzuki Beamish (a trial iron for those who avoid the mud at all costs!). As Chris points out (as if it were needed) he's rather partial to the smaller bikes. It's good to see someone with a penchant for the tiddlers, as they don't always get the coverage they deserve. Given limitless funds the Merrett garage would play host to a GT750J (always a popular choice), a 1200 Bandit, any Buell (because they just make them so different to any other bike) and an ex-WD BSA B40. Yet again the VJMC members show they are not purely focused on bikes from the Orient then. Seems to be fairly obvious now that we have some very eclectic tastes within the club.

If there's one thing that really winds Chris up it's preparation of tin-ware prior to painting. All that effort and time, filling, priming, sanding and then repeating it all ad nauseam until you think it's OK, only find another dent you missed. Many readers are going to



identify with that one methinks. On the skills side Chris passed on an ancient secret for carburettor restoration. Apparently pickling vinegar is excellent for removing the oxide from carbs. We don't have details, such as time of immersion or temperatures, but a good source informs that it's best to avoid the pickling vinegar that has added chillies. Apparently the chilly seeds tend to block jets! Chris has been tinkering with bikes for so long now that he's fairly up on most restoration

problems. It's also reasonable to say that his knowledge of the ST70 is close to comprehensive.

Outside of the VJMC, our man runs a children's quad bike ride and is heavily into vintage commercial vehicles. As if to underline the latter interest, Chris arrived at the VJMC's rally this year in a Green Goddess fire engine which certainly eclipsed his previous 'special'... a 50s tractor. Who says life in the VJMC is dull and totally bike obsessed?



PICKLING VINEGAR IS EXCELLENT FOR REMOVING THE OXIDE FROM CARBS, BUT IT'S BEST TO AVOID THE VINEGAR THAT HAS ADDED CHILLIES.







## BACK ISSUES

### 80 > BACK ISSUES

Missed a story?  
Catch up here

## QUICKSHIFT

With reference to the letter in the March issue from John Bisset, regarding quickshift conversions, I have one of these push-button quickshifters and they are brilliant. The company deal with a lot of customers with amputations and various paralysis and depending on circumstances (ie membership of NABD) will offer discounts. They would have the technical knowledge to help John with all aspects of conversions. Contact [www.kliktronic.co.uk](http://www.kliktronic.co.uk)

Spike, by email.

## WANTS DVDS

I want to tell you how much I love the magazine. I've been a subscriber over here in the US for a number of years now – and I think since you've taken over the magazine it truly just keeps getting better and better! I'm riding a 2000 Kawasaki ZRX1100 – not a classic – yet! Never done a major restore but I do enjoy doing all my own maintenance (valve adjustments, carb sync, tyre changes, fork oil changes, etc.).

As to your doing restorations on DVD, count me as a YES to purchase when they hit the market. Keep up the great work!

John Foley, by email.

*We're still working on this idea, John, and we'll keep you posted as the project develops. Would other readers like to have bike servicing available on DVD too? Rod.*

## WHERE'S THE Z650?

**Congratulations on a really great magazine. I look forward to it landing on the doormat with anticipation each and every month. Today, issue 214 was dropped onto said doormat by my postman. On the front cover I read 'MIDDLEWEIGHT MOULDBREAKER – Kawasaki Z650'. Being a Z650 owner myself, I couldn't wait to read through this particular article. But, having scoured through the magazine now on two different occasions, I still cannot find it. Can you please advise what happened to the missing Z650 article.**

Andy Ford, by email.

**In the August edition that's just dropped through my letterbox, where's the 'Middleweight mould breaker Z650' from the actual cover? Still love the magazine.**

Steve Ebberell, by email.

**Browsing the shelves of my local newsagents I came across a copy of your August 2005 issue. Blazened across the front cover was 'Middleweight mould breaker – Kawasaki Z650' and being the**



Rod captured on the phantom Z650.

**proud owner of a 1979 model I bought a copy of the magazine. When I got the issue home I read it from cover to cover, but found no article or mention of a Kawasaki Z650. What happened to it?**

D Graham, Shildon, Co Durham.

*My fault I'm afraid, and my apologies to all the other disappointed Z650 fans. We*

*actually prepare our covers some time in advance of publication, and when the planned Z650 feature was held over to make room for Piers Waddington's YZ490 crossover, I simply forgot to change the cover artwork. The planned Z650 feature will appear shortly, promise, and in the meantime here's a sneak preview. Rod.*

## TWIN-SHOCKED

**I've just collected my August edition of Classic Motorcycle Mechanics and was delighted to see your feature on the YZ490 Mono Shocker.**

**I attended the Farleigh Castle meeting last month and noticed that the machine being raced by Piers Waddington looked very special and was very competitive. The report and pictures are high quality and I sincerely hope that you cover more of the twin-shock and classic motocross scene in the future.**

**My brother and I raced throughout the 70s and early 80s so the twin-shock motocross scene is going to be a very interesting and nostalgic interest for us. Farleigh Castle is also a very nostalgic motocross venue. It was, and in my mind will always be, the home of the British 500 GP.**

**Every year without fail we attended the 500GP at Farleigh Castle and, as I now recognise in my later years what an absolute**



**privilege it was to watch the likes of Noyce, Hudson, DeCoster and Mikola race there.**

**It was the golden era of GP motocross. Thanks again for a great feature.**

Glenn Marriott, Markfield, Leicestershire.

Piers Waddington with the Motolink Yamaha YZ490.

*Would other readers like to see more twin shock off-riders in Mechanics? Drop us an email to [rgibson@mortons.co.uk](mailto:rgibson@mortons.co.uk) and let us know. Rod.*

## BUILDING THEM AGAIN

Following the recent discussions in the letters column about re-manufacturing older bikes, and particularly the problems of meeting current emissions laws, I would like to add my comments. If you were to build a 1978 model bike entirely from old stock parts then it could be registered as such, and would not have to meet any current legislation, just the 1978 standards.

So, if Honda, for instance, were to open up a 'classic division' and re-manufacture the 1979 CBX1000Z to the exact original specification with compliance plates and manufacture dates, then registration and ownership should not be a problem. I for one would beat a path to the dealer's door.

There is probably as big a market today as ever for the RD350LC and 500V4, and imagine being able to purchase a brand-new Kawasaki Z900, Kettle or GS1000S.

Come on guys, please, please build them again!

Chris Anderson, Papua New Guinea.



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It's that woman again – Heidi Cockerton and the 1965 Suzuki S32, winner of the 2005 'Masterclass'. Named in memory of past Editor and all-round VJMC lynchpin Graham Blunden, the award is contested by previous 'best in class' winners, who are henceforth eligible only for that prize. This has the double benefit of ensuring the same old bikes don't win the prizes every year, while encouraging the top restorers to keep producing new machines.



Steve Parr and Karen Taylor with their well-travelled Z1R, owned for 21 years. A frequent long-distance winner at VJMC events, the bike has now done 51,000 miles and has already this year picked up prizes at the Nabs Head and Heatley Shows, with Lotherton Hall next on the agenda.

# Suzukis steal the show

The VJMC National Rally at Kettering attracted a scorching selection of bikes to go with the scorching weather.

Suzukis stole the show at a scorching Kettering, with Peterborough's Heidi Cockerton running out the 'Victrix Ludorum' with her 1965 model S32.

Defying the rival attractions of Assen, Brands Hatch, Live8, various Superbikes, the National Rally and the Sheene Run, not to mention a doubtful weather forecast, the Doug Perkins-organised event once again proved a winner.

Moving the AGM to late Saturday afternoon still allowed time for two runs into the countryside beforehand. Perhaps more importantly, it allowed for a lie-in on Sunday before a more relaxed concours judging and presentation, and an earlier departure home for the longer-distance travellers. Club officials were re-elected en bloc, with members more than happy to confirm new Editor Dennis Lodge in post. A proposal to move the VJMC eligibility date out to 25 years, from the current 15, generated lively debate and gained little support when put to the vote. So we'll stay as we are all round, then!

The formalities over, members were then able to indulge in a full evening's entertainment, starting with John Kenworthy's quiz, moving on to Dodgy Doug's Double Deck Disco, two rock bands, and the infamous Somerset Cider Challenge, which kept some amused until 4am and beyond.

Defying the forecast, Sunday stayed fine all day and brought forth a crop of stunning new bikes to join some old favourites in the show line-up. Premier award is the Graham Blunden Memorial 'Masterclass', designed to encourage just that - major award-winning machines at Kettering being ineligible for anything other than the 'Masterclass' in subsequent years. This year it was the 1965 Suzuki S32 of Heidi Cockerton that took the top prize.

Latest addition to the Baldwin/Cockerton stable of stunning Suzukis is a Japanese-market K10, a utility single of the early 60s. At its first showing this took best Suzuki, best 'Tiddler', and also youngest ever

Judge Justin's special award, bringing a prize apiece to the Peterborough triumvirate! Best overall was judged as Jon Wright's Suzuki T125-II 'Stinger', followed by Chris Martin's Kawasaki Z1 and the Suzuki T250J of Steve Heyhoe. All three took home magnificent cut-glass decanters and glasses as fitting reward for their efforts. No show would be complete without some exotica from Brian McDonough, who managed no less than four trips to the podium with his bikes. Continuing the VJMC tradition of trophies that are top quality, useful and a little different, for this year winners will receive a 'Digital Dennis' photo of their bike in an engraved silver frame.

We now look forward to similar good weather for the open-to-the-public VJMC headline show at Lotherton Hall near Leeds on 7 August, where many more fine machines will be on display backed by a comprehensive Japanese Jumble.



Give that man a lollipop – second-best overall was Chris Martin from Melton Mowbray, with his immaculate Kawasaki Z1.

## RESULTS VJMC ANNUAL CONCOURS 2005

### MASTERCLASS -

#### THE GRAHAM BLUNDEN MEMORIAL TROPHY

Suzuki S32 Heidi Cockerton

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2 Kawasaki Z1 Chris Martin

3 Suzuki T250J Steve Heyhoe

#### MIKE GARNETT MEMORIAL CUP

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'Raffles'

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2 T350 Terry Hooton

3 GT750A PR Olnor

### SUZUKI - MODERN

GSX750 Kyle Lawrence

### YAMAHA - CLASSIC

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3 DT400 R Gibson

### YAMAHA - MODERN

RD200DX Jamie Allum

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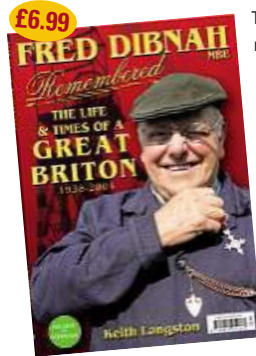
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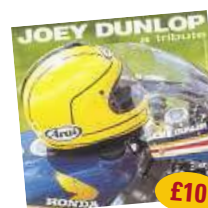
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### NO PARKING

I'm mortified to see that Scarborough Council is seeing fit to 'fine' motorcyclists yet again (see Letters, August issue).

I have been going to Scarborough for 40 years now, and I was happy to note that during the 'works' there on the sea wall the contractors did appear to be lowering the kerb to accommodate us, but it seems it was designed just to catch us out.

How about a big bike meet early one weekend to block up Scarborough, then go on to park one bike in each car parking space. How hard would that hit home? It would also be a cracking day out.

Keep up the good work.

**Pete Wright, Craig Wright and Conor Wright.**

I just received the August issue of Classic Motorcycle Mechanics. I have one complaint. I start to read, get inspired, and head into the garage before I finish an article! Regarding those b\*\*\*\*\*ds in Scarborough. Here in Melbourne, Australia, we have the right to park our bikes on ANY footpath (as long as we don't cause an obstruction and don't ride on the footpath).

A couple of times the council have tried to change the law, but then the MRA (Motorcycle Riders Association) organise a Saturday where hundreds of bikes turn up early and occupy one (car sized) space each. The council soon back off!

Keep up the good work.

**Trevor Lock, Melbourne, Australia.**

*We spoke to John Riby of Scarborough Borough Council, and he made the following response: "Scarborough has a long tradition of welcoming motorcyclists and is anxious that this relationship continues in the future. The borough council is currently pursuing new facilities for bikers near the southern end of Marine Drive, where secure and free spaces will be provided for approximately 50 bikes. This should be available for the autumn. This is in addition to other dedicated spaces around the town.*

*The on-street parking orders are, of course, enforced by the police in, hopefully, a pragmatic way. We would, however, ask bikers to act sensibly and not to encroach on to areas that might result in conflict with pedestrians and cause obstruction. This definitely would require police intervention."*

### IT MEANS MEGURO

Thanks very much for the Kawasaki SG250 article (August issue), it was a great read. As a Kawasaki enthusiast, it was good to see such a well-preserved bike getting a run. It appeared that the same bike showed up in the VJMC segment, where it was described as a '170'. What looks like a 1-7-0 on the side panel, is actually stylised Japanese Katakana script for the word Meguro.

The '1' really being 'Me', the '7' is 'gu', and the '0' is 'ro'. Katakana is one of the written forms used by the Japanese, mainly for writing foreign words.

Still, a great read, and a great magazine. Thanks.

**Jeff Eeles, by email.**

### KEEP DOING IT

**Greetings from Tasmania! Just finished reading the June issue, great effort on the part of all your team, 10 out of 10.**

**I went straight to your article on page 76 concerning the Katana project; she's looking good, although the frame bracing is like nothing I've ever seen here down under. I have several friends who have put together a few Kats, both for road and track, some stock, some highly modified but have never seen the likes of this.**

**A mate Chris had a Kat with a 1260GSXR engine with late model USD front end and monoshock rear, and the only bracing it had was for the rear shock mountings. He won his last year on the drag strip with no problems with frame flex.**



Our Katana is a hit down under.

**I've also never seen one with anything but GSXR suspension mated to it, and will be interested to see how the Kawasaki set-up handles. Once**

**again spot on magazine, keep on doing what you're doing and I'll keep reading it!**

**Geoff Taylor, Tasmania, Australia.**

### GOODBYE FOREVER

As I wrote to the editor at the time of the 'fresh new look', some smart ass, at a stroke, had destroyed the very thing that made CMM what it was. In my opinion the 'fresh new look' was more suited to the plastic rocket/boy racer brigade than us classic enthusiasts. When Bob Berry left CMM something went with him.

The articles within the magazine just do not possess the same depth of feeling – witness the idiot who rubbished the GS1000 sometime during 2004! Us classic enthusiasts want a classic magazine that befits our image, not something dreamed up by a student fresh out of Art School.

**Barry Tanner, Stowmarket, Suffolk.**

*Barry, it may have escaped your notice, but almost everyone currently writing for Mechanics (including myself) has been associated with the title for many years, and we were all pleased to have been part of Bob's team before he moved on. And our designer, Craig Lamb, is delighted to be compared to a fresh young student, but points out that he has in fact been designing Mechanics each month for the last six years.*

*I missed the 'rubbishing' of a GS1000 'sometime during 2004', so I'll be scouring my back issues to find out which idiot was responsible before issuing his P45 and sending him to the Job Centre. How dare he have an opinion different to yours? Rod.*



Designer Craig Lamb is long past his student days...

### LYMPHOMA CHARITY



The annual Wolds Run raised over £8200 for cancer charities this year.

**Regarding June edition of Classic Mechanics – As a cancer sufferer myself I would like to congratulate you for your obvious efforts that you put in to the Lymphoma charity, raising over £7800. Cancer is a filthy disease, and we never know when it is going to hit us. I honestly believe people that are unfortunate to get this illness must always think very positive, I do believe cancer kills quickly if we have negative thoughts. I was given five years to live nearly 13 years ago, but instead of thinking about it, I think about my life-long interest, motorcycles. I've just taken on another monumental task with the rebuild of my latest RD350 project. Good work with the lymphoma charity work.**

**Ed Jeffries, by email.**

*The final total raised by this year's Wolds Run was just over £8200. Keep an eye on our news pages for next year's run, planned for the first weekend in May. Rod.*





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# Riding with the gods



Ducati's 900SS V-twin was arguably one of the best sports bikes of the late 70s. John Nutting rode one soon after Hailwood's legendary TT win on a similar machine in 1978.

I was riding with the gods. Just weeks after Mike Hailwood's fantastic victory on a Ducati V-twin in the Isle of Man TT F1 race in 1978, here I was enjoying a brand-new 900SS of the type from which the winning machine had been derived.

At the time, more than a quarter of a century ago, it was the closest you could get to a race bike that you could buy for use on the road. The Japanese factories might have just started to offer better-handling high-performance machines like Suzuki's GS1000, but the Ducati was the real thing: a lightweight motorcycle stripped to the essentials that with the most basic of preparatory work could be raced successfully.

Despite the Ducati factory still being financially strapped, this was the highest pinnacle of its early history. Following a period of lean years, the Bologna-based concern had won its first world championship with the TT triumph and had started to establish a base from which it would go on to greater successes.

Until then it was clear that its lusty V-twins designed by the fabled Dr Fabio Taglioni were unrivalled for their power and flexibility. But build quality was poor. The 900 Super Sport offered in 1978 marked a turning point. This was a hot rod head-turner with a classy black and gold finish and improved detailing – exclusive to

the UK market – that could not only top 130mph but rip through the quarter-mile as quick as almost anything on two wheels. The test bike I rode also came with optional gold-finished magnesium wheels that added to the aura, but would prove to be a warranty problem.

It is arguable that this late-70s version of the Desmodromic V-twin was the factory's best-ever with bevel camshaft drives (which always offered a measure of technical one-upmanship), as distinct from the later belt-driven versions derived from the smaller Pantah. Even better than the Mike Hailwood replica versions, which were offered with full fairings and



bodywork that shared only a passing similarity to the machine raced by the great man. This had been one of a batch produced by the factory-supported NCR race team.

Until then Ducati's ever-changing management had seemed unappreciative of the talents of its chief engineer and his enthusiasm for using racing as a means to proving the quality of his designs.

Although the first prototypes of the 750cc V-twin were produced in late 1970 it took until 1973 for limited production of the first 750GT to start in earnest. Likewise, Ducati scored a legendary one-two in the 1972 Imola





200 race with Paul Smart and Bruno Spaggiari with 750cc Desmo racers, but it would take two years before in 1974 the factory produced a batch of 750SS Imola replicas, and then just 450 were made, creating one of the most collectable of production machines.

In 1975, the first 900 Super Sports models were offered – again in an even smaller limited batch – with the same 864cc engine capacity as the factory endurance racers that had won the Barcelona 24-hour race so convincingly in 1973. But it wasn't until 1976 that the 900SS became a series production model in the Ducati

range. Even then, volumes were small: the 900SS was that much a specialised machine.

But quality of finish was still a problem. Riders whose priorities focused on high-speed handling and power delivery might have regarded the poor paintwork, ignition systems and lighting as irrelevant, but by the late-70s these were issues that mattered in the sales room.

So following some prodding from UK importer Coburn and Hughes, the factory responded for the 1978 model year with a number of modifications that if not up to the standards of Japanese machines

#### DUCATI 900SS TIME LINE

1968	New Ducati managers Arnaldo Milvio and Fredmano Spairani appointed and authorize the design of two new V-twins: a 750cc V-twin and 500cc racer
1970	First 750cc prototype tested by Bruno Spaggiari and Franco Farne
1971	First 750GT model reaches the UK in August
1972	Paul Smart wins Imola 200 race on 750cc racer ahead of Spaggiari First 750 Sport shown at Paris show in October
1973	Spaggiari finishes second in Imola 200. NCR 864cc racer wins Barcelona 24-hours. Milvio and Spairani replaced at end of year
1974	750SS 'Imola replica' launched with round cases
1975	New range revealed: 900SS launched alongside 750SS with square cases: limited production
1976	900SS series production started
1978	Updated 900SS launched. Hailwood wins TT F1 title in Isle of Man
1982	Final year of 900SS production
1983	900S2 launched with revised fairing
1985	Mille S2 launched with 1000cc engine and plain bearing crank



**JUST HOW CLOSE TO STOCK WAS HAILWOOD'S TT WINNER?**



Hailwood's Formula 1 TT winner had a special frame and engine based on the NCR 750SS, shown here at the 78 Barcelona 24-hour race ridden by Victor Palomo.

According to the regulations for TT Formula racing classes, which were set up by the UK's motorcycle sporting body the ACU to enable world championships to be run in the Isle of Man after the Grand Prix series were withdrawn in 1976, machines were required to be based on quantity-produced machines available to the public. But they had to use the same number of cylinders and the stroke, leaving a barn door open for a number of modifications.

Mike Hailwood's 1978 TT Formula 1 world championship winning machine was based on a number of special Ducatis that were produced in the winter of 1977-78 by NCR, the official factory racing arm.

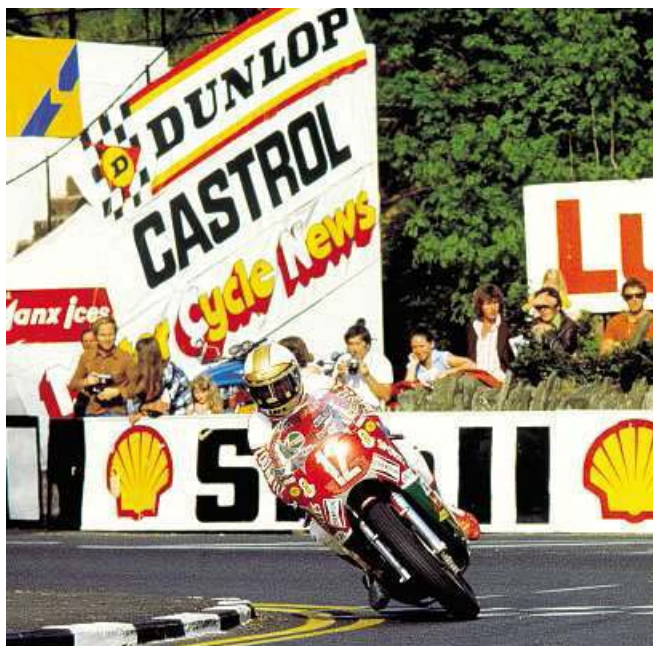
The NCR link had started with the preparation of the 1972 Imola 200 winning 750SS machines and continued with running endurance racing teams, most notably winning the 1973 Barcelona 24-hours by a hefty margin of 16 laps at the twisty Montjuic Park in the hands of Salvador Canellas and Benjamin Grau.

The NCR Ducatis for 1978 had special frames and engines based on the earlier 750SS. But these used

different castings that enabled the use of a revised sump and a cartridge, instead of a mesh, oil filter. The primary drive used straight-cut rather than helical gears and a dry clutch. For extra power, the cylinder heads were said to be modified with a narrower 63-degree rather than a 90-degree valve angle, providing a more efficient combustion chamber shape at the higher 11 to 1 (rather than 9.5) compression ratio. Inlet and exhaust valve sizes were bigger too at 43mm (39mm) and 39mm (36mm) respectively.

But these were just the starting points. Steve Wynne of Sports Motorcycles who had entered a 900SS for Roger Nicholls a year earlier in 1977 prepared Mike Hailwood's machine. The story goes that the 'works' bike for Hailwood was delivered in a condition that suggested it had just finished a gruelling race and required a complete rebuild by Wynne's team.

Nonetheless, Hailwood raced it to a popular win with a fastest lap of more than 110mph, making the Ducati the fastest four-stroke in the Isle of Man at the time.



The legendary Mike Hailwood at speed in the 1978 TT.

certainly addressed the demands of those who thought that idiosyncratic finish quality should be a thing of the past.

Apart from the back and gold paintwork, the 900SS I tested in 1978 came with an optional dual seat. Inside the fairing, the dashboard housed the ignition lock and set of bright repeater lights alongside the Smiths-made speedo and rev meter. On the left-side clip-on handlebar a newly specified switch cluster provided more sophistication compared to the flakey offerings of the past. The quartz-halogen headlamp was also up to the job called for by a 130mph road burner.

A number of changes had also been made to the iconic 90-degree V-twin, which featured the same angular outer cases first used on the 1975 Guigliaro-designed 860 GT models. Otherwise it contained the undiluted mastery of Tagliani's skills: essentially two overhead camshaft singles on a vertically split crankcase with a huge finned wet sump holding 8.8 litres of oil. Drive to the camshafts was through an intermediate shaft on the right side, which originally drove the ignition contact breakers, to spiral bevel gears and shafts connected the cylinder heads.

The crankshaft was a pressed-up affair with the one-piece connecting rods running side-by-side on needle-roller big ends. Strangely, the cylinder heads retained a relatively wide valve angle, a legacy of the production systems used for the old singles, but any deficiencies in breathing were compensated for by the Desmodromic valve gear that could, by both opening and closing the valves and unencumbered by power-sapping valve springs, accommodate much sharper lift and dwell. Bore and stroke were 86 by 74.4mm and compression ratio a hefty, for the time, 9.5 to 1.

The importers also specified the use of monster Dell'Orto carburetors with 40mm diameter throats with nothing as mundane as air filters: the only protection was a pair of gauze covers for the long inlet trumpets.

Unlike earlier versions, the gear change lever on the rear-set footrests was on the left to meet US requirements with the change mechanism in the left side behind the clutch. Otherwise the engine displayed Italian practice, with the final drive chain on the right and the primary drive on the left, with gearbox mainshaft and layshaft stacked vertically, a feature now commonplace to save space.

This model was also unencumbered by a starter motor, adding to the





image of a machine that was only to be used by those skilled enough to use its kick-start lever. Fortunately, the ignition had also been upgraded with magnetically triggered capacitor-discharge system. Not only that, you could check the timing through a small porthole in the primary drive case, dispensing with the time-honoured process of having to pull the covers and fit a degree wheel.

Provided you rotated the crank so that it was at the beginning of the longer of the gaps between the firing intervals and primed the combustion chambers by opening the carbs to operate the accelerator pumps, a firm swing on the long kick-start lever brought the booming engine into life.

Get it wrong and the chances were that you'd risk the crank bouncing back quickly enough to bruise your shin or break the mechanism.

But the thrill was in stretching over the long fuel tank, mastering the beast and then exploring its potential. In town, the straight-through Conti silencers were loud enough to inhibit opening it up much above a few thousand revs, but you could sense it straining at the leash.

The 900SS offered a peculiarly satisfying mix of handling strengths. Weighing just 450lb, with a gallon of fuel, it felt nimble at low speeds despite using steering geometry that these days would be regarded as



“GET IT WRONG AND THE CHANCES WERE THAT YOU'D RISK THE CRANK BOUNCING BACK QUICKLY ENOUGH TO BRUISE YOUR SHIN OR BREAK THE MECHANISM.”

## 900SS OWNER'S STORY

Bob Fox, 'an ordinary copper' from the Peak District, first rode a Ducati 900SS in 1981 when he was lent one for an hour when he was at Leeds University.

"Bear in mind that the owner was a chap who had come to see his girlfriend (a fellow student), didn't know me from Adam and the SS was his pride and joy," he recalls. "It was the sports bike of its era – and cost a year's wages. He just told me to go and have some fun... So I did."

He returned with backache, a big grin and a firm intention to buy one at all costs. "But things got lost in mortgages and marriages and it wasn't until I was 40 that I suddenly found I was looking at one with a view to buying it. I've now owned it for five years and won't ever part with it.

"The first production run of 250 or so 900SS machines made in the summer of 1975 are arguably better than the 'round case' 750SS as they were also built for production racing and still had race-shop-assembled engines. Rarer too! They are extremely handsome beasts – wire wheels, silver bodywork including the Imola tank and frame.

"My own bike is a 1978-79 machine in black and gold, a paint scheme produced for the UK market. It would originally have come with Speedline wheels but most were replaced under warranty as they were prone to cracking. (A friend had a rear Speedline collapse under him while at the Bol d'Or in 1982...)

"Mine has wire wheels and a single seat, which was an optional extra at the time. Various details (such as the chromed Tomaselli throttle, black

'shaved' Brembo calipers, Bosch horn etc) indicate that it is a 1978/9 build as opposed to the W-registration, which was in March 81. Not unusual for Ducati at that time.

"I took the indicators off ages ago but have now ordered some bar-end ones – which will look much better than the originals. I don't miss the indicators as I don't spend much time in town anyway.

"It's fitted with stainless Keihan exhausts for day-to-day use – the untrained eye and ear will mistake them for Contis anyway. I have a set of those tucked away in the loft for 'Sunday best' along with a set of Speedline wheels awaiting refurbishment (show only, not for riding!).

"I run the carbs with K&N filters and slightly smaller main jets (145 front, 148 rear) though I have a set of bellmouths for track days – they make lovely intake noises!

"The riding position is fine for a few hours in the seat but eventually my thighs start to complain. Suspension is okay at the back: Konis replaced the rock-hard Marzocchis, but the front fork needs sorting.

"Starting is a routine that you get into after a while. The early bikes did not have chokes but had to be flooded. So it's kit on, spin rear wheel to check it's in neutral (the lights sometimes lie), tickle carbs, footrest up, kick-start out and turn over onto compression – then turn the ignition on and lunge...

"Usually it starts first or second kick from cold (unless you are half-hearted about it) or hot, but can



be a pig when only warm. There is also the potential embarrassment factor to take into account. It usually misbehaves in front of a crowd – especially a knowledgeable one. Two that spring to mind are the busy car park of the Motorcycle Museum car park and the Quarter Bridge pub during TT week...

"What annoys me is that it just reinforces the stereotype about unreliable Italian bikes."



normal for a cruiser. With a shallow head angle of 30.5 degrees and a long 59.5-inch wheelbase, the 900SS was highly stable at speed, a characteristic enhanced by the triangulated tubular steel frame.

On grippy Michelin M45 tyres, you could carve through bends in complete confidence, so much so that it was all too easy to touch down the exhaust pipes and kick-lever boss. The stability of the chassis was so good that it exposed the weakness of the Marzocchi rear shocks, which were stiff when cold yet allowed the rear end to wallow in fast bends, not that it felt worrying. In contrast the Marzocchi telescopic front fork was softer yet offered just the right amount of control. But the deliberate steering called for careful selection of lines through bends.

At speed the rising position was pure racer, for the period, the fairing lifting the breeze over your helmet and providing just the right weight on the wrists. With just 1000 miles on the clock, the bike's gear change had yet to loosen up and the clutch dragged enough to make neutral tricky to locate.

At MIRA's proving ground in the Midlands, to which the weekly paper Motor Cycle had access, the 900SS would turn out to be the quickest all-round Ducati V-twin I'd tested.

This was primarily because it was set up with 36/15 final drive gearing that equated to 8000rpm at 130mph in top gear. This optimum gearing was lower than that used on the MHR900 and improved acceleration through the gears.

Aerodynamics helped too. You could casually reach and happily cruise at 100mph with 6000rpm on the clock, the roaring exhaust lost in the wind and the whining of the bevels and the gasping of the carbs reflected up from the engine bay.

Although Ducati quoted the peak power as 80bhp at 7000rpm at the



crank, it came with a broad spread with the peak torque at 5800rpm. Through the gears it was clear that it thrived from being revved and was happy to pull to 8500.

On the 1000-yard timing straight with a slight tail wind it revved to more than 8000 in top to clock a best of 131.6mph with a two-way mean of 128.3mph, putting the

Ducati in the same league as Suzuki's GS1000 and Kawasaki's Z1R. Acceleration was quick off the mark too, reaching 60mph in 3.5sec, 100mph in 10sec, and completing the quarter-mile in 12.7sec with a terminal of 106.8mph.

Braking from the triple Brembo discs was remarkable too, both for their potency in the dry (26.5ft from 30mph was right up with the best) and for their unusually poor performance in the wet, which went unexplained.

Also remarkable was the 900 Super Sport's frugal fuel consumption. In the constant speed tests at MIRA, it clocked 55mpg at 70mph, 72mpg at 50mph and an amazing 88mpg at 30mph, which although hardly practical backed up the overall figure of just under 50mpg. With four gallons available in the tank, this provided a rare combination: a fast and thrilling cross-country machine that could maintain high average speeds and that could also reach almost 200 miles between top ups. Just right for emulating your TT hero.

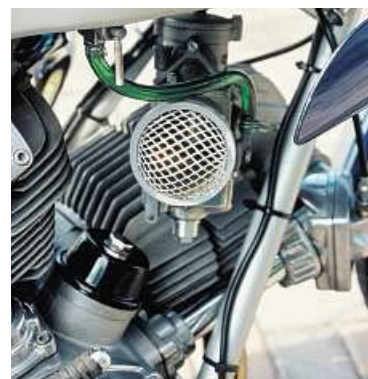
**PERFORMANCE DATA**



All figures compiled at Motor Industry Research Association's proving ground, Nuneaton, Warwickshire.

model	Ducati 900SS	Ducati MHR 900
date of test	July 1978	1982
reg no	YRO 450S	na
mean top speed	128.3mph	126.9mph
best one-way speed	131.6mph	130.6mph
mean normally seated	119.1mph	114.6mph
standing quarter-mile (mean, sec/mph)	12.7sec/106.8mph	3.33sec/102.55mph
braking distance from 30mph	26.5ft (8.08m)	na
Speedo accuracy, actual mph at indicated		
30	25.2	27.9
50	42.2	46.6
70	59.9	65.7
test weight (1 gal fuel)	451lb	480lb
overall fuel consumption (mpg)	49.9mpg	na
note	Gearing 36/15	33/15





## SPECIFICATION DUCATI 900SS

### POWER

engine	Air-cooled 90-deg V-twin
capacity	864cc (86 x 74.4mm)
valve operation	Desmodromic overhead camshaft
compression ratio	9.5 to 1
lubrication	Wet sump, capacity 5 litres
ignition	Coil, electronically triggered
carburation	Two 40mm Dell'Orto PHM
peak power	80bhp at 7000rpm
peak torque	63.5ft-lb at 5800rpm
primary drive	Helical gears
primary ratio	70/32
clutch	Wet multiplate
gearbox	Five speed
internal ratios	2.237, 1.562, 1.204, 1.00 and 0.887 to 1
final drive	530 chain
final drive ratio	36/15
overall ratios	11.74, 8.20, 6.32, 5.25 and 4.66 to 1.
electrical system	Bosch alternator, 60/55-watt halogen headlamp
battery	12v 12Ah

### CHASSIS

frame	Duplex welded tubular, incorporating engine
front suspension	Marzocchi telescopic fork
rear suspension	Pivoted rear fork, twin Marzocchi shocks
front wheel	Speedline, cast-magnesium alloy 2.15 x 18in
rear wheel	Speedline, cast-magnesium alloy 2.5 x 18in
front tyre	Michelin M45, 350 V18
rear tyre	Michelin M45, 425/85 V18
front brake	Brembo twin perforated discs, 11in diameter brake
rear brake	Brembo disc, 11in diameter

### DIMENSIONS

fuel tank	18 litres (4 gallons)
wheelbase	1,510mm (59.5in)
seat height	800mm (31.5in)
castor angle	59.5 degrees
trail	121mm (4.75in)
weight	205 kg (451lb) with a gallon of fuel

### CONTACTS

Ducati Owners' Club GB:	www.docgb.org
	Secretary, Andrew Jones, 57 Cliffe Lane South, Baildon, Shipley, West Yorks BD17 5LB. Tel. 01274 410916.
Ducati Bevelheads	www.ducatimeccanica.com

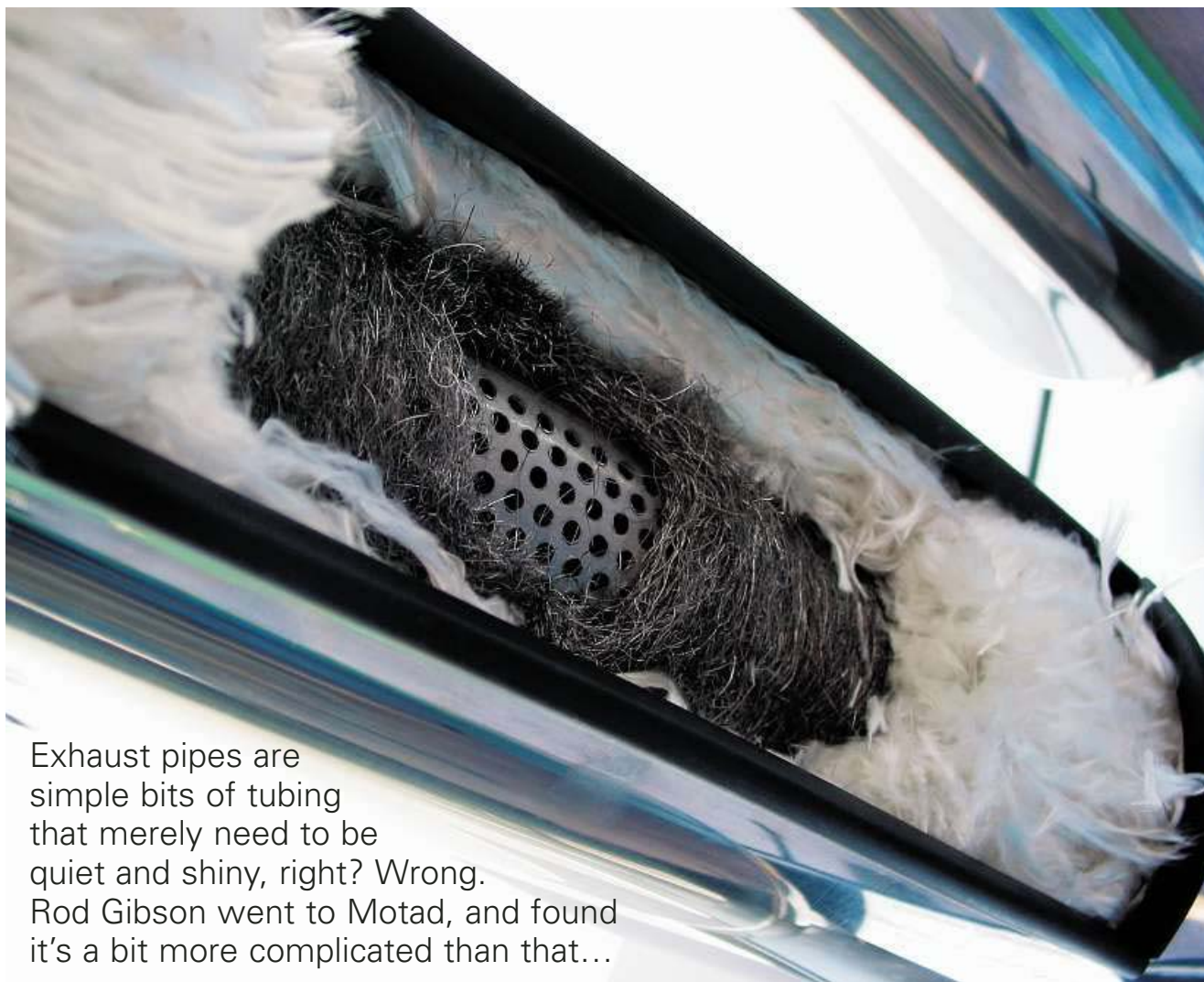
## COMPARISONS

	Price (1978)	Max mph	Fuel mpg	St quarter-mile sec/mph
Ducati 900SS	£2499	128.3	49.9	12.7/106.8
Laverda Jota	£2613	136.5	32.5	13.0/111.6
Suzuki GS1000	£1875	131.7	44.9	12.4/110.3
Kawasaki Z1R	£2009	127.2	40.9	12.6/106.3
BMW R100S	£2521	117.1	45.1	13.8/100.2
Moto Guzzi Le Mans	£2015	123.4	39.6	14.0/98.9





# Passing gas



WORDS/PHOTOS: Rod Gibson

Exhaust pipes are simple bits of tubing that merely need to be quiet and shiny, right? Wrong. Rod Gibson went to Motad, and found it's a bit more complicated than that...

For many years, I more or less ignored exhaust systems. By that, I mean that as long as the pipes looked presentable and weren't too rusty to fail an MoT I never gave them another thought. But, in a deep, dark corner of my mind, I've long been aware that exhaust system design can make a lot of difference to a bike's performance and efficiency, and fitting an after-market system is much more than just nailing on something that looks tasty and makes more noise. When exhaust specialists Motad invited me over to their factory in sunny Walsall to have a system made up for our project Katana, I took the opportunity to find out a bit more.

Factory fitted exhaust systems reduce the amount of noise produced by making the gas travel a greater effective distance than the length of the system. The length governs the frequency of the sound emitted by an exhaust pipe. The longer the length of the pipe, the lower the frequency. As engine rpm has increased over the years, the length of the exhaust pipe for any particular engine

configuration has shortened. Systems of this type will have some kind of internal baffle arrangement, frequently a chamber containing a series of overlapping pipes. Forcing the gas to travel back and forth along these pipes before escaping effectively lengthens the pipe, and helps reduce noise.

But any baffles will introduce backpressure into the system, and the gas has to overcome this backpressure to escape. If this backpressure can be reduced then it may follow that more power can be generated. Reduced pressure will enable the gases to leave more quickly leaving room for the next incoming cycle and thus increasing power.

Race exhausts that are too noisy to be road legal tend to use a straight through silencer so as not to interrupt the gas flow. These designs use internal perforated pipes along which the gas flows. As the gas enters the silencer it expands through the perforations in the tube into the silencer body. This space is packed with noise absorptive material, usually a fibreglass wrapping. The more sophisticated types use acoustic material woven into a mat-like structure so there are no loose fibres, which can be lost in use. The density of the packing is critical, too dense and it will not absorb any noise since the gas will not be able to expand. If the material is too loose there will

not be enough to react with the gases and reduce the noise level.

But noise control is only part of the picture. The engine designer seeks to create a negative pressure at the exhaust valve during the overlap period when both inlet and exhaust valves are open. To achieve this he designs an exhaust system that resonates at a particular rpm, and uses the pressure waves or pulses reflected by the ends of the pipes to modify the pressure at the exhaust valve. By coupling two or more of the header pipes together, the interaction between the pulses created by each cylinder modifies the pressure characteristics at any given rpm. But why is the designer seeking to keep this pressure anyway? The answer has to do with efficient cylinder filling; a little back pressure will stop the incoming fresh charge rushing straight out of the open exhaust valve during the overlap period, so tuning the back pressure will, in fact, result in more power and more efficiency. Which finally answers all those questions about why some motorcycle exhausts have balance pipes, and why some don't, and the likely effect of blanking them off. Anecdotal evidence also seems to indicate that a lack of back pressure, and subsequent increase in the speed of the exhaust gas passing out of the port, can overheat the exhaust valve and lead to valve seat burning.

## CONTACTS

Motad can be contacted on 01922 725559, or by email at [sales@motad.co.uk](mailto:sales@motad.co.uk) or check out their websites at [www.motad.co.uk](http://www.motad.co.uk) and [www.venomexhausts.com](http://www.venomexhausts.com)



Do a compression check on any high mileage Jap four which has run a four into one system for an extended period of time, and note how the compression falls off on one side of the engine first, usually the side with the longer header pipes. This does indicate that the longer pipe allows the exhaust valve to get hotter and begin to pit the valve seat.

The physics of back pressure works like this. When the exhaust valve opens after combustion a high pressure, positive pulse travels down the header pipes at the speed of sound. When it reaches a change in the pipe, such as a join with another pipe, a negative pulse is reflected back towards the engine. If the primary length of the pipe is correct the pulse will arrive at the exhaust valve just as it starts to close in the valve overlap period. This induces a greater pressure or scavenging effect across the valve. The dead gasses are dragged out more quickly and space created for the new. This effect will be maximised at one engine speed only, because it takes the same amount of time for the pulse to travel along the pipe, whereas the time between the valve opening and starting to close will vary with engine speed.

The method by which the header pipes are combined can broaden the effect of the optimum primary length. If all pipes come together as a four into one, the effect is emphasised at the top end of the rev range, improving power there. A four into two into one system shows broader effects down the rev range and is generally used to eliminate holes or dips in an engine's power curve at a given point. In general, the longer the primary pipe lengths are, the lower down the rev range the

optimum effect will be achieved.

Pipe diameter is also important. If it is too big at the start the gas velocity will drop, resulting in poor scavenging and power loss. The design of the collector, where the individual pipes come together, also affects the power curve. When the exhaust gases reach a change in cross sectional area such as at a collector, a positive pressure pulse is reflected back towards the engine. Such a positive pulse will tend to cancel out some of the negative pulse that the optimised primary pulse has created. This effect needs to be minimised, and careful collector design can make the positive pulses negligible. And if that's not enough, the amount of heat retained by the exhaust system will change the speed of sound within the system, and the gases will effectively see a shorter pipe. This will move the peak power up the rev range.

If all this hasn't put you off applying for a job as an exhaust system designer, just add considerations like ground clearance and access to oil drain bolts and filters, then make the system look good too. What once seemed like a bit of bent tubing begins to resemble a mammoth triumph of engineering and physics.

And one final question I had about the advantages of stainless steel over mild steel rapidly exploded another myth. There is stainless steel and stainless steel, it seems, and some cheap systems are made in 409-grade stainless which will corrode. The best stuff is 304 stainless, which won't. Motad have years of experience making both street legal and performance exhaust systems and still carry large stocks of four into ones for classic Jap bikes. They're also happy to



Motad's Rob Limbrick demonstrates the internal baffle assemblies used in traditional silencers for road use.

undertake one-off systems in house, and can even run the bike on their own dyno for before and after comparisons. Certainly the one-off system they produced in only a few hours for our Katana gave a measurable power boost, and contributed in no small way to the improving performance of the bike on the drag strip.

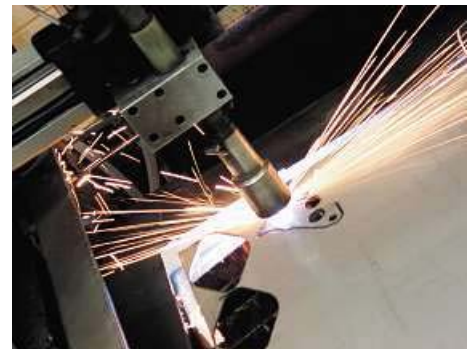
My thanks are due to Rob Limbrick and all the staff at Motad for showing me round and answering some of my dafter questions, and the tea was pretty good too!



Artistry in metal. These pipe sections are carefully hand cut and welded to make a one-off exhaust system at the Motad factory.



For production, jigs are made for each system to clamp everything up squarely before welding.



This plasma cutter slices through stainless sheet to make mounting brackets and collars.



Motad carry huge stocks of exhausts for classic Jap bikes.



Despite specialised CNC pipe bending machinery, a lot of good old-fashioned skill still goes into making exhaust headers.



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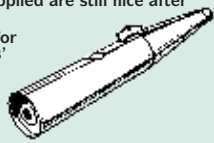
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Alastair McFarlane, MCI Tours

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3.25-19 54H	TK22 SUPER-TWIN	F	TL

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110/90-18 61H	TKV12	R	TL
120/90-18 65H	TKV12	R	TL
100/90-19 57H	TKV11	F	TL

### TKV11 & TKV12 CONTI-SPORTS ( V-RATED )

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110/90-16 59V	TKV11	F	TL
120/80-16 60V	TKV11	F	TL
130/90-16 67V	TKV12	R	TL
150/80-16 71V	TKV12	R	TL
110/80-17 57V	TKV11	F	TL
130/90-17 68V	TKV12	R	TL
140/80-17 69V	TKV12	R	TL
100/90-18 56V	TKV11	F	TL
110/80-18 58V	TKV11	F	TL
110/90-18 61V	TKV11	F	TL
120/90-18 65V	TKV12	R	TL
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# Show **S**rd500 - yZR500 replica Stoppers

The many bikes on display at shows can grab your attention for a whole host of different reasons. It may be their pristine restoration or even a similarity to your own machinery, either past or present. Nigel Kimber's Grand Prix YZR500 immediately smacks as something that just should not even be there. Top-level race bikes are rare, seldom seen away from the closely guarded paddocks and

workshops, and certainly not something you would stumble across at a classic bike event.

Of course it isn't a real one, rather an RD500-powered replica. Most people, however, would probably not guess its true origins even after minutes of close inspection, it really is that well assembled. The engine has been professionally shoehorned into a TZR250 chassis, which is then supported by top-notch running gear taken from a whole host of machinery. The forks are Ohlins originally meant for an Aprilia RSV Mille R while the rear end is once again Ohlins, intended for a CBR600. Marchesini wheels and Brembo brakes complete the Moto GP look and convince all that they are looking at something Max Biaggi might have ridden.

The bulk of the bodywork has been copied directly from an ex-Luca Cadalora race fairing, which was then modified to fit the TZR chassis, while the tail unit was originally an Aprilia race seat reshaped to mimic the immediately identifiable rear of the 2001 works Yamaha. Harry Barlow made the sweeping expansion chambers to finish off the pure GP look convincingly. The silencers do have some genuine Grand Prix provenance as they are taken from an RGV Suzuki once ridden by the 500cc champion of

2000, Kenny Roberts Jnr.

While we can identify the origins of the various parts relatively easily, the motivation behind the project is more difficult to nail down. "It all started when a friend bought a similar TZR250/500 hybrid. The work hadn't been done well and I knew I could do a better job of it," said Nigel. "I just had to build my own, chiefly as an advert for my fabrication and machining business, NK racing, but also to provide something a little faster than my 350LC special when I do track days. The project went reasonably smoothly, or at least as easy as any special can ever be. The only real problem came right at the end of the project when getting the bike to look right, adjusting ride heights etc, so the silhouette matched that of the pukka YZR500. It was only then I noticed that the wheelbase was becoming far too abrupt and would have been unstable at anything like a decent speed. This required some lengthening of the swing arm to correct and now all is well." Nigel Kimber is a perfectionist, as can be seen by examples of his work that adorn virtually every RD special in far corners of the UK and beyond. His YZR replica is a fine example of his workmanship and attention to detail; he already has orders for four more to be built.





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FULL ON

# Thumper

Dave Newitts XT500 supermoto is based on a 30 year old bike, but could still give some of the latest bikes a good thrashing, reckons Chris Pearson.

It is quite something when you can radically improve both the performance and handling of a seventies machine. What is even more special is if, while carrying out those extensive modifications, you can still retain most, if not all of the original spirit and feel at the same time.

This is exactly what Dave Newitt of the Thumper Club has achieved with his superb XT500 Supermoto machine. The engine is pure XT and yet, thanks to a few crucial improvements, it has a significantly

more modern, and rev happy, style about it.

The chassis too, is unmistakably XT, with the standard frame cradle remaining intact and yet, with some very trick stuff now hanging off each end, immeasurably improving the stopping and handling. All Dave has done is remove lots of the standard parts and replaced them with newer and more up to date stuff, and yet the weight has just fallen off.

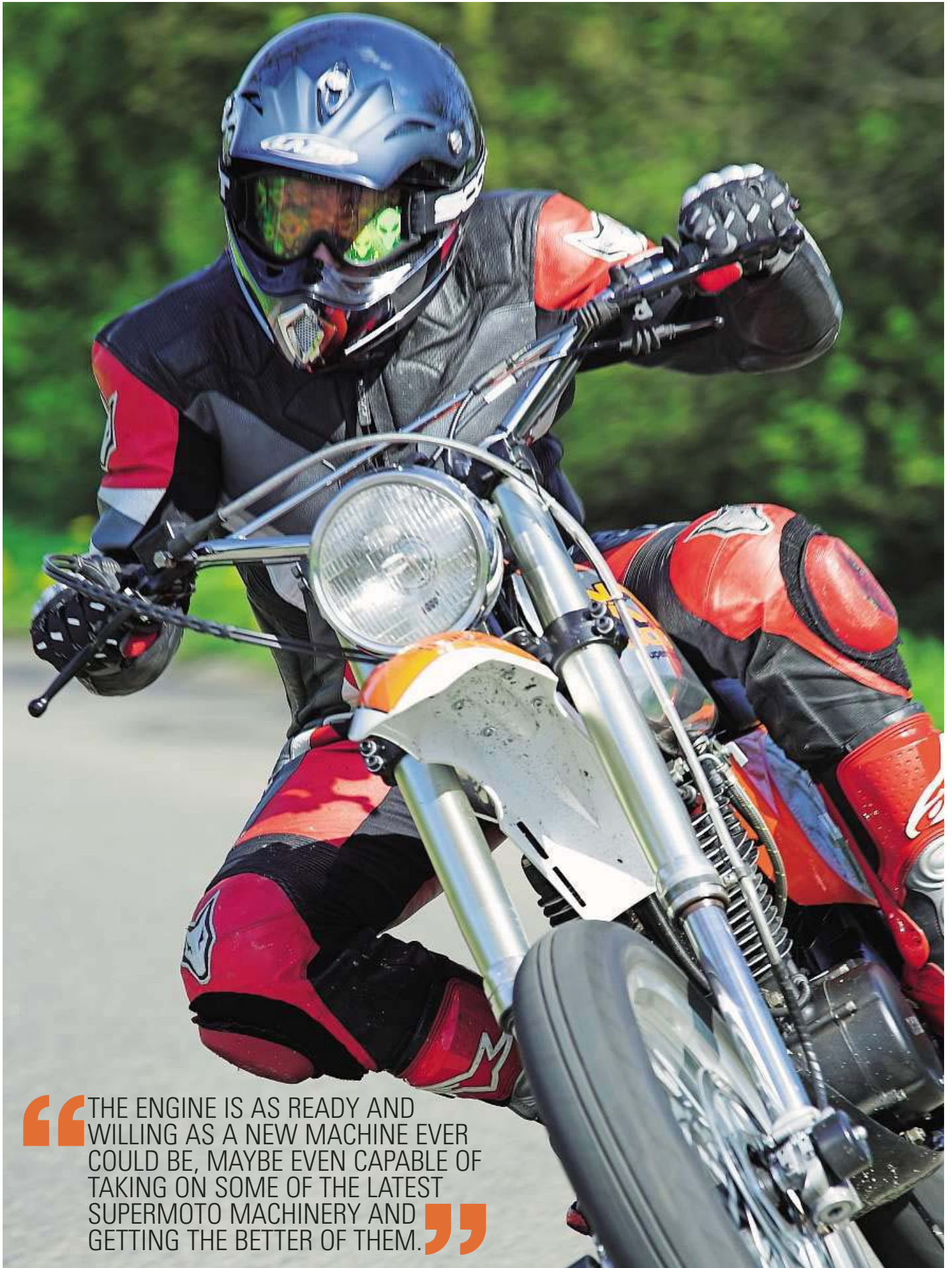
Weighing around 60 pounds less than an XT should, the Supermoto makes for quite a performer. Not having to











“THE ENGINE IS AS READY AND WILLING AS A NEW MACHINE EVER COULD BE, MAYBE EVEN CAPABLE OF TAKING ON SOME OF THE LATEST SUPERMOTO MACHINERY AND GETTING THE BETTER OF THEM.”



haul so much chassis around is a big bonus for an engine producing so little horsepower in the first place. The result is a thumpy, tractable machine that could "have a go" at any new Supermoto machine and yet, still slip back into a time of flared jeans and cut off denim jackets without attracting too much attention.

Dave originally bought the donor machine as a source of spares for the immaculate restoration seen in CMM issue 214, the plan was to strip the machine down and move on to the parts that remained via eBay. Once robbed of the necessary parts the remaining bike was still complete enough to start his brain thinking what if? With so many restorers seeking the holy grail of as new, or even better than, condition, Dave decided to show how you could keep the original looks without having to source the difficult to find, and often prohibitively expensive genuine parts. With the XT having more racy siblings in the HL and TT models the decision what to do was an easy one. Dave decided to build a full on Supermoto machine, using as many Yamaha parts from other machines as possible, with the emphasis on creating a fun machine.

The Supermoto began life as an American spec model imported to the UK. Thankfully it had been well cared for by its previous owner, having received a Wunderlich twin oil feed conversion to the rocker box area and many similar updates before Dave got his hands on it. The motor was damn fast too; a quick spin up the road soon revealed the work was not just external; this one was a real flyer.

The end result, after just six weeks of intense work, is the XT Supermoto seen here. Some problems did arise, like the wider rear wheel and tyre fouling both the swing arm and brake torque arm, but ace mechanic Dave quickly sorted these, eventually getting the Yam frame to accept a wider swing arm. Once a pair of YZ250 yolks had been grafted onto the front end, 50mm YZ 250, up side down, forks were slid in place enabling the use of a 240mm disc and a Nissin brake caliper replacing the tiny, single leading shoe, drum stopper of the XT. Spacers were machined up to fill the 5mm gap between the 55mm fork yolks and the fork legs, as the parts are from different models of YZ, even so they work very well together.

Using galvanised spokes provided by Central wheels, Dave rebuilt the wheels himself. The original rear hub and the YZ250 front item was laced to Takasago rims, this allowed the use of wider, smaller diameter tyres, more in keeping with the Supermoto



ethos. The new wheels were fitted with grippy radial rubber, the result is a sharp steering machine that can be thrown around on the road as if it were a fraction of the size it actually is.

Aesthetically pleasing to the eye and equally nice to ride, the XT performs the tasks of the original and much, much more. Despite looking well thought out and the subject of lengthy planning meetings, the orange and aluminium tank wasn't actually meant to be. The original plan was to get the bare aluminium anodised, however, an accident early on in the building resulted in a dent near the filler cap and the only option was to paint the upper section. Once again, Dave has made the best of the situation, the resulting colour scheme is striking and, at the same time, a homage to the XT. Simply by thinking in straight lines and logically, Dave over came the few niggling problems he encountered and the result is plain to see. The livery is enhanced further with a cut down front universal mudguard, while the standard side panels and rear guard remain intact. The flashes of orange and custom made logos finishing the job of nicely.

Once the project was something like complete the initial road testing began. Right at the top of the early failures was the standard Yam clutch that simply could not cope with the rigours placed upon it by the extra horses. An EBC heavy-duty kit,





comprising of plates and springs, was fitted and, since that time, nothing further has been heard from that department. In use the engine is "good old dependable" XT but, as if on steroids, much more willing to go. Throttle response from the 34mm Mikuni carburettor is instant, as is the lurch forward, stretching arms to the max and sliding the rider rearwards, greatly exacerbating the wheelie ability in the process. Off the gas for a corner and you can't load the front wheel as much as a modern Supermoto machine due to the excessive weight and positioning of the big Yamaha lump. What you can do though is ride it a like a conventional road going machine and keep the wheels more in line, making the most of the grip to get the power down

in the process. The horsepower is up by half as is the torque, which peaks at a staggeringly low 2500 rpm. Wheelies off the throttle can be had in the first three gears and one must show great care when cracking that throttle open while leaning as the front wheel will just leave the tarmac and head for the skies. This will happen regardless of the angle you have the bike over at, just get ready to lean even further still to reduce the understeer this process creates.

It was while pushing the cornering abilities to the limit that we found the only potential fault with the Supermoto XT. The rear Avon Azaro AV26 tyre is the largest that can be fitted within the swing arm, but this is still not wide enough to correctly fit the wheel

“WHEELIES OFF THE THROTTLE CAN BE PULLED IN THE FIRST THREE GEARS AND THE BIKE DEMANDS GREAT CARE WHEN CRACKING THAT THROTTLE OPEN AS THE FRONT WHEEL WILL JUST LEAVE THE TARMAC AND HEAD FOR THE SKIES.”





rim. The profile isn't quite right as the rim is a little too wide and a few times during the test we found ourselves running off the edge of the tread. This was at its worst when low down in the rev range as the torque was enjoying greater leverage over the tormented rubber. Massive power slides were the result though, the engine allowing superb control over them for the maximum grin factor to be had. For those a little less disposed to such riding, it is a simple matter of lifting the bike up, a few degrees onto the fatter part of the rear tyre, before hitting the go button, I just couldn't help myself. Just in case you do get it wrong large plastic crash bobbins are fitted at each corner of the bike to stop excessive damage.



Every inch covered while riding on the Supermoto is matched by a super wide smile, this bike delivers fun by the bucket load. Of course, it is in its element being thrown from left to right, and back again, down a twisty B road, or leaping over hump backed bridges. Checking out the top speed shows it is no slouch either should you wish to travel further a field. I would imagine however, that the vibration from the big single might get a little fatiguing over long journeys, you don't notice it along country lanes as you are having too much fun to be bothered by such things, get a long A road however and your mind would be less pre occupied.

With cycle parts chosen from a number of sources the result could have been a disaster, thankfully this isn't so and the machine handles superbly. Steering is far sharper than any road legal XT I've ever previously encountered, no doubt a combination of the jacked up rear, and the profile of modern Radial rubber. Sitting as high on the road as this machine does could have proved troublesome but Dave has thought long and hard about this motorcycle. To help the rider maintain a good foot hold when not moving, two inches of foam have been removed from the padding before being recovered with a custom made seat cover, complete with matching orange piping. Extra height would not usually be a benefit to the age old problem of getting an XT to burst into life, the precarious technique of balancing on one leg while you prod the starter with the other is never a good one on a standard machine, let alone one even further away from terra firma. Thankfully this pepped up machine is a cracking starter and struck up first time, every time. In fact it never missed a beat during our time on it. Quite surprisingly the ignition is unmodified, still retaining the points and coil set up as originally fitted by Yamaha. It works and clearly, very well, all the way up the extended rev range that this machine enjoys.

### STUNNING SOUND TRACK

Of course no production is complete without a stunning sound track and this bike doesn't disappoint. A K&N filter is all that separates the outside world from the inlet side of the engine while a short and stocky, cut down, Scorpion end can does little to calm the explosions going off with every other revolution of the crank. Attaching the silencer to the head is a custom-made stainless steel header pipe, which is nicely colouring up thanks to the heat process.

And it carries little in the way of social niceties. A digital speedo, actuated by a metal weight attached to the brake disc, provides enough information to keep your license intact, while mounted on the head light shell are the neutral, high beam and oil warning lights. This integration of components keeps the slim styling as neat as possible and is typical of Dave's approach to the whole concept.

Dave is pleased with his latest creation and he should be. Without a firm idea or plan in mind about the end result, he has got stuck in and reacted to each and every problem positively.

The Supermoto looks every inch an XT500 and yet, more alert and ready for action. The engine, now thirty years old, is as ready and willing as a new machine ever could be, maybe even capable of taking on some of the latest Supermoto machinery and getting the better of them.

It certainly sounds as good as anything else out there.



### SPECIFICATION YAMAHA XT500 SUPERMOTO

POWER	
engine	4 stroke single cylinder aircooled SOHC US spec 1E6 model
capacity	499.35cc
bore & stroke	87mm x 84mm
compression ratio	9:1
carburation	34mm Mikuni
max power	45 bhp @7500 rpm
torque	37ft lb @ 2500 rpm
ignition	Contact breaker
transmission	Five speed, wet clutch
starter	Kick ( and pray)

CHASSIS	
frame	Steel single down tube
front suspension	50mm telescopic USD forks,
rear suspension	Hagon hydraulic shocks 4 way spring pre load
front wheel	120/70 x 17
rear wheel	140/80 x 17
front brake	240mm disc nissin caliper
rear brake	150 mm single leading shoe

DIMENSIONS	
wheelbase	1415mm
weight	115 kgs
fuel capacity	8.8 ltrs inc 2 ltr reserve
top speed	94 mph

### CONTACT

[www.yamaha-xt500.co.uk](http://www.yamaha-xt500.co.uk)





In the final part of our Hodaka story, the Road Toad, Dirt Squirt and Thunderdog join forces to survive against the onslaught from Honda and Yamaha.



# of Road Toads & Dirt Squirts

From 1973, Hodaka's idiosyncratic model designations and promotional material went wild. Wes Jackson, of Nanaimo, British Columbia, started selling Hodakas from his basement in 1973 before establishing a dealership that sold Hodakas until 1979. "They were quite an interesting company," Jackson said. "They were always coming up with some cute little gadget, cartoons, calendars, that sort of stuff. It was good for business."

As Swanson explained, the promotional force, Marvin Foster, 'has a tremendous imagination and was able to get away with that stuff when our conservative bosses weren't looking'.

He went on: "Don Koch, 68, of E&K Cycle Sales in Sweet Spring, Missouri, started his dealership in 1967 in my wife's uncle's garage with two bikes and \$50 worth of spare parts." Today E&K Cycle purports to hold the world's largest inventory of NOS and used

Hodaka parts. In spite of this stature in the new age of Hodaka, it's still a mom-and-pop operation. "My wife can just about answer any question I can," he said.

Koch says he acquired the massive inventory from one of the 12 US distributors, Bill's Hodaka of Mexico, Missouri, after Pabatco locked their doors. "We were selling bikes by the turtleloads around here and I didn't think it was right to leave the customers high and dry," stated Koch.

At the same time, Wheels of Time in Pennsylvania acquired the rest of Pabatco's inventory, eight freight cars full, sourced from the US, Canada, and Australia. Regrettably, their warehouse burned down in 1981, damaging or destroying much of the contents, thus clearing out the world's motherlode of Hodaka spares. What wasn't melted or ruined was sold to John Fisher, a Pennsylvania Hodaka dealer.

Meanwhile, the Missouri distributor badly wanted out of the now-defunct Hodaka business. While the two men were sitting around Koch's back yard, Koch offered to 'bring all the stuff here, straighten it out, pay the advertising, and split it down the middle'. In response Bill jumped out of his lawn chair and ran home to pack up his inventory before Koch could change his mind. "That put us with 5000ft of shelves with Hodaka parts - and that's not counting no big parts," Koch said.

Of Hodaka's demise, Koch said: "Shell Oil's got economists sitting around and they don't necessarily care what's going to happen tomorrow or the next year, but they do care what's five and 10 years down the road. And they didn't like what they were seeing."

By the mid-70s the economists

probably saw a lot not to like. In 1973 floating exchange rates were introduced and, in an unregulated currency market, the Japanese yen started rising rapidly against the US dollar. Prior to that, the yen-dollar exchange was fixed at 360. Today it hovers at something closer to 100 yen to the dollar. Matching prices with the 'Big Four' became more and more difficult for Pabatco.

They launched the 100c 'Road Toad' in 1975 at a competitive \$529 when Swanson says they really needed to sell them at around \$1200 to make a reasonable profit. The more diversified corporations like Honda, for instance, 'could give away their 125s while profiting from the Gold Wings and cars'. And Yamaha could sell you a piano if you weren't in the market for a motorcycle, Koch added.

To twist the screws further, this was also the dawn of the long travel suspension age and single-shock technology. Manufacturers like Kayaba, Showa and KYB were reserving the newest technology for the 'Big Four'. Overproduction would glut the market through to the early 80s, land use restrictions bounded the endless mountain trails and wide-open desert riding typical of the conditions Hodakas were designed for.

The last new model, the 1978 Hodaka 175 SL (street legal) came out on stage just before the curtain closed. Production ended after 700 units. "They had their act flat together with that bike," recalls Koch, while looking at one on his shop floor with only 147 miles showing on the odometer.

Other than that, Koch's favourite model is the mildly tuned 100cc Dirt Squirt that came out in 1973. "It gave you all the

WORDS/PHOTOS: Darrell Ohs



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basics you needed to trail ride right there – and it had that tough old 100cc engine sitting in her.” But the Road Toad, which is the street legal version of the Dirt Squirt, doesn’t garner as much praise from him: “The Road Toad? Right. Well, they was OK... I guess.”

1975 saw the first totally new Hodaka design, the 250cc Thunderdog enduro bike. Two years later the Thunderdog SL emerged for street trail riding. The aforementioned, but otherwise nameless, 175SL was built from a sleeved-down Thunderdog motor paired with a 125 Wombat chassis. As a postscript, the last year also saw the creation of the smallest Hodaka, a minicycle for kids called the Dirt Squirt 80, just before Shell Oil pulled the plug on the Pabatco-Hodaka connection.

“That was a real, real neat little bike with lots of trick things but unfortunately those are wicked rare,” said Paul Stannard, 47, of Strictly Hodaka, Rhode Island. “The 175s and 80s were imported after Hodaka knew they were done so, as far as replacement parts, there’s barely nothing.”

Stannard is the ‘spark plug’ behind the Hodaka revival, said Foster. Stannard got back into Hodakas in 1987, after a having a Dirt Squirt 100 as a teenager. The sausage-maker and deli owner found the old twin-shock Hodaka magic and charisma were still spellbinding across the passage of time and technology. Over the next few years he managed to track down and phone some of the old Pabatco guard. “These are great bikes!” Foster recalls Stannard telling him, “and I want to resurrect them!”

Everybody I spoke with from any point in the timeline of Hodaka gives kudos to Stannard for bringing the brand back from the ashes. “It’s not just me,” rebutted Stannard. “Honest to gosh, there’s a bunch of people that are all a part of this. I might be the loudmouth, or the front man, but there’s a team of us that all work together.”

Strictly Hodaka began as a hobby in 1987 when people were just happy to give away their orphaned machines and parts to clear out their garages and basements. Stannard began buying Hodaka parts to support his new hobby of collecting and restoring and then reselling the extra and surplus pieces. In the early 90s, word got round that he sometimes had parts for sale.



Hodaka celebrate their 10,000th machine in June 1966.

Then he got involved in reproducing the rare and non-existing parts to keep his bikes running, and selling the rest of the small production runs to other collectors.

Stannard also required the balance of the fire sale inventory from John Fisher. As Strictly Hodaka bolted forward with unanticipated acceleration, Stannard and his wife, Patti, had a rough ride running the sausage company and deli as well. As for this logjam, Stannard said: “It was overwhelming – I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy.”

No longer an eccentric little endeavour, the remnants of the little motorcycle company regrouped and started charging the hill again. Hodaka, it seemed, just wouldn’t stay down. Stannard sold the sausage factory and deli in 1993 to get a grip on the runaway hobby and tame it into a legitimate business.

What drives people’s devotion to an obsolete and nearly extinct twin-shock line-up of trail bikes? “Back in the 60s and 70s, everybody got their start on a Hodaka,” explained Stannard. “Most of my customers are in their forties and fifties and sixties and they want to turn the clock back 30 or 40 years when things were a little bit simpler and a little more fun... I think that’s what people are shooting for.”

There are three main factors, Stannard reckons, that enabled the Hodaka revival. First was the reproduction of extinct parts. “The main focus is on all the little incidental things that we need to keep the bikes alive” – sundry mechanical bits like kick-start

shafts, shifter shafts and rubber pieces like air boots.

Second was access to information and communications through the internet. “Computers have made a world of difference for people who had an old broken-down Hodaka in their barn. The websites out there... people can find information on how to fix up

the bikes and where they can find the parts.”

And third, Hodaka Days, an annual three-day celebration in Athena. Unique among the programme’s many events is a Hodaka parade along Main Street, a slide show of Hodaka-Pabatco’s early years by Chuck Swanson, and former world 250 motocross champion (1973) and early Hodaka rider, Jim Pomeroy, conducting classes in beginners’ motocross skills.

“It’s a ton of fun – you wouldn’t believe it,” said Stannard, adding that 1000-1500 people were likely to attend the 2005 event, doubling the population of Athena for its duration.

And what do the former Hodaka employees think when they return to Athena and see their past come rushing back at them? Many of them had devoted their lives to the fertiliser company’s motorcycle division between 1961 and 1978. The resurgence in the popularity of the machines and the free-spirited and creative forces driving the company validates what they were trying to do. “We always tried to make it fun,” said Swanson, “and look – today our propaganda and stuff is still working!”

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# Six of the best

Honda's GB500TT single is a rare enough beast, so when six of them cropped up in South Yorkshire Rod Gibson grabbed his goggles and headed for mining country.



# Six of the best



“ THE GB500TT IS AN ABSOLUTE DELIGHT TO RIDE, RARE ENOUGH TO ATTRACT LOADS OF ATTENTION, BUILT WELL ENOUGH TO BE RELIABLE, AND YOU CAN AFFORD ONE. ”

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Happy GB500 owners, left to right: Ian Wilson, David Ward, Gary Mangan, Clive Pearson, Ron Hollingsworth, John Wright.

As a Yorkshireman, I've always been slightly wary of Barnsley folk. The former coal mining town seems to have a dialect all its own, and it's not unusual to overhear burly ex-miners in the pub addressing each other as 'love' or 'flower' in deep, booming voices without a hint of irony. So, when reader Ron Hollingsworth invited me up to take a look at a unique gathering of Honda's (arguably) most desirable single I had to check I didn't need to take my passport.

I needn't have worried, for the welcome photographer Andy Dutton and I received when we rolled up at Ron's home was not only warm and welcoming, it also included copious amounts of freshly brewed tea and a huge plate of home made scones. While we quaffed and munched and attempted to avoid spitting too many crumbs at each other in our mutual enthusiasm for Honda singles, Ron's mates began to arrive, each on yet another seemingly mint but subtly different variant of the rare GB500TT that sprang from the mainstream XBR500 production line.

memories of my own XBR, which provided me with five years of reliability and fun while it carried me over the Yorkshire Moors to work each morning. Eventually the cylinder head expired, and I swapped the engine for a much later NX650 Dominator unit from a trail bike, a bike which is still available brand-new as the Spanish built SLR650 or 'Vigour'.

The XBR remains a favourite among lovers of big singles, and occupies a place in the hearts of thumper lovers, rivalled only by Yamaha's SRX600. But what let the XBR down, to my eyes at least, was the styling. A mish mash of classic lines and mid-80s 'high-tech' resulted in the strange

Most people have come across the XBR500, and I have very fond

## SPREADING THE WORD

Word of Ron's Honda singles spread around the local grapevine, and it wasn't long till mates were asking to have a go on one of his GBs to find out why the little Hondas seemed to leave a permanent grin on his face. And as the grin factor spread, the ads were scoured for more GB500s and the local collection grew.

- Ian Wilson is a retired teacher from Doncaster who suffers with MS. Having graduated from a series of Velocettes, Ian now prefers the Honda, partly because of the electric starter which makes it manageable, and says he wouldn't swap it for his old Velo Thruxton.
- Retired engineer David Ward also owns a Kawasaki W650 and a Yamaha XT600, and has owned a string of Jap bikes including two XBRs. "The GB500 is a thinking

man's bike, and it's great to ride," he says.

- John Wright bought his GB500 for his wife Pauline to ride, but uses it himself as often as he can. His collection includes a couple of stunning Brits and a Honda RC30. He does his own rebuild work from engine building to frame construction.
- A long-standing BMW owner, Clive Pearson's interest in singles goes back to his days as a marshal at Oulton Park in Cheshire when single-cylinder machines ruled the roost.
- Community Development Officer and local JP Gary Mangan also owns a Kawasaki W650 and a Yamaha XT600 that he uses all year round, averaging 15,000 miles per annum. "For sheer riding pleasure it is hard to beat a good single," he says, "and the GB500 is excellent."





mixture of beautifully curvaceous fuel tank and hideous Comstar wheels, of gigantic plastic winkers and a tail-light that looked like a reject from a Superdream facelift project.

The best model was the XBR500G, which came with the infinitely more desirable spoked wheels, but the XBR, whichever version you ended up with, always looked like the kind of bike you'd want to take a hacksaw to and make some direly needed styling improvements. Which is what I thought someone had done the first time I saw a GB500TT in the flesh, at the Castleford Classic Show a few years back. Gone were the awful Comstars in favour of spokes, gone were the plastic mudguards in favour of chromed steel items, and the bumstop seat could have come straight from a Triton.

With a classically styled tail-light, neat chrome winkers and understated paint job the bike was everything the XBR had promised but failed to deliver, and immediately went onto my own personal shortlist of desirables. Once I'd been informed, that is, that this was indeed a factory bike, and not a special someone had put together from an XBR and classic Brit autojumble parts. Then, as now, I'm astonished that the GB500 was never offered as an option in the UK, which must have been its spiritual homeland. Perhaps Honda didn't wish to be seen to be mocking the memory of Velocettes and Goldies on their home ground, but the lucky folks in Japan and the US were treated to the tasty GB version in 250, 400 and 500cc options while we, officially at least, missed out.

## IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY

But of course a handful of GB500TTs have trickled into our septic isle



through the usual grey import channels over the years, and do occasionally crop up in the small ads for surprisingly modest prices. Ron acquired his first GB500TT though the classifieds after spending some time with an XBR. Like me, his eye was taken by the prettier GB, and the bike has performed as well as the looks promise. Ron's affair with bikes began at the age of 12, when his father bought a Norton ES2 with sidecar, which later passed to Ron himself. A Velocette Venom followed the Norton, before the Hondas attracted his attention, and Ron says he loves them all; no Brit versus Jap arguments here.

"They're all great bikes in their own way," he told me. "The Honda is more modern, so it benefits from improved technology, and the build quality is superb. And these bikes are

much cheaper to buy than an old British classic, which means you can concentrate on having fun on one rather than worrying about what rare parts you'll total if you drop it."

The black bike is Ron's (and is probably the very same bike that caught my eye back in Castleford all those years ago), and it's now kept company in his garage by the red one, rebuilt and painted to echo the lines of a Matchless G50, and one of the standard brown bikes, added to the collection six months ago. All three are Japanese spec imports.

Despite my preconceptions, the GB500TT was never a merely facelifted XBR. As a matter of fact there are innumerable differences which give the GB its own unique identity. Apart from obvious styling themes, the handlebars are set lower than the XBR, and the front tyre has a

Ron and Gary explain the joys of handling a GB500TT to Rod.



## RIDING THE GB500TT

Honda's cafe racer single is small, light and nippy, and the relatively low power output means the rider has to focus on getting gearshifts and braking spot on. The modest 36bhp power output peaks at 7500rpm, which means the bike likes to be revved, (though there's plenty of low end torque for plodding through traffic). Get it right and it's enormous fun to ride, and it will make respectable progress, as Ron proved when he kept pace with Velocette racer-mounted Bill Swallow at a recent Barnsley Bikers' Classic parade at Wombwell Kart Track. We used the very same track for our photoshoot, and a supposedly staid parade for the cameras soon turned into a test of pace and bottle.

Riding Ron's red bike it only took me



a couple of laps to slot into a groove and start enjoying myself, as memories of thrapping my long-lost XBR over deserted moorland roads came flooding back. "You can give it a bit of stick," said Ron when I got off, "there's no need to pussyfoot around like that on it!" I thought I'd been doing OK, but watching Ron throw my overweight Harley tourer round the track later on rubbed in just what a skilled rider he is. I really would like to spend a day at Cadwell Park on a GB500TT, so much so that I'm repressing a desire to go shopping for one until I have a bit more garage space. But the GB is no racetrack prima donna, and if you're simply looking for a bike with classic looks that will be reliable and rewarding to ride then look no further.





**SPECIFICATION**  
**HONDA GB500TT**

POWER	
engine	498cc air-cooled four-stroke single sohc with RFVC four valve head
bore & stroke	92x75mm
compression ratio	8.9:1
claimed power	36bhp @ 7500rpm
transmission	Five speed

CHASSIS	
front tyre	90/90x18
rear tyre	110/90x18

DIMENSIONS	
dry weight	163kg
fuel capacity	3.6 gallons
seat height	790mm (31.1in)
wheelbase	1412mm (55.6in)

CONTACTS	
Honda Owners' Club	<a href="http://www.hoc.org.uk">www.hoc.org.uk</a>
Thumper Club	<a href="http://www.thumperclub.com">www.thumperclub.com</a>



narrower section, both contributing to make the bike nimble in the twisties. American spec bikes are discernable by the clean air recycling system bolted 'like a large alloy carbuncle' to the engine's left side, which most owners choose to remove and chuck in the bin. The Japanese had a 400c option, which doesn't have the punch of the bigger bike, and the very rare dohc 250cc version is pretty but gutless.

The most common mod is to the gearing, with Jap bikes running a 37-tooth rear sprocket and the US bikes a 39. Even the UK market XBR had a 36-tooth rear sprocket fitted, but all the GB500 riders were unanimous that the bike benefits from raised gearing. The combination of a 33-

tooth sprocket and a small flyscreen turns the GB into a more relaxed ride and makes all the gears more usable on the road. 32 and 34-tooth sprockets are also available.

Some bikes came with dual seats (which seems to fly in the face of the GB's design brief), but the lovely little race seat on these bikes is still available as a new, but pricey, part. Stainless spokes are a popular mod, and two of these bikes have been fitted with bespoke stainless exhaust systems made by Paul Wilkinson of Diverse Engineering (01226 360991). The only Achilles' heel of the whole design is the slightly suspect starter clutch; three of these bikes have had starter trouble and I've heard of NX650s with the same

problem. It's fixable, though, and the GB is blessed with a traditional kick-starter if the electric foot does go down miles from anywhere.

There's something about the GB500TT that makes it a very special bike to own. They're rare enough to attract loads of attention and double takes from members of the public, who inevitably think you're riding a restored Brit.

They're an absolute delight to ride, they're built well enough to be reliable, and they're cheap enough to be affordable, if you can find one. At the risk of driving prices up (before I've had chance to grab one myself!), we reckon the GB500TT is an absolute corker.

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# From the jaws of disaster



WORDS/PHOTOS: Rod Gibson/Rod Gibson, Andy Dutton

Bolted back together in a hurry, the bike just made the start line for Round Ten of Straightliners at Elvington.

Just when our project Katana was looking like a solid contender fate rears up and bites us on the bum. Rod gets the spanners out again...

In mitigation, I can only say it was very, very early in the morning. I'd arranged to meet up with photographer Andy Dutton for the ride over to Lotherton Hall. When Andy turned up on a brand-spanking-new GSXR600, I knew we were in for more than a gentle potter, but alas I can only say we were doing an unspecified speed on an unspecified road far, far away from any other signs of civilisation when it happened. As I shut off after an extended high-speed run, the Kat coughed, and went a bit asthmatic. I backed off, and Andy came charging past, waving and pointing at my bike. As we pulled over he shouted "There's an awful lot of smoke blowing out of the back somewhere." That's when the sinking feeling began.

Starting the bike up, it seemed to run happily, though it was definitely lumpier than it should have been. But the worrying part was the clouds of oil smoke it was now blowing out of the engine breather, which vents out behind the number plate. Fearing the worst, but hoping for the best, I potted the remaining few miles to Lotherton Hall and parked the bike up at the Mechanics stand for the day. And there it stayed until packing up time, when a decision

had to be made. I fired it up and it still sounded sick, the smoke was still blowing out in great clouds, and the general murmur around the group of onlookers was that it would be better off going home in a van.

Back in the workshop the following day, I pulled off the head and barrels to find out just how close I'd come to a 'catastrophic engine failure', as us wags in the trade call it. Number three piston had clearly picked up on the cylinder wall, which was smeared with chunks of aluminium. The back of the piston skirt was totally goosed with the rings welded into their grooves, and close inspection revealed a crack which had spread almost across the width of the skirt. Another few yards' high-speed running and the piston would have disintegrated, creating enough debris to probably total the motor. "Gosh and darn," I remarked, with one eye on the calendar to see how long I had to get the bike fixed for the next Straightliners meeting. This was going to be tight, but first I needed a professional diagnosis and a strategy for a fix.

Ian at Dynamax took one look at the barrels and sent me off to see Jim Morley at JME

Engineering, who turned out to be something of a guardian angel. Despite being in the throes of moving into a new unit, Jim got out his micrometers to measure the damage to the bore. "It's too badly scored to hone," he pronounced, "so we'll have to rebore it. Get some oversize pistons pronto and I'll do it straight away." Cue desperate phone calls to Wiseco, who, it turned out, don't do oversize pistons, but would supply a complete replacement 1260 kit with new liners. In fact, they rather gleefully suggested I take the opportunity to take it out to 1370cc, which I'm afraid I declined, fearing the fragility of the stock crank, transmission and clutch to cope.

Several nail-biting days passed, as the replacement parts made their way over the Atlantic from Ohio, until finally, with only four days to go to the 4 September meeting, the kit arrived. I ripped the parcel open to find a set of four high-compression pistons with huge domed peaks, and took the lot straight to Jim. By 7pm the following night all four new liners were in place and the bores were machined, and by midnight the bike was rebuilt and ready to go.





Number three piston after it picked up in the bore at speed on the way to Lotherton Hall.



Jim Morley at JME Engineering carefully measured all the pistons before concluding the bores were too tight.



The replacement pistons from Wiseco have much higher crowns for an increased compression ratio.

Throwing caution to the winds, I guessed at a carburation set-up and spent all day Saturday trogging the bike round Norfolk to get the bores run in, pausing at the roadside to keep retarding the ignition a bit more to stop the high compression kit pinking. And, with no idea about valve to piston clearance, no time for a dyno run and only a couple of plug chops that's how the bike made it to the start line for the Straightliners 4 September meeting at Elvington. And amazingly, it didn't bend any valves, even when I missed a gear on my third run. In fact it not only survived the day, I got my best ever run with a time of 11.37 and 121mph, finishing sixth in class.

With a bit more running and set-up time, the bike should be a front-line contender by the season's end.

So what caused the problem? We found no fault with the old pistons or with the lubrication system, but measuring the undamaged part of the old cylinder bores opened a can of worms. Not one of the liners we'd had fitted previously measured correctly; each one was below Wiseco's recommended minimum tolerance, and the cylinder that picked up showed only one-thou clearance between the cylinder wall and the piston. How it came to be like that remains a mystery, but until I have a better explanation I can only assume that it hadn't been bored correctly when we had the kit fitted last year.

Elvington <b>STRAIGHTLINERS</b> 04/09/05 13:34:28		
No.	E.T.	Terminal
344	1.921 11.37	Run 7 121mph

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#### UNLUCKY NUMBER THREE

Ten years ago I was running a 1000 Katana which, with hindsight, must have been raced. At speed on the M62 near Warrington that bike went very sick, and when I stopped, it dumped all its engine oil onto the floor from the air-filter box. Not good.

It turned out that both centre pistons had started to break up, and number three had a whopping great hole in the crown. The culprit on this occasion was a points ignition conversion, which had been set up incorrectly for the two centre pistons, causing terminal detonation in the cylinders.

I successfully got that bike honed, and with two new pistons it ran sweetly, but I never really trusted it again and eventually swapped it for a GPZ1000RX.



Rod's last Katana was a victim of production racing, and expired at speed on the M62.



The calm before the storm. The Kat pictured on a gentle run over the North Yorkshire moors.



Number three piston, terminally damaged by the effects of detonation.



# Joining the Japanese classic gang

CB500



MALC WHEELER

> Malcolm Wheeler is Publishing Director at Mortons Media Group, publishers of *Classic Motorcycle Mechanics*.

This CB500 Four is one bike I wish I hadn't had the chance to buy, yet I'm so pleased that it has joined my small stable. Let me explain.

Just over a year ago I lost one of my best pals in a road accident. Les Worthington will have been known to many of you, either as the proprietor of Syd Smith Spares in Sheffield, or as the builder of the incredible miniature Gold Star that made the odd public appearance at the Stafford Shows and the TT. Having retired a year or two early, Les had moved to the Isle of Man with wife Jean, and they were really beginning to enjoy life to the full. In the accident that took his life, and in which he was totally blameless, Jean escaped serious injury and has set about rebuilding her life in the Island.

Les and I enjoyed one of those special friendships. It's fair to say we were both fairly strong characters and we didn't always agree on everything, but we never had a cross word. We just agreed to disagree. We both enjoyed nothing more than sitting on the verandah of his Island cottage, which has a stunning view over Port St Mary Bay, with a nice malt to hand after a good meal, while we talked rubbish. The usual subject was bikes, especially racing, but we both enjoyed gardening, so we were never short of conversation.

Where we did differ was in engineering skills. I can make swarf or sawdust; Les could make anything, be it in wood or metal, and it would fit. If you've seen his little Goldie you know exactly what I mean.

From the moment that Jean asked me to help sell Les's small, but classy, collection of bikes, I thought perhaps it would be nice to buy one for myself. What is now my 1975 500 Four shared workshop space with a 1920s Rudge 500, a 500 Gold Star, a thirty-something Francis Barnett and Les's Argon classic parade machine. Given my eclectic collection of motorcycles, old and new, the Honda seemed to fill a void.

All of the bikes, except the racer, which Jean intends to keep, were in various stages of restoration. The Goldie was completed but just awaited testing once a pair of touring bars, more in keeping with a bad back and bumpy Manx roads, had been fitted. The Honda, which had been a steady, 'when I've got nothing else to do' job, was finished, even down to the brand-new battery. Les had managed to track down new exhausts through his old contacts in the trade, and he had stripped and rebuilt the motor.

The chrome and paintwork is a combination of original, preserved and replaced or repainted. But the finished result still has the patina of a very clean used bike rather than a 'bulled to win a show' look.

As best as I can remember, given the amount of Scotch we'd usually consumed when we talked about our bikes late into the evening, all that remained to do was track down an original front guard, to replace the pattern BSA one fitted, and source a seat strap and fittings. Perhaps a *Mechanics* reader or advertiser can help me here.

With a nice new MoT and tax disc in place, I am already enjoying my little Honda. I was involved with the motorcycle trade when they were launched and well remember my first couple of rides on one.

Being more used to a (relatively) lumbering Norton Commando, the low, four-cylinder sewing machine was a revelation. I reckon I might well get in quite a few miles before winter arrives; in fact, the Honda is currently parked second-in-line in the shed, allowing quick access when the fancy takes me.

And you know what? Any fears I may have had about feeling sad owning one of Les's bikes in these circumstances have been quickly dispelled. All I get when I press the button, and the motor whispers into life, are happy memories.



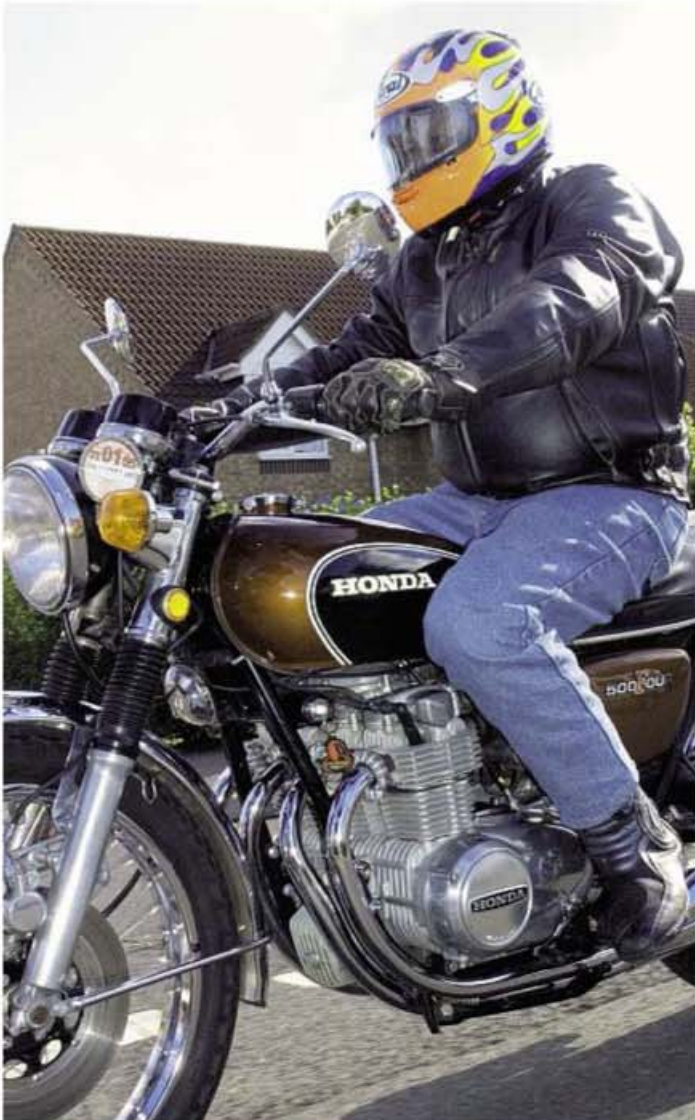
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# magazine FOCUS

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The Honda should provide a good few days of riding pleasure before the winter sets in.



Rebuilt bike has the authentic patina of a clean, used bike.



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## IDLE SOD

I just had my Moto Guzzi serviced but now the bike won't idle correctly and sometimes dies when in gear coming to a stop. The garage say there is nothing they can do. The bike starts fine, but needs an idle adjustment. I have reviewed my owner's manual, but can't seem to get the idle up. I hope this will help. Can you?

**Tony Abbot, Lomita, California.**

*The manual should indicate the location of the throttle stop screws on the carbs, and you should be able to adjust the idle speed to between 1200 and 1500rpm with the engine hot. If you cannot get an idle at all, you may have to strip the carbs and make sure the pilot drillings in the carb bodies are clear of obstruction, and the pilot jets are not blocked. Stalling when coming to a standstill on older big twins is not unheard of, and can be caused by fuel surge; you may have to develop the old Brit riders' technique of blipping the throttle as you bring the bike to a halt to keep it running. RG.*

## NO GO

My Yamaha XS500B has not been run for a number of years. With a new battery the starter motor wouldn't operate and the solenoid made a hissing noise. I obtained a new solenoid that clicks, but the starter motor doesn't move. With both solenoids, if they were taken out of circuit and the starter motor lead connected to the battery, the motor worked. The lights and horn work normally. Please help.

**John Hewitson, by email.**

*If the starter spins when you connect it straight to the battery it must be healthy, and you've already tried a new solenoid. All that leaves you with is a wiring fault, and I'd double check to make sure the heavy leads from battery positive to the solenoid, and from solenoid to starter motor, are in good condition. Also check the engine has a good earth connection to the frame; there should be a heavy-duty cable linking the two together. If you find no fault with these connections, check the right-hand switch as you may have a fault with the starter button itself. RG.*

## LUMPY RUNNER

I have just purchased a 1978 Honda CB750K8 that is in excellent condition and is an American import. The bike runs not too badly apart from at low revs.

I have treated it to new plugs, points and condensers, checked the ignition timing, cleaned out and balanced the carbs, but it will only tick over with half choke and runs very lumpy.

Could it be to do with running it on unleaded fuel and, if so, what is your advice to correct this?

What jets should be in the carbs?

**Alan Black, by email.**

*Check the compression to make sure all is well within the engine, but your bike could be suffering from carb varnishing, which is becoming a common problem on older bikes that have been standing. The bike will have been designed to run*

*on unleaded fuel so that will not cause the problem, but modern fuels are of pretty poor quality and degrade very quickly. Our Honda manual shows size 68 primary main jets and 102 secondary main jets. RG.*

## WHICH TWIN?

I've just returned to biking via a Suzuki GN400 and have totally lost touch with bikes. I now want to upgrade to a mid-range or big twin. I can't afford a Le Mans, so can anyone suggest a torquey twin for me?

**Stuart Morrisson, Longlevens, Gloucester**

*There are lots of perfectly fine torquey twins on the market, Stuart, and so much will depend on your own personal choice and budget. Talk to other owners and get a few test rides if you can. If you're looking for a good, solid, Japanese classic twin, you could do a lot worse than looking at a Yamaha XS650. RG.*

## BATTERY POWER

**Could you tell what is the correct battery for a Suzuki GS550L as I have chance of one for free, but it needs a battery?**

**Kevin Smith, Spalding Moor, York.**

*The GS550L was initially fitted with a YB10LA2 battery, which was changed later in the production run to a YB10LB. The two batteries are identical other than the breather pipe outlet, which is alongside the negative terminal on the YB10LA2, and moved to the positive side on the YB10LB. The number on the old battery casing, assuming it's still present, will identify it for sure, and you can quote the number at your local bike shop when buying a replacement. RG.*



The numbers on the old battery will tell you which replacement to buy.

# MEET THE EXPERTS

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### ROD GIBSON

Worked in Kawasaki, BMW and Triumph dealerships before starting his own restoration business.





Remove your steering lock before having the frame powder coated.

### STEERING BLOCK

I would like to send off my frame for powder coating. The last time I sent off a DT175MX frame for coating it came back with a steering lock that was jammed and unusable, and had to be drilled out, on advice from my local dealer.

Before I send off the next frame, I wonder if I can cleanly remove the lock and reinstall it after the frame is done.

Please advise and save me some work.

Ross, by email

*If you leave any components in the frame, including the steering lock, they will be powder coated over and you will have to damage the new finish to remove them. To remove the steering lock, prise the swivelling cover away from the headstock (it's retained by the single rivet) and remove the cover. Now turn the lock body to its 'unlocked' position and pull it clear of the frame, collecting the small spring that will follow it out. Put the swivelling cover in the pile for replating, or replace it with a new one. If you don't have the key, you'll have to drill out the centre of the lock until the tumblers fall free – a tedious and drill bit-consuming task. RG.*

### RESTORATION QUESTIONS

I am currently restoring a Honda CB750K2 and have been reading your restoration with interest. There are just a few questions I would like to ask. Is it better to strip the engine first then have it vapour blasted or is it better to have the engine done as a complete unit? While it is down, I was thinking about having the head converted to unleaded – would I need to change the jets?

Also, can you tell me where I can obtain the silver paint used on Hondas, and lastly, before I reach for the hammer and chisel, how did you get the badges off the petrol tank? I have looked and cannot see how they are held on.

Alan Evans, by email

*While a skilled specialist may be able to vapour blast your engine without dismantling, I'd be very hesitant to recommend it. Personally I always strip an engine down to its bare components before having any blasting work done; the consequences of getting any grit into the engine make it by far the safer option. Your bike should run quite happily on unleaded fuel without modification, and a switch to unleaded will not require a change in jetting. I use a proprietary silver engine enamel aerosol to spray the crankcases on Hondas and Suzukis, and the tank badges will come away if you simply prise them gently off the tank. RG.*

### UNSHIFTABLE SHIFTER

I'm having difficulty using the gear selector on my Honda V45 Supermagna. It's a bit stiff and the clutch is not working too well; could this be a lack of lubrication, due to the bike being left standing for a couple of years?

Alan Bowcock, by email

*Yes, it could. Start by giving the bike a full service and making sure the clutch cable is in good condition and well lubricated, and that the lifter is correctly adjusted. If your bike has the later type gear change, it may be worth stripping the linkages and lubricating all the pivots. The V45 is a strong, well-designed bike so should respond to a little TLC. RG.*

### RATTLY DUCATI

My 1995 Ducati Monster has a noisy, rattly clutch. So do they all, I hear you say. True, but can anything be done about it?

Tim George, Biggleswade, Beds

*I'm afraid it's in the nature of this type of clutch design, Tim, and is part of the charm of owning a late model Duke. After-market carbon fibre covers are available, but they tend to make the noise louder rather than muffle it. Sorry, but it's the nature of the beast. RG.*

### UNDERCHARGING

When I ride my Honda NC23 Tri-Arm with the lights on it drains the battery. Is it the alternator or something more sinister? I have made sure the correct bulbs are being used, and it holds its charge fine until I turn the lights on.

Adele Gerrard, by email.

*Generally speaking, the charging system will either work correctly or not at all so, if yours is undercharging, the fault may be tricky to trace. You'll need a multimeter and access to Honda's test figures from a factory manual, then test the AC outputs from the alternator and the DC output from the regulator in order to isolate the fault. Alternatively, you can call in a specialist like Ferrets Custom Electrickery on 07765 832420. RG.*

### DREAM OR SUPERDREAM?

My Honda CB250N misfires at anything above tick-over. It also spits back through the carbs. The carbs have been stripped and cleaned. Also, is it a Dream or a Superdream?

Devlin Maguire, Isle of Arran

*You may have some incorrect parts fitted to your carbs, or they may have been incorrectly assembled. If possible, try borrowing a set of carbs from another bike to see if that affects the problem. You may find a good workshop manual will be useful in identifying how the carbs should be assembled. The CB250T Dream is quite rare as it was only in production for one year before being restyled as the CB250N Superdream. The Superdream has the late, angular 'Eurostyle' look similar to a CB900F, and has a tailpiece. RG.*

## HOT AND BOTHERED

The starter motor on my 1982 Suzuki GS650GT fails to turn over the engine when hot. If left for 20 minutes, the starter spins the engine quickly and it starts first time. The starter works fine when totally cold and the engine starts first time even if left for a couple of weeks. The problem occurs only when the engine is hot and the bike has been left for only a few minutes, eg after filling with petrol. I have checked and cleaned all earth contacts and cleaned the commutator on the starter motor. Any advice gratefully received.

Robert Mitchell, Ayr

*Assuming this isn't a problem with engine compression, ie the starter is simply refusing to spin the engine, the fault must be down to the starter motor itself. Make sure the carbon brushes that run on the commutator are in good condition and the windings on the armature are undamaged. If the fault persists, you may have a problem with the insulation on the windings breaking down when the motor is hot. The armature can be rewound, but a second-hand starter motor is probably a cheaper and easier option. RG.*



Carbon brushes must be in good condition for the starter to work properly.



## THE LOST GS

I am currently restoring/renovating two GS650GTs, and I am wondering why these bikes have been ignored in your back issues. It's also difficult to obtain spares, info etc on these bikes. Everyone covers the 550 and 750, so why not the 650? Any feedback would be appreciated.

**Steve Hunt, by email**

We covered the GS650GT in our *Buying Bikes* feature in the July 2004 issue (No 201), and you can still obtain a back issue by ringing our Customer Services Department on 01507 529300, or online from [www.classicmagazines.com](http://www.classicmagazines.com) Many parts and service information for the 650 are similar to the rest of the GS series, and you should be able to obtain parts quite easily from a number of Suzuki spares specialists in our *Jap Corner* section on page 87. RG.

## THE NUMBERS GAME

I'm about to start restoration my 1977 Honda CB400F, but at some time in its past, the plug leads have been removed from the spark plugs (they're in appalling condition anyway). Which coil supplies which cylinders?

**Terry**

As with all in-line Japanese motorcycles, the cylinders are numbered from the left as you sit on the bike, so No 1 cylinder is on the left and No 4 is on the right. The ignition systems used on Japanese fours all use the wasted spark system, with one ignition coil firing the outer two cylinders, and the other firing the two inners. The leads on each coil are actually interchangeable (ie you can swap No 1 for No 4 lead, and No 2 for No 3). RG.

## A GEAR TOO FAR

When going through the gear selection on my 1978 Yamaha YZ400E, I get three gears but, when I go from third to fourth, it is as if I hit another neutral. I seem to have no fourth gear or any more. How many gears should it have? Parts are so hard to find – can it be fixed? What oil is right for the engine?

**Sean Fry, by email**

Your YZ should have five gears, Sean, so you're going to have to do some exploration to find the problem. You may have a problem with the selector mechanism or even the dogs on the gears themselves. If you need parts, ring Motolink on 01526 344443 ([www.yamahaspares.uk.com](http://www.yamahaspares.uk.com)). They may have some second-hand parts in stock that will help keep repair costs down. Yamaha recommended a light gear oil for the box, so a good quality 10/40 semi-synthetic should suffice, and the engine will run happily on premix of 33:1 if you're using two-stroke oil from your local bike shop; racing oil will let you go safely to 40:1. RG.

## FLOOD WARNING

My 1983 Suzuki CS125 cuts out at the traffic lights and burns lot of fuel.

Any suggestions?

**Tony, by email**

This almost certainly sounds like carburettor flooding. Remove the carb and clean it, then carefully set the float height to the level recommended in your workshop manual. After refitting, watch for any signs of fuel dribbling from the overflow pipe on the carb float bowl, and be prepared to fork out for a new float needle and seat to stop it leaking if the problem persists. RG.

## BEARING REMOVAL

How do I remove the lower bearing from the steering stem on my 1997 Kawasaki? Kawasaki shows a special bearing separator in the factory manual. This tool is expensive and there must be a different approach. It is also used on the KZ1000 model.

**Charles Jackel, by email.**

Without the special tool you have a few options. The bearing is a simple push-fit on the stem and it shouldn't be too tight.

I usually find that careful work with a hammer and two small chisels inserted between the bearing race and yoke will ease it squarely off the bottom of the stem. Once a gap has opened up, it can be prised upwards with a pair of tyre levers or similar. You may damage the lower rubber seal below the bearing when you use the chisels, so budget for a new one along with the new bearings. RG.



Rusted fuel tanks can be treated with an anti-corrosion coating.

## TANK TROUBLE

What is the best way to clean out a fuel tank? I have just got a second-hand tank for my Honda TL125S and it is rusty inside.

**George Richmond, AYR**

Put a handful of old ball bearings or small nuts and bolts inside the tank, seal up all the openings, then shake the tank around vigorously for several minutes. This will remove any loose rust from inside the tank. Then treat it with a proprietary tank sealant such as this epoxy compound from C Wylde of Leeds. If corrosion is advanced, the metal on the tank may be very thin at the lowest point of the seams, so examine it carefully before coating. A specialist will be able to repair small areas of damage by welding or brazing, but don't attempt this without lots of experience, and have the tank pressure tested afterwards to make sure it won't leak. RG.

## LEAKING GUSSET

I'm going to strip my 1100 Katana for another rebuild. At the back of the engine the frame has a gusset at each side, which holds the swing arm pivot and rear upper engine plate bolts. The gusset is open at the top and bottom, and a line of rust comes from the bottom where the water runs out when it gets wet. How do I prevent this happening again? Can I weld it up at both ends? And how do I go about removing the existing powder coating?

**John Regan, Preston**

The gaps in the gussets are there simply because of the nature of the mass production process used in the manufacture of the bike, and can be safely welded up before powder coating. It may be a time-consuming business,



Gaps in welding can leave rusty streaks after powder coating.

though, and spraying a little ACF50 into the holes regularly after washing the bike may be a much easier way to stop the

unsightly rust streaks. The easiest way to remove the old powder coating is to get the frame shot blasted. RG.

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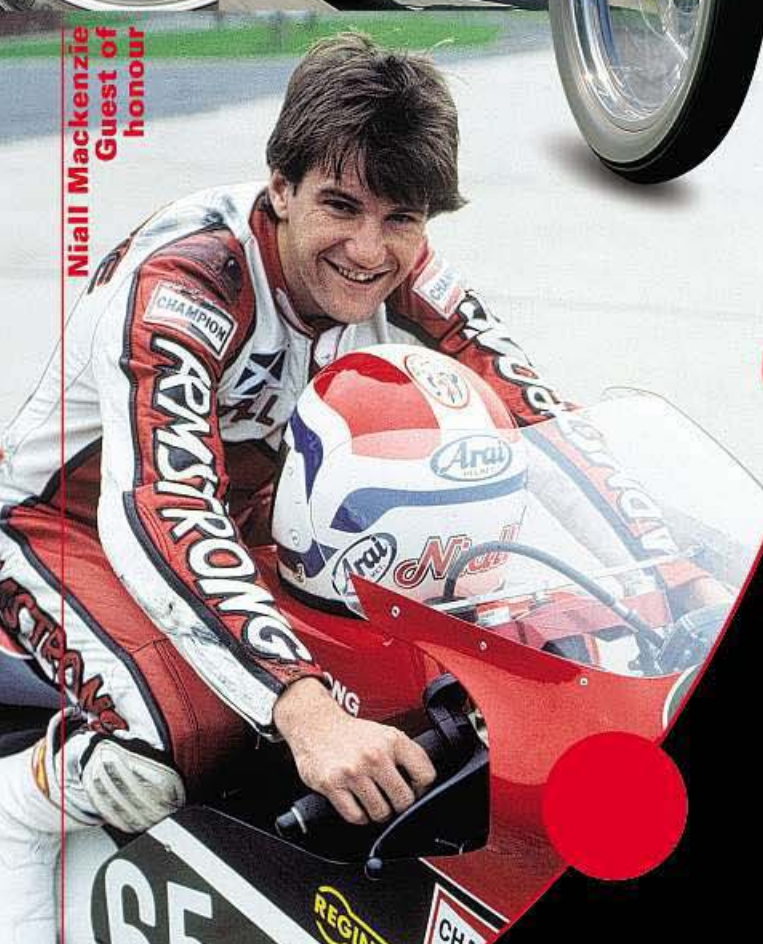
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	Southend-on-Sea, John Parker	01702 612859	<b>Merseyside</b>	Walthamstow, Jack Nice M/C	0208 5201920	<b>Wilts</b>	Beverley, Hull, R M Motorcycles	01482 887886	<b>Conwy</b>	Colwyn Bay, Colwyn Bay M/C	01492 535959
<b>Herefordshire</b>	Ross-on-Wye, Lucas M/C	01989 563261		Liverpool, Bridge Rd M/C	0151 9242369	<b>E Yorks</b>	Hawes, Wensleydale		<b>Carmarthen</b>	Johnstown, RJ Motorcycles	01267 233906
<b>Hertfordshire</b>	Knebworth, Jacksons Garage	01438 812928	<b>Norfolk</b>	Shipdham, Dave Wicks M/Cs	01362 821263	<b>N Yorks</b>	Mike Tonge Motorcycles	01969 667852	<b>Mid Glam</b>	Merthyr Tydfil, Bob Wilding M/Cs	01685 384625
<b>Isle of Man</b>	Ramsey, Royal Enfield M/C IOM	01624 813244	<b>Northants</b>	Gt Oxendon, Rockingham Cl/Sp	01858 439945						





# Kawasaki Z440LTD

1980-1984

For those concerned with flat-out performance and looking for a degree of comfort, one of the Kawasaki LTD series may be just the job. Rod Ker examines the 440 version.



WORDS: Rod Ker PHOTOS: Darren Hendley

“A COUPLE OF YEARS AFTER BSA HAD BEEN BURIED, RUMOURS WERE RIFE THAT KAWASAKI WAS GOING TO LAUNCH SOMETHING REALLY WILD BASED ON THE Z1.”



## BACKGROUND

The idea of a 'factory custom' really doesn't make much sense if you think about it. How can something be customised if it's identical to the next one off the production line? Whatever, the term has held great appeal to marketing departments for about 30 years now. Possibly the first motorcycle to deserve this dubious title, if retrospectively, was the Triumph X75 Hurricane, an American interpretation of a custom bike, made in Britain, just before our home-grown industry collapsed.

While the X75 (which was actually more of a

BSA than a Triumph) was different and special enough to ensure that it could never have made a profit even if sold for a price far in excess of a standard Rocket III or Trident, the Japanese spotted the moneymaking potential of factory customs. A couple of years after BSA had been buried, rumours were rife that Kawasaki was going to launch something really wild based on the Z1. Word on the street was that it was going to be some kind of chopper, just like Peter Fonda's bike in Easy Rider.

The reality, as unveiled at a lavish do in Beverly Hills, was slightly less far out. Perhaps





wisely, Kawasaki decided to make their new KZ900LTD closer to standard than expected. Designed and built in the good old US of A, it was basically a Z1 with a Jardine 4-2 exhaust, Morris 'mag' wheels, ape-hanger handlebars, smaller tank and a king 'n' queen seat. Perhaps the wackiest feature was the fat, 16in rear tyre, a special Goodyear with tread wrapping round its sidewalls.

As the name suggested, the intention was to make a limited quantity of LTDs. Well, at a price about 30 per cent above the standard 'Zee', Kawasaki might have been a bit worried

that no one would want to pay the premium! As it happened, plenty did, and the factory custom concept soon became established, in America, at least, and other manufacturers followed Kawasaki's lead. It took Suzuki and Honda a while, but Yamaha soon offered Special versions of the XS650 twin and XS11 four. In the early days, customs tended to be larger-engined models, but the trend inevitably spread into the lower orders, with varying degrees of success! A 50cc custom bike? Hmm...

Meanwhile, having been forced to abandon its infamous Green Meanie triples on

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

After around six years on the market before the LTD arrived, the twin should by rights have been well and truly sorted. Cynics might have suggested that early 400 customers did unpaid development work for them, because the engine suffered from various teething troubles. In 1974 Kawasaki's four-stroke experience (not counting the Meguro link) came from the dohc Z1, which used a built-up crankshaft with roller bearings and a gear primary drive. The twin used plain bearings and a hy-vo chain primary drive, with roller chains to drive the single camshaft and balancers. Tappet adjustment was through eccentric rocker shafts, rather like earlier Honda twins.

While this all seemed sound enough, it wasn't long before faults cropped up. All three chains wore out, and oil leaks tended to appear, particularly around the head joint. It's probable that some of the cam chain problems were the result of ill-informed meddling, though, because one of the engine's idiosyncrasies was that it ran backwards, ie in the opposite direction to the wheels, which explained why the tensioner stuck out of the front of the cylinders, behind the frame down tubes. You couldn't really blame Kawasaki if the correct maintenance procedure wasn't followed.

The unusual valve clearance adjustment method caused similar problems, it seemed. Adding all this together, the result was that some early Z400s turned into rattly, vibratory, oily horrors. To make matters worse, electrical faults were common, leading to frequent blown bulbs. Overall, you were left with a £609 bike that not only sounded like a British twin, but also behaved like one! It took a while, but Kawasaki responded by substantially redesigning the engine. Camchain tensioning became fully automatic, the valve gear was modified to incorporate screw and locknut adjustment. A six-speed box was added to the Z400B available from 1978, and this was retained for the LTD, even though it could have got by with four.

If it's a belt-drive model you're after, beware. Although the transmission will be quieter and smoother, there may be occasions when you might wish for a good old chain. As I said earlier, the belt must be tensioned correctly, which really requires a special tool (now let's hear from all those owners who twang the belt to check for play and never have a moment's trouble). Even assuming the tension is right, foreign objects getting trapped under the teeth can wreak havoc. The Kevlar fibres inside might be just about indestructible but the rubber bits aren't. Which is when you might discover that a new belt costs about the same as a dog of a LTD440...

Whether the twin's habit of blowing bulbs was due to poor voltage regulation or vibration is open to debate, but it's a bit ironic that the new design of alternator used was one of the things Kawasaki boasted about. A quarter-century later, cracked wiring and bad connections are more likely to be the concerns, particularly as custom bikes tend to be ridden more slowly and rarely get used at sustained high revs.

As with most old bikes, most of the buying advice that applied when new tends to be redundant now. Make sure the electrics work. Listen to the engine, check that all the gears engage and stay engaged. Anything major wrong here might make the bike worth next to nothing, because the world isn't full of people waiting to buy old LTD440s. Having said that, some of the basics, like cam and primary chains, are available from places like M & P, so all may not be lost.





## SPECIFICATION KAWASAKI Z440LTD

### POWER

engine	sohc air-cooled twin, 4 valve
capacity	443cc
bore x stroke	67.5 x 62mm
carburation	36mm Keihin CV
compression	9.2:1
max power	40bhp at 8500rpm
torque	26ft-lb at 7000rpm
transmission	6-speed, belt or chain final drive

### CHASSIS

frame	Duplex cradle
front suspension	Air-assisted, leading axle telescopic
rear suspension	Swinging arm, adjustable preload springs
front wheel	3.25-19
rear wheel	130/90-16
front brake	9in disc
rear brake	Single 6.3in drum

### DIMENSIONS

seat height	29in
wheelbase	54.7in
weight	377lb
fuel	2.6g

### CONTACTS

www.zpower.co.uk

environmental grounds, by the mid-70s Kawasaki was left with a rather lacklustre range of smaller four-stroke street bikes. In particular, the KZ400, aka Z400, twin first seen in 1974 was widely perceived as a cure for insomnia. As usual, though, what some people – magazine road testers, especially – missed was that not all motorcyclists were obsessed by speed. Riders wanting a reliable all-rounder for everyday commuting and the occasional longer trip really didn't want 'excitement' of the sort served up by a two-stroke triple that did 25 miles per spark plug and needed reboring every few thousand miles.

In many ways the Z400 was like a Triumph or BSA might have been if the design had been moved into the second half of the century. Just like an old Speed Twin or Beesa A7, the engine was a parallel twin with a chain primary drive, tuned to provide a good spread of torque. Unlike an old Speed Twin or Beesa A7, it didn't shake itself to pieces (in theory), thanks to the marvel of contra-rotating balance shafts. Even in 1974 this was a very old idea, originally credited to a British engineer named Fred Lanchester, who was responsible for many of the innovations later re-invented by other manufacturers. In the two-wheeled world, Yamaha had already been there with the TX750 and dohc 500 twins, both of which failed miserably to convince punters that balance shafts were worth the trouble! Perhaps because

Kawasaki didn't shout about it too much in publicity material, the 400's 'whirligigs' weren't a big issue. With a top speed of around 100mph, the 398cc twin was just about smooth enough and fast enough to satisfy most people, and gave better fuel economy than the opposition. Kawasaki claimed 100mpg – at 37mph! Admittedly, beating the 30-40mpg average of a Suzuki GT380 or Yamaha RD350 wasn't a huge achievement, but the Z400 used less juice than a Honda CB400/4.

And it wasn't much slower, either. In fact, claimed power and torque figures of this disparate duo were almost identical, it was just that the frenetic four always sounded twice as fast! Still, despite having gained an extra gear by 1979, the Z400 was beginning to look dated. As was, and still is, the trend, Kawasaki decided to extract a bit more oomph from the engine by increasing the capacity.

Previously of almost square 64 x 62mm dimensions, a new pair of 67.5mm pistons gave 443cc. While they could have been forgiven for calling this a 450 (or maybe a 500 if it was Italian), Big K modestly rounded it down and slapped a Z440 badge on the side of their new baby. As you might expect, an extra 10 per cent displacement gave about 10 per cent more power and torque. 41bhp at 8500rpm and 26ft-lb at 7000rpm were now the figures.

Funnily enough, the paper gains didn't seem to



The 440 had only a single front disc, although it's possible to add a second. The caliper suffers from regular seizures, particularly if used on salted roads.

## BRAKES



## CARBS

The CV carbs can suffer from split diaphragms; after-market replacements are available. A hesitant, lumpy idle is almost certainly caused by out-of-balance carbs.

## DRIVE CHAIN/BELT

Drive belts on late models are smooth and reliable, but expensive to replace when worn out. Early 440LTDs had chain drive, and the later belt versions can be converted.

be matched in reality, because the 440 appeared to be about as fast, or slow, as the first 400 if road tests are any guide. For those who weren't wild about factory customs, worse was to come. Yes, in 1980 the 440 was finally given the LTD treatment, as seen here! Following the recipe of the first 900 and succeeding 750 and 1000cc models, Kawasaki added wide bars, smaller tank, stepped seat, Morris (not really) wheels and a fat rear tyre. Possibly because of the stubby silencers that came as part of the package, power was down slightly from the ordinary roadster. Those 40 horses had a struggle to push a human parachute through the air, apparently, resulting in embarrassing limpness. Even the advanced contortionist techniques of ace road testers failed to persuade the LTD440 (the reversed numbers and letters were Kawasaki's official designation) to wheeze far past 90mph, which translates into a practical top whack of maybe 80mph in most circumstances. Not impressive. Of course, no one who bought a custom was expected to care about flat out performance. If they did, they'd buy a normal bike, simple as that.

## DEVELOPMENT

By the time the LTD came along the basic design was six years old and had been

developed about as far as possible. The only real event before the model gave way to the new water-cooled twins in 1985 was in the transmission department. Following the lead of those well-known masters of avant-garde engineering, Harley-Davidson, Kawasaki offered a belt-drive version of the LTD from 1981. So that the choice was entirely up to customers, both were listed at £1199. This probably made the rubber band model a bargain, because accommodating the wider, Kevlar-reinforced belt was not simply a matter of changing the sprockets.

The advantages were quieter, smoother running, reduced maintenance (no lube required and infrequent adjustment), plus a service life claimed to be two to five times that of a properly looked after chain. On the debit side, the belt had to be tensioned correctly – and it was a lot more expensive to replace.

## PRICES

No one ever accused the LTD440 of being beautiful, and apart from the novelty of belt drive it didn't really have much going for it, which explains why there are so few around. Stranger things have happened, but prices are likely to be stuck in the zero to £1000 bracket for a long time unless an absolutely mint example turns up.



## RIDING

The 80s custom bike doesn't offer the greatest riding experience. High, wide handlebars; lots of steering trail; fat, high profile rear tyre; rearward weight bias. You didn't need to be Kenny Roberts to work out that the handling would be slow and imprecise, getting worse at high speed when the rider acts as a wind vane. Still, as the engine is only good for about 90mph, the LTD can be a relaxed cruiser and has the right sort of power characteristics for slicing through traffic. Pity that the bars are so wide that you'll spend all day clipping door mirrors.

Perhaps the bike's best feature is its sound – 360-degree firing intervals means it makes a nice deep burble, just like an old Brit twin.





**CB200T**, 1976, 11,078 miles, t&t, plenty of work done, very good condition, not restored, totally original, £1150 ono. Tel. 01242 570428 or 07748301809. Gloucs.



**CCM R30S**, Supermoto Dec 03, 644, Suzuki engine carbon look paint, Remus pipe new chain and sprocket, £2750 ono. Tel. 01724 848131 or 07811755371. North Lincs.



**HONDA CB72**, 1966, restored, new pistons and liners, very good condition, £1500. Tel. 0161 928 1555. Cheshire.



**SUZUKI 600** Bandit, unfaired, 1997, R reg, 11k, Alpha-dot, 11 months' MoT, garaged, just serviced, totally excellent condition, £1695 ono, may p/x Classic Jap 70s-80s. Tel. Nigel 0114 2884226. Sheffield.



**HONDA 360** was good runner, stood up 4 years, plus 360 engine, 14k, £250 ono the lot, also lots of original spare parts. Tel. 01275 794794. Bristol.



**SUZUKI RG500**, 1986, 15 miles, 1 year tax, MoT, new paint, RGV forks & wheels, Dep cans, new head gaskets, all std parts are available. Tel. 0208 6908607 or 07785 535526. London.



**KAWASAKI Z550**, 1980, very good, unrestored condition, 31,000 miles, 2 owners from new, stored for last 12 years, £700. Tel. 01778 425837. South Lincs.



**MOTO GUZZI**, 1978, 85OT Cali I electronic ignition, unrestored, tax Oct 05, MoT May 06, some history, stainless steel exhaust, top box/panniers, new rear tyre, manuals, 26,042 miles. Tel. 01483 821946. Surrey.



**LAVERDA Alpino 500**, 1986, 12 months t&t, 35k miles, engine overhaul at 32k by Monty d'ons, Lafranconi silencers, Konis spares, receipts, £1500 ono. Tel. 07949 462989. S.W. London.



**KAWASAKI GPZ 900R**, A7, H reg 1990, 1 year's MoT and 6 months' tax, 43,000 miles, excellent condition, £1495 ono. Tel. 0777 6214691 or 01342 844345. Surrey.



**SUZUKI GS1000S**, Wes Cooley replica, built by village bike shop, receipts for thousands spent, awesome spec, impressive performance, may p/x slabside GSX-R750, £2950. Tel. 01964 503857. Hull.



**HONDA CB750 K6**, 1979, vgc, t&t, hundreds been spent, too many parts to list, £3850. Tel. 01603 411673. Norwich.



**KAWASAKI Z650 B1**, 1977, MoT April 06, new chain & sprocket, Ferrett re-wire, well used reliable bike, £900. Tel. 07890657637. Hertfordshire.



**SUZUKI GS750E**, 1978, black, vgc, lots spent, electronic ignition, new coils, carbs rebuilt, 4-2 exhaust original book/tools, taxed, new MoT, £1250. Tel. 01633 895848. Newport, Gwent.



**YAMAHA XV1000**, Virago, 1986, low mileage excellent condition, lovely example of this rare model, £1975. Tel. 01568 708435. Hereford.



**SUZUKI B120**, good condition, all original, easy restoration to show condition or just buy to ride, £450 ono. Tel. 07946 568578. West Midlands.



**KAWASAKI GPZ900R**, 1995 A8, t&t, superb condition, well looked after, 29k miles, new Macadam tyres, stainless front pipes, etc. £1900. Tel. 01373 858341. Wilts.



**YAMAHA XS650B**, 1975, Halco restored April 2004, taxed, MoT, July 2006, superb order, some spares, manual, £2195. Tel. 01425 629834. Hampshire.



**KAWASAKI Z900A4**, total restoration, near concours, chrome, engine covers, Goodridge hoses, otherwise standard, £5750 ono, p/x S3 KH500. Tel. 01379 674426.



**SUZUKI GT380B**, 1979, super standard example, first to see and ride will buy, £1500 ono. swap + cash good S3/KH500. Tel. 01379 674426. South Norfolk.



**KAWASAKI ZIB 900**, 1975, UK bike, only three owners, new coachwork, pipe, shocks, a real headturner, lovely condition, be quick, £2800 ono. Tel. 01588 620302. Wales.



**TRIUMPH LEGEND** 2000, excellent condition, screen carrier, Datagged, new r/tyre, t&t, green/silver, 8000 miles, £3200 lady owner. Tel. 01772 734598. Preston.



**YAMAHA RD350**, YPVS F2 original frame and engine numbers, full engine rebuild, new chain, sprockets, wheel, bearings, tyres, blue & yellow, £850. Tel. 01639 841171. South Wales.



**YAMAHA SDR200**, MoT, no tax, small dent + scratch in top of tank plus another for spares, £1000. Tel. 0208 690 6058. London.



**SUZUKI SV650S SK2**, silver, 2002, immaculate, 2900 miles, fsh, t&t, April 2006, £2795. Tel. 07760 252873 email d a v p 8 @ t i s c a l i . c o . u k Hampshire.



**MOTO GUZZI 1000S**, 37,000 miles, black/orange with matching fairing, stunning bike, all the usual modifications, £2900 ono. Tel. 07792231202. Twickenham.



**HONDA CD200** Benly, 1982, in metallic blue, good condition especially for year, 12 months' MoT, £275 ono. Tel. 01305 788591. Dorset.



**XS 650 Special US**, 1982 24k miles, reliable and good overall condition, Tel. Oliver 0207 6071353 or 0797 0273894. London.



**998 HILMAN IMP**, Classic registered, fully tuned engine, Southern 100 winner 4 times, 2 spare engines 1 spare gearbox £6500. Tel. 07974592956. North Yorkshire.



**SUZUKI GSXR 600**, 2003, 4700 miles, cat 1 Meta alarm immobiliser, colour matched undertray + hugger, blueflame can, double bubble, mint condition. £4500. Tel. 01224 724712. Aberdeen.





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**SUZUKI GT250X7**, 1978, all new paintwork, re-covered seat, new tyres, wheel bearings, good chrome, new t&t, runs well, £700. Tel. 07891294834. Gloucestershire.



**SUZUKI GT380B**, 1979, blue, tax and MoT July 06, new tyres, battery and forks, good condition, £750 ono. Tel. 07940506230. Hertfordshire.



**HONDA TL125'S**, 1976 P, fully restored, VJMC cup winner, unused and as new condition, you won't find a better TL, £2750. Tel. 01296 661284. Bedfordshire.



**HONDA CBR900 RR**, N FireBlade, the original (Round Eye) 1992, absolutely mint, not many left like this. oiro £2500. Tel. 07817 555839. Clwyd.



**SUZUKI ZR50**, good condition and runner, low mileage, 5 gears, MoT March 06, £250 or why? Tel. 0151 2701786 07957957575. Merseyside.



**YAMAHA TZR250**, classic in the making, newly refreshed with Yamaha pistons, tested June 06, nearly new tyres, must be seen, £895. Tel. 01526 388364, 07773 594907. Lincolnshire.



**HONDA CB750F**, 1979, 28,000 miles, Sorn, very good condition, £1250 ono. Some spare parts. Tel. 01604 642414 after 6pm. Northamptonshire.



**BMW R80RT** Monoshock, 1995, 75,000m, g cond, taxed, new MoT, dual front discs, BMW luggage and heated grips, £1350 ovno. Tel. 01904 783682 or 07968 144349. North Yorkshire.



**YAMAHA SR500**, 1978, UK, silver, daily use, t&t October 05, new seat and paint, £500 or make offer. Tel. 07905 472817. Worcestershire.



**YAMAHA SR250**, 1993, very good condition, MoT and taxed until May 2006 would like £900 ono. Tel. 01295690898. Warwickshire.



**TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE T140V**, 1976, 13,700 miles, good condition, first to see will buy! £2300 ono. Tel. 07816017975. Oxfordshire.



**YAMAHA TZR**, 250cc, 1989, original colours white and red, excellent condition, 1 year's MoT, £795. Tel. 01256 850454. Basingstoke.



**SUZUKI GSX 1100 ET**, W reg, black holographic paint, tax & MoT used daily, £895. Tel. 01384 821303, 07969 508988 ph004e0809@blueyonder.co.uk. West Midlands.



**ITALJET**, early kids' Motocross machines, almost 2 bikes in need of t/c, too many other projects, £145 ovno. Tel. 01438 741491. Herefordshire.



**YAMAHA RD350LCII YPVS**, 31k, 1985, vgc, F2 pipes, good tyres, new brakes/lines, full MoT, £795 ono. Tel. 01562 60755 or 07747 777326. Worcestershire.



**KAWASAKI KR1**, 1990 G reg, excellent throughout, nice motor, loads spent, tax & MoT, £1400. Tel. Matt on 01243 576436. West Sussex.



**HONDA S90**, 1966, MoT, with original reg number, totally rebuilt and immaculate. £1350 ovno. Tel. 01225 705029. Wiltshire.



**YAMAHA XJR400**, 1999 V-reg, 11 month's t&t, 13k, digital dash, one mature owner, £1795. Tel. lan on 01964 630350 after 6pm. East Yorkshire.



**APRILIA TUAREG 350**, 1989, vgc, t&t, manuals, 1 prev owner, 21k miles, dry stored 9 years, recent recommission, nice bike, £750 ovno. Tel. 72281161. London.



**YAMAHA XS650 Custom** 1980, beautiful condition, taxed, long MoT, £1200 or why? Tel. 01745 585987. Clwyd.



**BSA A50**, 1963, MoT June 06, tax exempt, 12v electronic ignition, good runner, minor cosmetic attention needed £1150 ono. Tel. 01530 450212. Leicestershire.



**KAWASAKI ZRX1100 C2**, 1998 R reg, 24,000m, Micron can, Rental bars, new front tyre, mini indicators taxed, MoT, good condition, £2750 ovno. Tel. 01604 645189. Northants.



**KAWASAKI GPZ900R**, H reg 1990, 25,000 miles, Nexxus exhaust, Goodridge hoses, progressive fork springs, alarmed, taxed, MoT, good condition, £1450 ovno. Tel. 01604 645189. Northants.



**HONDA CX500CC**, UK custom, 1981, new exhaust, serviced, t&t, 3900 miles, runs well, fair cond for year, new brakes, £575 ono. Tel. 07768073265. Essex.



**KAWASAKI Z650**, 1979, British model, all original except 4-1 exhaust, only 24,000 miles, superb runner, 3 owners, MoT, £1295 ono. Tel. 01489 795013. Southampton.



**HONDA NT650V** Deauville, 37k miles, t&t July 06, fsh, Honda high screen, large pannier lids, Givi top box with brake light, £2500. Tel. 01280 816816. Buckingham.



**KAWASAKI Z650**, 1978, 26,600 miles, MoT and tax, super condition, 4 into 1 Motad otherwise original, £995 ono. Tel. 01604 414034. Northampton.



**SUZUKI GT750**, 1975 N reg, super condition, thousands spent, receipts, restored in 2003, used last year, £2750. Tel. 01248 670037 or 07796172562. North Wales.



**KAWASAKI EN450**, t&t, 1985, Goodridge hoses, low mileage, owned last 10 years, vgc, £795 ono. Tel. 0116 2892478. Leicester.



**KAWASAKI GPZ1100**, A1, 1984, carb conversion, 4 into 1, Goodridge hoses, new seat, battery, stove frame, some spares, £995 ovno. Tel. 0116 2892478. Leicester.





**KAWASAKI Z750 LTD**, 1983, 12,500 miles, good condition, t&t, £1500 ono would consider good GB175/200 CB250 as part exchange. Tel. 01289 331080. Northumberland.



**YAMAHA SR500**, Clubman clip ons, r/sets, stainless spokes, Goldie h/light brackets and front guard, perfect, £1650 ono. Tel. 07746 871910. Kent.



**HONDA CB650**, 1981, t&t, MoT July 06, new tyres, excellent condition, well cared for, includes spares, £950. Tel. 07879 423988. Tel. 01506 882817.



**KAWASAKI Z1100R** Lawson rep, 1986, 24k, UK bike, t&t, lots of new parts, very clean almost standard bike, £2850 ono. Tel. 07761439600. Leics.



**LAVERDA RGS1000**, Corsa 1989, MoT July 06, excellent condition, alloy box, swingarm, stainless exhaust and brake lines, £3950. Tel. 01274 778462. West Yorks.



**HONDA GOLDWING**, 1200cc, 1987, American import, 33,000 miles, vgc, taxed and tested, £3800 ovno. Tel. 01224 774220. Aberdeen.



**HONDA VF400 FD**, 1986, t&t, 12,000 miles, totally original collector condition, mature owner, 14 years, garaged and fair weather use, £1250. Tel. 01484 519837. Huddersfield



**HONDA CB650SS** Nighthawk, 1982, 32,275 miles, MoT, excellent condition, two new exhausts, used during summer – restored in winter, £1250. Tel. 01749 672269. Somerset.



**SUZUKI RG500H**, 1987, 99% original, rebuilt forks, brakes, clutch & gearbox, all genuine parts & spares, £2500. Tel. 01530 450503 or 0780 1931489. Leics.



**YAMAHA FZR1000** Exup, 1991, 25,000 miles, t&t May 06, two owners, loads of new parts & accessories, too much to list, £1995. Tel. 01530 450503 or 0780 1931489. Leics.



**KAWASAKI ZZR1100**, 1997 P reg, long MoT, good condition, Scottolier, immobiliser and alarm, £2300 ono. Tel. 07812196337 or 01288 356440. Cornwall.



**HONDA CX 500C**, t&t, £850 ono. May p/x lighter bike. Tel. 01202 773726. Dorset.



**YAMAHA RD250LC**, 1981, 1 year's MoT, & tax, 23,000 miles, very original condition, top-end rebuild, genuine parts, runs/rides perfectly, excellent bike, £875 ovno. Tel. 0208 423 1220 or 07748 597695. Middx.



**KAWASAKI 750** Zephyr, stainless 4 into 1 exhaust, spare seat, new MoT, £950 ono. Tel. 01432 340256. Hereford.



**TRIUMPH 900 TRIDENT**, 1996, t&t, low miles, excellent condition, much spent must be seen, £2600. Tel. 0121 458 6407. Birmingham.



**SUZUKI GS750E**, 1979, blue, vgc, many new parts – seals, beading, tank etc, MoT end June 06, tax end Dec 05, 47k, £925 ono. Tel. 07767898861. Norfolk.



**HONDA EUROSPORT**, 1982, 500cc, t&t 12 months, total rebuild to engine, genuine 16,000 miles, history, £1400 ono. Tel. 0788 4416741. Leeds.



**LAVERDA ALPINO**, 500cc, 1983, new tax and MoT, rebuilt motor, great as it is/make a Montjuic! £1500. Tel. 01947 893356. North Yorks.



**YAMAHA YR5**, 350, 1971, MoT, tax exempt, good condition, collectable classic, very eye catching bike, £800 ono. Tel. 01691 829122. Powys.



**DUCATI 750 Sport**, H reg, new battery, cam belts, fork seals, rear tyres, serviced good condition, Dell'Orto carbs, MoT July 06, bargain £950 ono. Tel. 01244 383730. Cheshire.



**HARLEY-DAVIDSON** Hydra Glide, 52, restored 4 years ago, foot change, superb condition, Avon gangsters, pan head, £11,950, may p/x. Tel. 01253 711698 or 07973 217833. Witham.



**HONDA CBX750**, 1985, only 12,000 miles, history, silver, recent C&S fork seals, new tyres, MoT July 06, s/s exhaust Motad Neta, std not messed with, Givi Sports rack, £1150. Tel. 015242 41622. Lancs.



**COTTON**, 1960, 325 Sports twin, totally sorted, Akront rims etc, one of the best, new tax, MoT, full docs old and new, transferable reg, £2000. Tel. 01455 283066. Leicestershire.



**ROTRAX JAP** Speedway bike, type 4B engine, Jawa countershaft clutch, mainly new Barber replica frame, wheels, stunning condition, £2500. Tel. 024 7654 3543 or mobile 07984 876687. Coventry.



**JIM SUSANS ARIEL HT5**, Ex Colin Dommatt, very competitive machine, superb example of the Bikecraft marque. Tel for full spec, £4750 ono. Tel. Jon 01803 521896 or 07837 660472. Devon.



**TRIUMPH**, 1960, 21 (3TA) matching numbers, original reg, old green logbook, some history, tax exempt, long MoT, many new parts fitted, ride away for £2250. Tel. 07814 925085. East Yorks.



**DUCATI MHR 900SS**, current MoT, 19,000 miles, £3900 negotiable. Tel. 01727 861255. Herts.



**VELOCETTE VENOM**, 1964, Clubman, vgc, 12v electrics, rear sets, Borrani rims, new battery, 12 months' MoT, same owner 14 years, £4000. Tel. 01252 674507. Hampshire.



**MOTO MORINI** Classic Italian, 350cc, V-twin, reg 84, model K2, vehicle Sorned – been stored approx 7 years, nice condition, 20,000 miles from new £1500. Tel. 01636 626671 after 6pm.



**TRIUMPH T110**, 1955, 1400 miles since rebuild, frame 567406, engine T110-67406 MoT June 06 and free tax, £4250. Tel. 01480 461424 Cams.





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**GREEVES 250CC**, 4T Essex Twin Cafe Racer Special, recon crank, new modern tyres, Borrani rims, Honda front wheel expansion exhaust, 11 months' MoT, £17,600 ono. Tel. 01282 861853.



**TRIUMPH**, 550cc, 1930, excellent condition, taxed tested, been on last 6 Banbury runs, sell £3000, also 1948 Tiger 100 immaculate condition, t&t. Tel. 01706821801. Lancs.



**MANX NORTON 40M**, 1956, original, all numbers, engine frame, forks, g/box as new, also Manx Rolling Chassis, Featherbed with Triumph 500cc GP engine, 1948 & gear box will split. Tel. 01706821801. Lancs.



**BSA Enthusiast** offers, 1971 OIF BSA 250cc, OTJ rebuild, used regularly, really very good, £1250, also BSA 441a Victor many extras, used regularly, new engine build, exceptional, £1750. Tel. 01992 651772. Herts



**DOT TRIALS 3RA Villiers**, 1961, 250cc, lots of money spent on the engine, not reg, £1100 ono. Tel. 0161 737 7315. Salford.



**APRILIA RS250** 1996, Limited Edition, Aprilia works bike department, series number R123, 16,310 miles, 3 former keepers, alarm/immobiliser, £1699 or possible p/x Tel. 01767 626319. Beds.



**SUZUKI 250 RG Gamma** (Walter Wolf) Ltd edition, one owner since import, D registered, dry stored, unused for some time but started regularly, vgc, £995 Tel. 01767 626319. Beds.



**HARLEY DAVIDSON, FXDWG**, 1997, immaculate showroom condition, only 17,000 dry miles from new, many extras, phone for details, £6950. Tel. 01275 844787. Bristol.



**TRIUMPH TROPHY**, 1952, close fin motor, matching frame and engine numbers, VMCC registered, recent rebore, crank balanced, road and trials tyres, £4950. Tel. 01985 217953 evening or 01722 741247 day.



**TRIUMPH 900 Thunderbird**, 1995, 15,000 genuine miles, MoT June 06, fsh & handbook, includes screen, backrest & rack, last used on road Aug 04, excellent cond, £2200. Tel. 01274 821031. West Yorks.



**DOUGLAS T35 Sport**, the most coveted post-war model, concours rebuild 700 miles ago, totally correct, superb, original MoTs, taxed, £4250. Tel. 01865 514308 anytime. Oxford.



**TRIUMPH TROPHY TR25W**, 250cc, 1970, vgc, Boyer Bransden ignition and indicators fitted, 393 miles since restoration, £1500. Tel. 01913884743. County Durham.



**TRIUMPH TIGER 750**, 1976, US spec, N/F tyre, matching engine/frame numbers, MoT May 06, tax October, well sorted, ready to ride, Boyer ignition, £2300 ono. Tel. 01372 363570. Surrey.



**PEUGEOT**, 1927, two stroke, approx 200cc, requires complete restoration, fresh from a French barn, B/E wheels, drum brakes chain drive, £1000. Tel. 01732 883282. Kent.



**BSA**, 1941 WM20, 500 SV regd, 1949, tax and Mot, July 06, £2250. Tel. 01732 883282. Kent.



**NORTON 650SS**, 1969 restrained cafe racer, rebuilt to very high standard & spec, Hemmings engine, £6750. Also Norton Goldstar 500cc Special 1958, t&t, £3150. Tel. 01438 871775 or 07765 413431.



**BSA GOLD SR500**, 9500 dry miles, purpose build Sept 2000, single leather seat, Avon road runners, alloy tank, t/s straight bars, exceptional cond, 12 months' MoT, tax, reluctant sale, £4500. Tel. 01622 728181.



**AJS** 1957, 16 MS, 350cc, in excellent condition, easy starter, owned 10 years, tax and MoT, £1900 onvo. Tel. 01843 602667. Kent.



**MONTESA COTA 247**, 1973, lovely condition, recon engine, powder coated frame, mostly restored bike, has V5, on Sorn, would make great twin shock comp bike, £1000. Tel. 01452 855858. Gloucester.



**KAWASAKI ZRX1100**, taxed & tested, Kawasaki manual, crash bars, colour belly pan, paddock stand, £3300 ono. Tel. 07917402134. Cheshire.



**SUZUKI GT250 X7**, X reg, in very good condition and runner, taxed and MoT till June, £525. Tel. 0115 8542189. Nottingham.



**YAMAHA YB100 De Luxe** 1988 (F) vgc, red 3400 miles only £898 onvo. Tel. 01795 474701. Kent.



**SUZUKI GS750**, 1977, 30k, superb condition, recent service, MoT, tax, battery, chain and sprockets, swap twin shocks trials, £1800. Tel. 01743 343530. Shropshire.



**HONDA ST70**, original wee bike, 2 owners from new, immaculate condition, 1900 miles on the clock, £1500 ono. Tel. 07771846446. Lothian.



**YAMAHA FJ1200**, 1987, not t&t, used until recently, rear wheel & head bearings needed. hence £600 ono. Tel. 01623 432920. Nottinghamshire.



**BMW 650 LS**, 1981, 30,000 miles, MoT and tax Jan 2006, phone further details, £700 ono. Tel. 01438 249626. Hertfordshire.



**YAMAHA FZR1000RU Exup** 1991, J reg, 11 months' MoT, 5 months' tax, 13,600 miles, excellent condition, new D208 tyres, £1850. Tel. 07875 761306. West Midlands.



**HONDA CT125C** rare motorcycle in the UK please phone for information, £595. Tel. 01298 22080 or 07851 800375. Derbyshire.



**HONDA CB 750KZ**, (Californian import), selling as non-runner as it hasn't run for 12 months. Tel. 07719261985. Greater Manchester.



**GSXR750**, 1985, very good condition, MoT, 26,000 miles, £1000. Tel. 01372 729646. Surrey.





**BMW K100RS**, 16v, 1990, 112k (70,000 miles), ABS, panniers, hazards, gauges, MoT 4/06, tax, £1200 ono. Tel. 01342 837005 or 07976 361599. Surrey.



**YAMAHA XJ900S** Diversion, 1997, one owner, summer use only, 34,000 miles, Yamaha panniers £2450 ono. Tel. Richard 01628 625273. Berkshire.



**KAWASAKI KZ1100** Ltd, 1984, shaftdrive, 30k, t&t, Contis, braided hoses, screen, vgc, reliable, fast cruiser, offers over £2000. Tel. 07734 229252. Cheshire.



**HONDA VFR750FR(95)**, red, street fightered with Fireblade front end, Dream Machine paint, high level E marked exhaust, long t&t, £1400 ono. Tel. 01737 277834.



**KAWASAKI ZXR250**, 19,800 miles, tax and MoT, 33bhp cert, Datatool immobiliser, great bike – owned for the last 2.5 years, ladyowner. Tel. 07949318932.



**SUZUKI GS550E**, 1981, low mileage, excellent condition, full MoT, Sorn, standard except Motad exhaust, very reliable, owned over 2 years, £995 ono. Tel. 01204 598129 or 07790568488. Grt Manchester.



**KAWASAKI KH250**, P reg, fully refurbished, lots of new parts, chrome and paint, tax, test August 2006, £695 ono. Tel. 01904 703415 or 07940 916685. York.



**NSU QUICKLY**, 1959, restored with lots of new parts, powder coated frame, proof of age, £799 ono. Tel. 0151 336 3945. Cheshire.



**SUNBEAM S7**, excellent condition, 480 miles since restoration, 1000s spent, £3950. Part ex Indian Chief basket case, cash difference. Tel. 0191 4282492. Tyne and Wear.



**HONDA CB450**, K5 1972, t&t, new tyres, fully restored, £1200 ono. Tel. 01695 579897 after 6pm. Lancashire.



**SCOTT FLYING SQUIREL**, 1935, buff logbook, MoT, tax, unrestored except new exhaust, radiator, spare tank, nice example, £3999 ono. Tel. 07703464676. West Midlands



**KAWASAKI SR650**, 1978, purple, beautiful condition, only 1500 miles, since complete professional rebuild, t&t 10 months, £1295. Tel. 01252 793848. Surrey.



**YAMAHA DT175MX**, 1978, 15500 miles, t&t, early frame number, matching engine number, recent rebore, £750. Tel. 01202 381110. Dorset.



**SUZUKI GS450E**, 1986 D, tax & MoT end Nov, reliable and economical, 2 new tyres, £425 ono. Tel. 01438 722374. Stevenage.



**SUZUKI GT380B**, 1979, blue, tax and MoT July 06, new tyres, battery and forks, good condition, £750 ono. Tel. 07940 506230. Hertfordshire.



**MZ MOTORCYCLE**, 1985, 250cc, good condition, garage kept, leather panniers, top box, £600. Tel. 01255 812381. Essex.



**KAWASAKI Z650** Streetfighter Rolling Chassis, many new parts, Z650 basket case, too many parts to list, £500. Tel. 07753 557555. London.



**HONDA CB650Z**, 1981, rebuilt, p/c frame, 2nd engine, many other parts, manuals, reliable runner, £650 ono. Tel. 01784 461662. Surrey.



**YAMAHA RD200PX** many spares, £450. Suzuki CS125, 4 stroke scooter, £275. Suzuki GP100U, new piston, £295, all vgc, t&t. Tel. 01903 755330. West Sussex.



**DUCATI 750 SPORT**, 1989, good condition, recent rear tyre, chain, belts, battery, on Sorn, will MoT for buyer, £1295 ovno px considered. Tel. 01535 676334 or 07745 483876. West Yorkshire.



**YAMAHA XJ550** Street Fighter, 1982 X reg, FZ600 engine & carbs fitted, been totally rebuilt for grown up, taxed & tested, immaculate condition, £1500 ovno. Tel. 01535 676334 or 07745 483876. West Yorkshire.



**B21 BSA**, 1939 Deluxe, 250cc, OHV, restored with original engine/frame, two reg owners from new, 39k miles, looks good, runs well, BSAOL dating cert, offers around £3200. Tel. 01494 881040. Bucks.



**KAWASAKI GPZ550**, 1990 G, 10,050 miles, taxed, MoT, one owner from new, good condition, summer use only, £1295 ono. Tel. 07740924200 or 01482 567878. East Yorkshire.



**XL125**, Chinese copy, 05, red, taxed 07/06, mph converted, 12 volt, £850 ono. Tel. 01379 588161 or 07845 941326. Norfolk.



**YAMAHA RD200DX**, 1979, tax, MoT, Microns, fantastic condition, a real gem in blue, £825. Tel. 07719931029. Middlesex.



**SUZUKI GSXR1100**, 1989, slingshot, import on J plate, 38,000km, vgc, all original spec, 12 months' MoT, £2200 ovno. Tel. 07795 180024. Cambs.



**ARIEL 1935**, 350cc, NH converted for trials over 30 years ago, competitive, reliable, road registered with original number, buff l/b, V5, new rims, tyres, seat etc, history, £1650. Tel. 01706 225727. Lancs.



**NORTON Commando 850** Interstate, 1974, black, good looking, reliable, easy starting bike, 1 year's MoT, 6 months' tax, £3250. Tel. 0208 657 4055. South Croydon.



**CORGI MK2**, 1948, V5c, taxed, MoT, very good original condition, good starter, rides perfect, single speed kick start model, fitted period sidecar, excellent chassis, £1250. Tel. 01159 194054 Notts.



**GSXR 1100N**, 1992, 35k miles, 10 months' MoT, very well maintained, exc orig condition, £1500. Tel. 01743 233920; mobile 07835 429216.





**HONDA SL350**, 1970, UK reg, some new parts, running but has small problem, £400. Tel. 01132 292254. W. Yorks.



**BMW R80T**, illness forces sale, less than 11k miles since rebuild, manuals and panniers, t&t. Tel. John 01403 248275; 07879 475151. W Sussex.



**HONDA GOLDWING GL 1200**, MoT Jun 06, all paintwork in good condition, £1800 ovno. Tel. 07974 747464. N Yorks.



**SUZUKI GS850G**, 1981, superb condition, 30k, rebuilt and refurbished, runs well, many extras p/coated frame, £1000 ovno. Tel. 01202 522082. Dorset.



**KAWASAKI GPZ900R**, 1990, exc condition, 8000 genuine miles, t&t till June 06, last of this model, £2400. Tel. 01416 445503.



**DUCATI DARMAH**, 1978, superb condition, full engine rebuild 6k ago, plus professional paintwork, owned last 10 years, £3000 ono. 01235 224360. Oxfordshire.



**MOTO GUZZI 1000SP**, 1980, in immaculate condition, fully restored, runs and sounds superb, much spent on restoration, all receipts, £2500 ono. Tel. 01733 328617 evenings. Cambridgeshire.



**HONDA CB 400F**, 1977, with Haynes manual plus panniers, plus new boxed cylinder head, mileage 21,890, £1395. Tel. 01986 780944; 07910 503059. Suffolk.



**GT 380**, 1977, 28k miles, running but needs attention and a few bits, kept indoors past 2 years, sensible offers only. Tel. 07706 586207. Staffs.



**BMW R80/7 RS**, t&t Jun 06, 1978, recent battery, runs very well, original good tyres, s/s silencers, ride away. Tel. 01759 303164. E Yorks.



**BMW R65**, 1979, s/s exhaust, new tyres, new clutch, BMW luggage, 43k miles, t&t, £1100 ono. Tel. 01253 821488. Lancs.



**BMW R100S**, 1980, excellent condition, full MoT, extensive history, panniers, htd grips, £2000. Tel. 01256 397945



**SUZUKI GS850**, 1979, very good condition for year, long tax and MoT, first to see will buy, no area selected! Tel. 07833 175782.



**DUCATI 160 MONZA**, rebuilt 4 years ago, lovely little bike, been standing, £800 ono. Tel. 07976 188238. Burton-on-Trent.



**MOTO GUZZI Le Mans 850 Mk 2**, 1979, 36k miles, all stainless and Goodridge, excellent condition, OIRO £2000. 01189 672732. Berks.

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## Bikes For Sale

**KAWASAKI KH250**, 1979, 18,500 miles t&t, new tyres and chain, runs well. £795. Tel. 01903 523810 Sussex.

**CB200**, 1976, stored for 10 years may be more, runs, 22,000 miles on the clock, needs restoring, £250 ono. Tel. Ben 07974903189. London.

**SUZUKI GT250M**, 1976 P reg, Candy Gold, low mileage, MoT till April 06, v good cond, £795 ono. Tel. 01430 440507 or 07734658339. East Yorkshire.

**YAMAHA RD250LC**, 1981, black, restored, not mint, vgc, 12 mths tax/MoT, rebuilt engine, £1250. Tel. 07886 097429. Cardiff.

**2X SUZUKI X7'S** one 'Ealystocks' racer... ready to go, other has 275cc motor in frame, loads of spares, £700. Tel. 01925 791773. Cheshire.

**KAWASAKI Z1000**, 1976, excellent condition, 25,000 miles, £1995 ovno. Tel. 01986 788675. Norfolk.

**HONDA XR200** Twinshock, 1980, reasonable condition, needs some parts, some parts, £350. Tel. 01686 688615 after 7 pm. Powys.

**HONDA CX 500**, only 5,000 from new, nice, original and clean, taxed and tested, recent service, £1500 or p/x Brit bike. Tel. 01749 890170. Somerset.

**HARLEY-DAVIDSON** 1340 electra Glide Ultra Classic, 12300 miles, long t&t, good condition, £8250 ono. Tel. 01785 780068 or 07721 774451. Staffordshire.

**HONDA CAMINO PA50** moped, running but needs a tidy! V reg. Tel. 01233 500395. Kent.

**KAWASAKI Z1100R** Lawson replica UK bike, average condition, carbs need cleaning as been stood, all original make good restoration or ride. Tel. 0781 7414638. Oxfordshire.

**HONDA 400/4** restored at great expense, powder coated frame, new rims, spokes, cables etc taxed & MoT till April 06, £1600. Tel. 01704 232166. Lancashire.

**YAMAHA DT175**, 1976, R reg, twin shock original complete and runs, no MoT hence £425. Tel. 01604 839052 or 07754 395901. Northamptonshire.

**KAWASAKI GPZ900R** A8, 1992 K reg, MoT 07/06 tax 01/06, Nexus exhaust braided hoses, vgc, £1600 ono. Tel. 01452 618272 or 07833 565817 Gloucestershire.

**MOTO MORINI**, 350, 1975, MoT, with spares, in good working order, £1000. Tel. 07929714191. Cambridgeshire.

**HONDA VT500E**, E reg, 1987, 11,900 miles, 7 months MoT and tax, vgc, fsh, new rear tyre and battery, £900. Tel. 01424 721210. Hastings.

**HONDA VF1000 R-F**, 1984, 24,000km, import, taxed, tested, alarmed, completely standard and in superb condition, £1950. Tel. 01782 775029. Stoke on Trent.

**KAWASAKI GPZ400S**, import, 1986, MoT May 06, no tax, good condition, not being used hence £450 ono. Tel. 01691 657379. Shropshire.

**BMW R100/7**, 1978 spares or repair bike complete, water damage only, top box, panniers, £499. Tel. 01228 592696. Cumbria.

**MOTO GUZZI V3511**, good condition, been standing, low miles, needs tlc, no t&t, £450 ono. Tel. 01952 248058. Telford.

**KAWASAKI Z1300**, black, 1979, standard bike, £3950. Tel. 01428 644819. Surrey.

**HONDA CD185T**, 1978, restoration project, dismantled second engine, engine fitted did run but suspect gearbox problems, £50 ono. Tel. 01293 510546 after 6pm. West Sussex.

**GT380 SUZUKI** Basket Case complete new mudguards, excellent exhaust, good engines, new loom, two of everything, runs fine, £300 ono. Tel. 07867 761046. Cheshire.

**KAWASAKI Z900 A4** original condition, must be seen for more details. Tel. 07749283646. Merseyside.

**HONDA REVERE** immaculate, 24k, luggage set, tank harness, windscreens, new battery & MoT, centre-stand, economical, mint, £950 ono. Tel. 01305 781530. Dorset.

**KAWASAKI KH250**, 1976, Allspeeds, new seat, wheels, 27,000 miles, original total rebuild 4 years ago, 300 miles on second engine, vgc offers over £750 + comes with spares. Tel. 01392 219405. Devon.

**SUZUKI RV90** sandbike, big tyres, very unusual, has all road legal lights, no spark, needs points, sell £300. Tel. 01932 829451. Surrey.

**YAMAHA RD250E**, standard white/red was basket case, just needs paint to finish, tax & MoT Nov 05, need room, £900 ovno. Tel. 07837641234. Staffordshire.

**HONDA 750**, DOHC, 1981, 80% complete for spares or repair, V5, £175 ono. Tel. 01252 512738. Hampshire.

**NORTON**, 1960 s/line frame + s/arm, f/glass tank, triumph, 1955 engine, Norton F/hub + bits & bobs, offers. Tel. 01942 711457. Wigan.

**YAMAHA XS400**, £350 ono, Honda CB185, £200 ono, MZ250 spares, or repair free. Tel. 01942 711457. Wigan.

**SUZUKI GS750E**, 1978, black vgc, lots spent, electronic ignition, new coils, 4-2 exhaust, carbs, rebuilt, cam chain replaced, new seat, new headlamp, 37,200 miles, original tools, owners book, taxed, MoT, £1250. Tel. 01633 895848. South Wales.

**HONDA CB500/5**, total rebuild, bills to prove, gold and black, new tank, saddle, mudguards, £2200 ovno. Tel. 01189 326442 or 07887 507016. Hampshire.

**YAMAHA DT400B** two show winning bikes, 1976, all receipts for spares to much to list, £1500. Tel. 01656 643894. South Wales.

**KAWASAKI GARAGE CLEAROUT**, Z1000 (79), ZIR (78), rolling chassis, GPZ 1100 BI (81), Z650 (80), CB 900F (79), Z1000 ST (resto), Z1000R (83), all need work, sensible offers. Can email pics. Spares available Z900/Z1000/Z1100R. Tel. 07815 578959. N East.

**YAMAHA FZR600** gen track bike, Hobbsport big bore kit 683cc, ignition advancer, flatslides, ported head, dynojetted, modified airbox + more £300 ono. Tel. 07867 761046 or 01606 833316. Cheshire.

**KAWASAKI 4ST**, 1982, 250 single, road bike, complete, running, restoration project, swap for Bantam or similar any condition. Tel. 07743 852439. Hartlepool.

**XT500**, 1977, total rebuild, not standard, ready for MoT, move forces sale, £800. Tel. 01654 781331 or 07793 272488.

**SUZUKI RGU250 P**, unfinished project, so much money spent, needs finishing, polished frame, swing arm, wheels, new bearings, chain, sprockets, pads etc, Stan Stephens stage 2 motor just been built, spare motor, needs bore, refurbished powervalves, rebuilt suspension, bodywork good no cracks. £800 ono. Tel. 01543 251483 or 07971 535859.

**HONDA ST70** monkey bike, original wee bike, 2 owners from new, immaculate condition, 1900 miles, £1500 ono. Lotherian.

**YAMAHA DIVERSION 900**, 1998, burgundy, 34k, heated grips, recent tyre and brake pads, vgc, £1800 ono. Tel. 07812 572204. Derbyshire.

**FREE TO GOOD HOME**, GPZ550H1 and CB250RS (box of spares for RS), both tatty and needing care, Tel. 01566 779831. Cornwall.

**Z1300-A4** unfinished project, can be heard running, resprayed in red/silver metalflake, frame powdercoated red, £1500 ono. Tel. Ben 07795024247. Oxfordshire.

**HONDA CB350K4**, Olive Green and Black, 1974, good condition, not t&t, 33,000 original miles, everything original, lack of time for restoration project. £650 ono. Tel. 01978 758950. Wrexham.

**SUZUKI GT750**, 1976, 12 months' MoT, a very nice bike, fully restored with receipts, £3995 ono. Tel. 07950 577037. West Yorks.

**HONDA VF1000 F2F** Bol'dor, 1986, red & silver, 43k, new fuel pipes, battery & recent chain, good condition, reliable sports tourer, £1500 ono. Tel. 01709 582740. South Yorkshire.

**HONDA CB200**, red, t&t 02/06, 2 into 1 pipe, good runner, 1975, £300 ono. Tel. 079105 28863. Northants.

**Z1000**, 1976, spares repairs, triple discs, wire wheels, 99% complete, non runner, turns over, ally swingarm, fork brace, £300, great project. Tel. 01785 248392. Stafford.

**MORINI 500**, 1982, 8000 miles, only needs some attention cosmetically, £1200 or exchange considered. Tel. 01268 710946. Essex.

**BENELLI 750** Six, 1976, needs restoration, £1500 or exchange considered. Tel. 01268 710946. Essex.

**KAWASAKI HIB**, 1972, restored t&t, £1750 ono also 2 x 750 Turbos, vgc, £1750 ono the pair. Tel. 01629 823011. Derbyshire.

**TRIUMPH TT600**, front crash hard, V/2000 recorded some panels included, £1400, swap unbodged 750 Tiger. Tel. 01923 231421. Herts.

**HONDA XL500R**, X reg, good original condition, tax and MoT, new rear tyre, £1150. Tel. 078340 06947. Bucks.

**YAMAHA DT250**, 1976, twinshock, 512 Prefix, good condition, new tyres, some new parts, parts book, manuals, spares, £650. Tel. 01525 873802. Beds.

**KAWASAKI KLR650**, 1996, P, 14,060 miles, new tyres, good condition, £1250 for quick sale, genuine reason for sale. Tel. 01476 572228. South Lincs.

**AJS 350 SPECIAL**, new everything, no lights, spare hi/comp engine, £1450. Triumph 350 scrambler, BRG runs strong, £1500. Tel. 01985 212719. Wilts.

**SUZUKI GSX750E**, 1989, ideal project runner, no MoT, Sorn, some standard, parts included £595. Tel. 01598 752278. North Devon.

**GS1000E**, good runner, needs attention but all there, stored under cover 4 years. £800 ono. Tel. 01437890632. Pems.

**YAMAHA XS400**, blue, vgc, £350. Honda CD185 needs battery, £150. MZ TS250, free spares/repair. Tel. 01942 711457. Wigan Lincs.

**FRANCIS BARNETT**, light cruiser 1959, 175cc green and white, swinging arm, restored to a high standard, new rims, tyres, exhaust etc, 25,400 miles from new, ring for details. Tel. 07818 425061. Northants.

**HONDA CB125T**, 1979, mint little bike but needs some little bits to finish, bargain, £460 + 125T parts. Tel. 07979082285. Anglesey.

**INDIAN CHIEF**, 1200cc motor and gearbox, 1931, virtually complete, bottom end and cylinder bores, A1, perfect original nickel on cylinders and heads, Beaulieu autojumble green field 365/366, £1950. Tel. 01790 753605 or 07789 157220. Lincs.

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**MOTO GUZZI V50 2**, 1980, black and red, also fully rebuilt, powder coated frame, vgc with full t&t, engine bars and rack, new tyres/battery/barrels & piston/heads/clutch/generator/coil etc, 2 spare engines, tanks, forks, seat etc, lots more useful spare, £1400 ovno. Tel. 02380 556605. Southampton.

**YAMAHA XS1100**, 4 into 1 exhaust, as new and powder coated, heat resistant black, resprayed fuel tank (blue with silver panels), Clymer & Haynes manuals, £100 the lot. Tel. 02380 556605. Southampton.

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## Wanted

**WANTED HONDA CD200** indicators + rear light, for CM125 all, ignition parts. Tel. 02392 648695. Hampshire.

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**CENTRE** Stand and air filter housing for Yamaha RD200DX. Tel. 01475 544870. Norfolk.

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**FZR 400RR**, 1986 breaking for spares. Tel. 07013158863. South Shields.

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# Lucky thirteen



WORDS/PHOTOS: Joe Brock

Joe Brock recalls a summer trip to the Isle of Wight with a dozen mates.

It was the summer of 1981 and we all had bikes. We'd discussed the summer trip in the George and Dragon, Downe in the depth of winter. We did a trip every year but this was going to be a biggie, to the Cotswolds, then the Isle of Wight. Why the Isle of Wight? Well, we couldn't quite afford the ferry to France. At least this way we could pretend we were going abroad. We were ready to go when the back brake on my SR500 started to stick; it had worn past its limit and the cam was turning past its maximum open position. I had to sort it out on the day much to the disgust of my fellow bikers.

The weather was great (as it always was in those days) so we set off from Orpington for the Cotswolds.

Let me introduce the team, Myself (Sprocket) into renovation but never had more than a fiver to spend, tended to like quirky bikes. Ray, a great bloke but no bike, so he came on the back of mine. Tils (or Gary, short for Garibaldi as he was a slap 'ead) who was one of the sensible riders (note the tank bag) so he took Domp, who had a GT185 which when I had my CD175 seemed lightning quick but by this time nobody was prepared to wait for him. Ball Knawer, bit of a nutter but quite skilful with a bike and had brains, with the best pillion I ever took on a bike, Champs. EJ (so called because when we worked in Tip Top Bakeries the foreman (Denbo) couldn't pronounce his rather exotic name) who always had the coolest stuff, ride his bike the quickest and could get round corners that everyone else bottled. You didn't want to put EJ at the front as we could all end up dead trying to keep up. On the back of EJ was Scrunity (we never really knew why) who always talked of XS750s but only ever

actually had an XL125. Kev who'd just realised that EJ had the same bike, with Steve (five bellies) on the back. Peeny, who had the smallest bike, and finally Chris who had the biggest bike and was the biggest nutter. The only thing brave enough to go pillion with Chris was the Til's family tent and even that's looking a bit pecky.

What a great trip. We'd pitch the tent, go out for a day's riding, and then return at night with other happy campers nervously looking to see which tent was ours. We had to leave a large space around the tent to park the bikes which one unhappy couple thought was an ideal place to pitch their tent. Wrong!

Actually, we weren't hooligans. We were sober during the day, walk to the pub at night, have a few snowballs and return to sleep it off for the next day's riding. It continued like that for an excellent seven days of brilliant fun.

How we got back alive is another matter. The general trend of riding for the day was to start off with someone sensible at the front. It was all very civilised. Then gradually we'd get faster and someone less sensible would take over the front slot. You'd get faster and faster until someone would almost 'come a cropper'. Then we'd stop, have a fag, (for those stupid enough to smoke), calm down, then set off at a civilised pace again. Then gradually we'd get faster and faster...

I had the closest thing to a disaster on this trip. The SR500 was great at lower speed, scratching down lanes, but suffered two-up from a soggy suspension. In an attempt to keep up, round Sandown somewhere, and with Domp on the back, we lost it at about 50mph round a right-hand bend. Both tyres slipped away from

under us and we thought we'd had it. The SR slid across the road but hit the curb and flipped upright again, skittering along the gutter upright and unharmed. The exhaust down tube had suffered a few scratches. So, at the end of the day, we laid the bike down again just to see at what angle the bike had been at to do this strange damage. Looking at an angle of around 25 degrees from horizontal wasn't nice. We had been lucky. Needless to say this calmed us down; well for at least the first 20 minutes of the next day's riding.

Riding in a group, at speed, is an exhilarating experience, but dangerous. Another time we were scratching along when suddenly a nicely sequenced set of red brake lights were going on in front of us. Instead of reacting immediately I wondered why everyone was slowing down on such a straight piece of road, only to realise that the road did a 90-degree right-hand bend. What looked like the road going straight into the distance was in fact a dirt track, not good at speed.

Great memories, and thankfully we all got back all right vowing that we'd do Le Mans next year. But that's another story.

The bikes in the picture are, from the left: Yamaha SR500, (big headlight version with mag wheels); Honda 400 Superdream (orange and black with silver comstars); Suzuki GS450 (a rare bike, looked like the GSX400, and went like stink); Honda CX500 (black and red with silver comstars); Honda CX500 (blue with silver comstars); Honda CB250RS (red with blue and white stripe – it kept up really rather well, especially when you thrashed the nuts off it) and finally Honda CB750F (black and silver, similar to the 900 but with proper handlebars).



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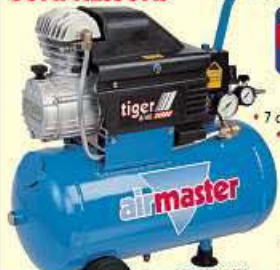


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**£140.94** (INC VAT)

Shown with optional drawer

MODEL	SIZE (LxWxH)	EX VAT	INC VAT
CN1000	1000x500x800	£119.95	£140.94
CN1500	1500x500x800	£154.95	£182.07
CN2000	2000x500x800	£174.95	£205.57

### Clarke MULTI-DRAWER PARTS CABINETS

\* Drawers on each model have slotted fronts allowing tickets to be added for easy identification

MODEL	SIZE (LxWxH)	EX VAT	INC VAT
CN1000	1000x500x800	£119.95	£140.94
CN1500	1500x500x800	£154.95	£182.07
CN2000	2000x500x800	£174.95	£205.57

### Clarke AUTO TRICKLE CHARGER

• Ideal for motorcycle batteries

• LED charging indicator

**ONLY £9.95** (EX VAT)  
**£11.69** (INC VAT)

### Clarke ANGLE GRINDERS

Inc. disc & handle

**FROM ONLY £12.95** (EX VAT)  
**£15.22** (INC VAT)

MASSIVE PRICE CUTS

MODEL	DISC	MOTOR	WAS	NOW EX	NOW INC
CAG1210	115	500w	£12.95	£15.22	
CAG115C	115	720w	£29.32	£22.95	£26.97
CAG115	115	500w	£30.49	£23.95	£28.14
COU115	115	1010w	£35.19	£24.95	£29.32
CAG232	230	2000w	£35.19	£25.95	£30.49

† Heavy Duty Contractor model

### Clarke TAP & DIE SETS

**FROM ONLY £12.95** (EX VAT)  
**£15.22** (INC VAT)

TYPE	EX VAT	INC VAT
16pce Metric	£12.95	£15.22
19pce UNF	£14.95	£17.57
24pce UNC/UNF/NPT	£19.95	£23.44
28pce Metric	£19.95	£23.44
33pce Metric/UNC/UNF/BSP	£29.95	£35.19

† 28pce Best Budget Buy 33pce Recommended Practical Classics

### Clarke BENCH GRINDERS

**FROM ONLY £12.75** (EX VAT)  
**£14.98** (INC VAT)

CBG6W (wet) features B\* westone & 6" drystone.

MODEL	DUTY	WHEEL DIA.	EX VAT	INC VAT
CBG6RP	DIY	150mm	£12.75	£14.98
CBG6Z	PRO	150mm	£18.95	£22.27
CBG6SC	HD	150mm	£25.49	£29.95
CBG6RW*	HD	150mm	£29.95	£35.19
CBG6SC	HD	200mm	£33.95	£39.89
CBG6W (wet)	HD	150mm/200mm	£33.95	£39.89

### Clarke BATTERY CHARGERS

Automatically regulates charge to battery condition

**FROM ONLY £9.95** (EX VAT)  
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### Clarke AUTO TRICKLE CHARGER

• Ideal for motorcycle batteries

• LED charging indicator

**ONLY £9.95** (EX VAT)  
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# Clarke HYDRAULIC MOTORCYCLE LIFT



**ONLY £299.95** (EX VAT)  
**£352.44** (INC VAT)

**400 KG**

- Locking wheel clamp
- Table size 2220 x 685mm
- Sliding plate aids wheel removal
- Max lift height 472mm

**ALSO AVAILABLE**

**ONLY £99.95** (EX VAT)  
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Full range of Drill Vices available

### Clarke DRILL PRESSES

\* Tables tilt 0-45° left and right

\* Depth gauge • Chuck guards

B=Bench mounted  
 F=Floor standing

**FROM ONLY £29.95** (EX VAT)  
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Includes wet 'T' slot cable & worklight

MODEL	WATTS/SPEEDS	EX VAT	INC VAT
CDP500	245/5	£29.95	£35.19
CDP101B	245/5	£49.95	£58.69
CDP151B	300/5	£79.95	£93.94
CDP100	370/12	£89.95	£105.69
CDP201B	370/12	£99.95	£117.44
CDP15F	370/12	£114.95	£135.07
CDP301B	510/12	£134.95	£158.57
CDP351F	510/12	£149.95	£176.19
CDP401B*	510/16	£159.95	£187.94
CDP511F*	510/16	£189.95	£223.19
CDP501F*	900/12	£379.95	£446.44

### Clarke 6 SPEED METAL LATHE

WITH 12 SPEED MILL/DRILL HEAD - CLASSOM

- 430mm between centres
- Power feed screw cutting facility
- Forward/reverse lathe operation
- Fine feed adjustment for milling

**ONLY £649.95** (EX VAT)  
**£763.69** (INC VAT)

Shown with optional floor stand

**£119.95 EX VAT**  
**£140.94 INC VAT**

FULL RANGE OF ACCESSORIES AVAILABLE!

### Clarke METAL LATHE

- 300mm between centres
- LH/RH thread screw cutting
- Electronic variable speed
- Self centering 3 jaw chuck & guard
- Gear change set • Power feed

**ONLY £359.95** (EX VAT)  
**£422.94** (INC VAT)

FULL RANGE OF ACCESSORIES AVAILABLE!

### Clarke METAL LATHE

**ONLY £359.95** (EX VAT)  
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FULL RANGE OF ACCESSORIES AVAILABLE!

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TRAINING  
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# FIZZY DAYS

DISTRACTIONS -  
HAZARDS AND  
VENGEANCE.

IT'S VITAL THAT YOU ARE  
AWARE OF THE MANY HAZARDS  
THAT CAN BEFALL THE  
INEXPERIENCED RIDER.

THIS WILL ALL  
BE WORTH IT  
WHEN MAM  
SEES ME  
CERTIFICATE.

LESSON 37

**GOOD**

**BAD**

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET.

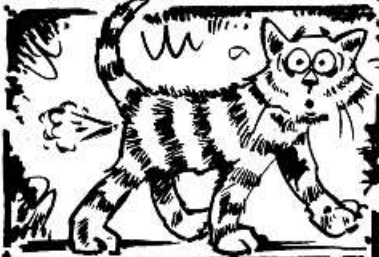
THE RIGHT  
SAFETY GEAR  
IS  
ESSENTIAL

ALWAYS KEEP  
AN EYE OPEN FOR  
DISTRACTIONS

ANYTHING  
DAY GLO  
IS GOOD

THE  
WILDLIFE -  
WATCH IT!

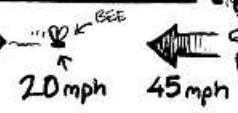
A WANDERING PUSSY  
CAN BE DEADLY. BEWARE



A DUCK CAN  
ALSO BE NASTY.

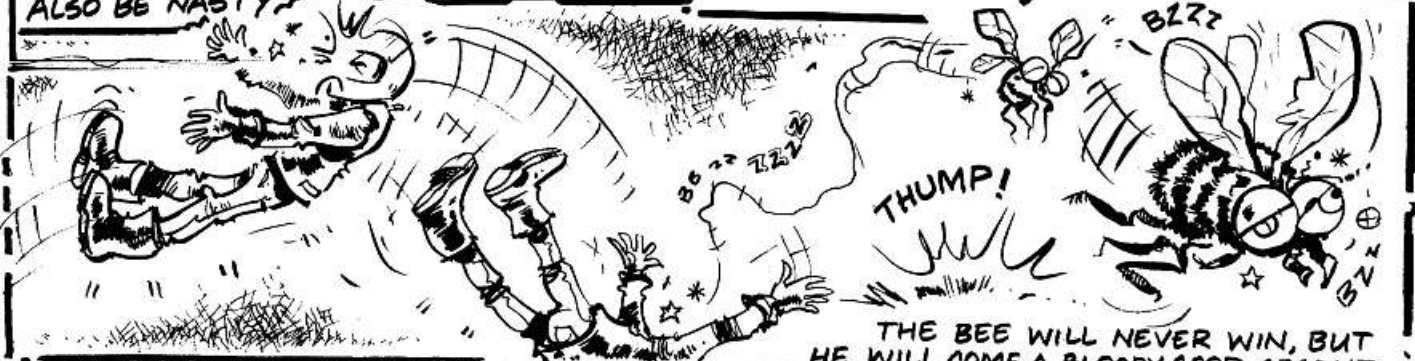


A HARMLESS BEE  
OR SO YOU THINK...



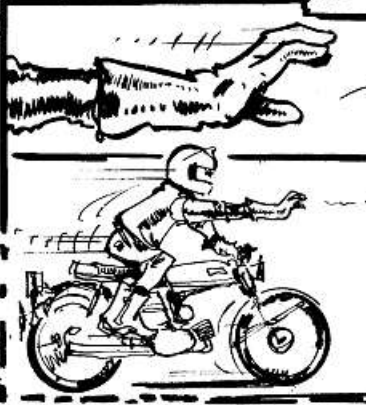
$$20 + 45 = 65$$

IMPACT!



THE BEE WILL NEVER WIN, BUT  
HE WILL COME A BLOODY GOOD SECOND.

HE'S  
NOT  
GETTIN  
AWAY  
WITH  
THAT!



VENGEANCE?  
VENGEANCE!



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