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MORTONS
ISSUE 429
JANUARY 2020
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AT THE
NEC!



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CLUB
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MALLE MILE

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AT BACK STREET HEROES -
THE OFFICIAL GROUP



So this is winter, is it? I don't like it much...

Don't get me wrong, I like some bits of winter – I don't mind the cold, I'm just not that keen on having to go out and ride motorbikes in rain so heavy you keep looking in your mirrors for large wooden boats carrying lots of animals.

It's mid-November as I write this and, this morning, I had to take the Niken over to the local Yamaha dealer for a much-needed service. The forecast running up to today hadn't been great all week, and when I awoke I could hear cars splashing through what was rapidly becoming an ever-expanding lake on the road outside the house. Joy. My usual first-thing scan of social media turned up the fact that the local dual carriageway, the main arterial route through East Anglia, was closed both ways exactly where I was due to join it and, as it'd be the middle of rush hour when I did so, that meant absolute traffic chaos. In heavy rain. On flooded roads. Even more joy.

By the time I'd kitted up and pulled the Yam out of the Toy Cupboard (Chris Ireland used to call the building where he stored all his bikes and trikes this, and it's such a good name I've shamelessly stolen it... sadly, though, there're no stacks of V8 motors, or a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, in mine as there was in his), the roads around Chez Samson were so damp I half-expected to come across Kevin Costner battling punks on matt black jet-skis, and the first few miles made me remember exactly why, normally, when I wake to rain like this, I pull the covers back over my head, and go back to sleep. The Niken wasn't going to service itself though (it's good, but not THAT good) so...

A fair few of the little back roads that I was going to have to take were so underwater I wondered if someone'd twinned Suffolk with Atlantis without telling anyone, but the two front hoops of the Niken cut through it all without even a twitch and, even when an impatient knob'ead in a chavved-up Mercedes pulled out on me in a village, I wasn't too worried as (a) I was going slowly enough to brake safely, and (b) I kind o' knew he was going to do it. You know how it is, I'm sure – you just get this feeling, don't you, when someone's about to do something



EDITORIAL

twattish? Nothing you can put your finger on, but you just know, don't you?

Skirting round Bury St Edmunds, where the A14 was closed, I briefly had to sit in traffic (narrow roads, and stupidly heavy traffic, meant even a bike couldn't get through), and exchanged a nod with a guy on a big BMW trailie coming the other way who looked as resigned to it as

I felt. Even when heading away from the town on empty roads (well, my lane anyway) I couldn't open 'er up as the fact that there're literally hundreds

of vehicles crawling along the other way

means that there's a good chance some oxygen thief's going to get tired of waiting and perform an illegal U-turn, usually right in front of some poor unsuspecting biker as they haven't bothered to look ahead or behind properly.

And then, by the time I did actually get on to the 14, miles away from the incident, the spray off vehicles ahead of me was so bad that I didn't really see the truck in front of me turn off at the exit I wanted (the fact that he didn't indicate probably didn't help...), but, thankfully, he soon turned off again so I was able to make it to the dealer on the empty, if fairly submerged, road that runs parallel with the main one. As I did so, I looked across, and thought "I'm glad I did – my textile gear's pretty good but, looking at that spray, maybe not THAT good". I don't know about you, but I'd rather ride wet roads that're as empty as they can be, even if the journey takes slightly longer, than take the shorter route on really busy ones...

Arriving at the dealer an hour and a half after I set out (the journey on a dry day, when the roads aren't as clogged as a chain-smoker's arteries, takes about 45 minutes), they looked at me oddly, as I stood there dripping on their nice clean floor, and said: "We didn't expect you in this!" I asked if there was a loan bike I could borrow for the duration of the work (they'd said it'd be done inside a day) but, apparently, some of the parts required hadn't arrived and that meant it wouldn't be done today so, instead, they gave me a lift to the station and I got a nice, warm, dry train home. Result!

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SINCE 1982 - AFTERMARKET PARTS & ACCESSORIES FOR

CUSTOM MOTORCYCLES



SORRY DAVE!

Back in issue 424, out in July, we had a feature on Nelson's very cool little red/white/blue Triumph, and the information that we were given was that it was the one built back in the '80s by the late lamented Southern Cycles, and featured in *BSH* way back when.

Well, it turns out there were two very similar bikes; one built by Southern Cycles, and the other built by Dave Bachelar of P&D Customs, and guess what? This one is the P&D one, not the Southern Cycles one... doh!

Apologies to Mr B for getting the info wrong – all I had to go off was the owner's info, and he was reliant on someone on t'internet, who probably also didn't know there were two, telling him it was the other one.

DRAGON RALLY OIL IN THE BLOOD

As I'm sure you know, the Dragon Rally is probably the most hardcore British motorcycle rally there is – held in the Welsh mountains in February since 1962, making it one of the UK's longest-running bike events. It's famed for its toughness and spartan facilities, and to say you've been is a real badge of honour.

Next year's event's being held over 8-9th February (yes, it's just one night), and tickets will cost £25 if you pay direct to the organising club's bank account, £30 if by cheque, or 35 euros if coming from abroad. Go to www.conwymotorcycleclub.org.uk or the

club's Facebook page for more details.

We (okay, Nik, as he's odd like that) will be going and, of course, doing a feature on the event – see you there?



BEELINE MOTO



Beeline Moto is a revolutionary new motorcycle sat nav that makes navigation on a bike easy and safe. It's a neat little round unit that attaches to the front of your bike (on the dash or the 'bars or a mirror stalk, wherever you can see it) and, once your planned journey's been entered into the corresponding app, shows you the direction you need to travel in, and how far it is to the next turning. I've been using one for a couple of months now, and it's excellent, and does away with the need for a bulky, obvious, and nickable, navigation unit mounted on your 'bars, or a Bluetooth headset in your helmet.

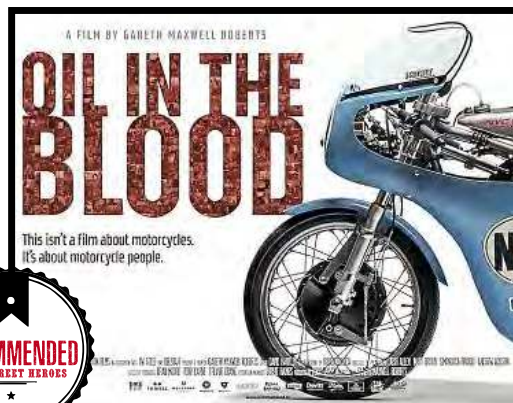
It's fully waterproof, and shockproof, and the battery lasts for 30 hours of use between charges (compared to around five on traditional 'navs), and it's easy to read both day and night. A range of mounts allow it to be attached to any bike's handlebars or tank, while the twist-lock mechanism allows the unit to be clipped on and off the bike in moments.

It costs just £149 (for the plastic version, there's a metal version for £199), and you can get one from www.beeline.co

Oil in the Blood is an excellent documentary film about the contemporary custom motorcycle culture, directed by lifelong biker Gareth Maxwell Roberts, and produced by Lucy Selwood.

Over the last three years, they've interviewed nearly 300 bike builders, riders, journalists, artists and racers, and filmed at just about every big modern show there is, detailing off-road H-Ds in the Sahara, flat-track racing in dusty bowls and indoor arenas, ice racing in Wisconsin and in the Alps, and the American Wall of Death in Texas. They've filmed dozens of cool custom bikes, choppers, cafe racers, flat-trackers, sprint bikes, electrics, old-school specials and urban brats, hundred-thousand dollar pristine beauties and 500-buck rippers.

Oil in the Blood is available for digital download to rent or buy on Amazon, iTunes, Google, YouTube Movies, Sky Store and Virgin Media, and it's also available on Blu-ray and DVD from Amazon.



NEW TRIUMPH ROCKET 3!



Triumph have announced the prices for their new Rocket 3R, and Rocket 3GT, as being £19,500 and £20,200 respectively, and that both models'll be available in dealers from early 2020.

They both feature the biggest production motorcycle engine in the world; a 2,500cc triple that delivers incredible acceleration and performance, the highest torque of any production motorcycle you can buy with 221 Nm at 4,000rpm, and 167 PS (165bhp) at 6,000rpm. The R is a muscle roadster, and the GT a laid-back cruiser with effortless touring capability.

Get more info from your local Triumph dealer or www.triumphmotorcycles.co.uk

KRAZY HORSE FARM HOUSE

Krazy Horse Customs, one of the leading names in UK customs, has opened a third shop to complement its Bury St Edmunds and London stores and, just like the two established branches, the new place is well worth a visit.

The Krazy Horse Farm House is at Heath Farm, Banbury Rd, just outside Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire (OX7 4BN), and has a wide range of amazing bikes, both stockers (with demonstrators) and customs, and cool clothing, and has that welcoming feel that's made their places such a great place to visit.

Ring the new shop on **01608 656400**, or go to www.krazyhorse.co.uk/pages/farm-house-oxford



GLOSSARY

A BRIEF, NOT TOO SERIOUS EXPLANATION OF TERMS COMMONLY USED IN THE MAGAZINE. THIS MONTH, THE HS:

HACKSAW – cutting tool available in standard and junior sizes, both equally capable of removing skin from finger tips, and slipping and scratching delicate chrome and painted components

HAMMER – universal tool used for fixing everything, it fixes things better the harder it's used

HANDLEBARS – the single most argued-about component on any internet motorcycle discussion group

HAND-SHIFT – referring to a gear change mechanism that's operated by hand, rather than by foot

HARDTAIL – a frame that has no rear suspension

HARLEY-DAVIDSON – do we really need to tell you?

HARRIS – Harris Performance Products, respected Hertfordshire purveyors of performance parts, who also made the Magnum frame kits, bought out recently by Royal Enfield to do their frame development for them

HARRISON BILLET – renowned UK manufacturer of exquisite billet alloy calipers for a huge range of motorcycles

HEADLIGHT – the light at the front of your motorcycle which shows you which way you're travelling in the dark... hopefully

HEADSTOCK – the tube at the front of your frame that holds the steering stem and the bearings that allow your bike to turn when you move the handlebars

HEADSTEADY – bracket, primarily on V-twins, that bolts the top of the motor to the frame to stop it moving around like someone with Parkinson's

HEATED GRIPS – electrically warmed handlebar grips that keep your hands from completely freezing during winter riding

HELLS ANGELS – one of the oldest MC clubs in the world, originally formed in San Bernardino in California in 1948, but now worldwide

HELMET – the only legally required item of protective clothing on a motorcycle in the UK, available in full-face, open-face, and flip-front styles

HIGHWAY 'PEGS – foot-pegs fitted to the front frame down-tubes to give a relaxed cruising position, different to forward controls in that they're just footrests, and don't have controls for brake or gear change

HIGH-SIDE – accident in which the rear wheel momentarily loses traction and then regains grip, ejecting the rider violently over the 'high-side' of the bike

HINDSIGHT – what we all have after spending thousands on a project, only to realise that we've spent it on the wrong things

HIPSTER – a word used as a derogatory term by blinkered types who think that anyone with the slightest amount of fashion sense or self-esteem is a twat... although, to be fair, some of them are

HOG – somewhat tongue-in-cheek term used to refer to a Harley-Davidson, invariably by people who aren't motorcyclists. Also, in capitals, the Harley Owners Group... strangely, a similar group for Buell owners is called the Buell Enthusiasts Group

HOMOLOGATION – the jumping through hoops and meeting of emissions and safety regulations required to allow a bike to be sold, or raced, in a certain country or area

HONDA – again, really?

HUB-CENTRE-STEERING (HCS) – steering mechanism utilising a front swinging arm, rather than forks, that moves around the wheel hub's centre; benefits include separating suspension and braking effects on the steering, and looking very futuristic

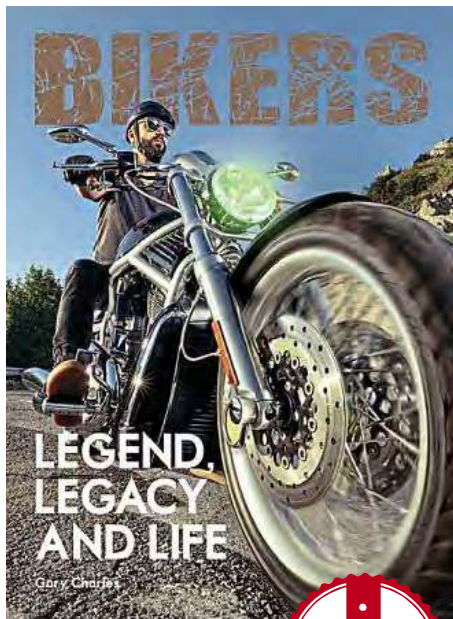
HYDRO-DIPPING – paint effect using a thin film on which a design's been printed that's applied by floating it on top of water, and then lifting the component through it

2020 LOUISE LIMB CALENDAR

Her work's graced the pages of *BSH* for more than 35 years, and our own Louise Limb's been once again collecting some of her favourite works to put in her very popular calendar for 2020. Her new offering features a selection of classic images from her archive, and maybe even the odd new piece, and's guaranteed to brighten even the darkest January or February day. Retailing at just £18 (including UK postage), it's A4, comes in a board-backed envelope, and the first 100 are signed by Louise herself. There's also a huge selection of Christmas cards too. Get yours from her website at www.louiselimb.com



LOUISE LIMB
MOTORCYCLE
ART
CALENDAR
2020



BIKERS: LEGEND, LEGACY AND LIFE

Since the 1950s, the leather-clad motorcyclist's been the most potent image of the archetypal bad boy, popularised by Hollywood stars such as Marlon Brando and James Dean. Now this painstakingly detailed chronicle of biker culture delves into the early town sieges of America's mid-West in the 1940s, through to the British Mod and Rocker coastal clashes of the 1960s, the Easy Riders of the 1970s, the streetfighters of the 1990s and the vibrant multifaceted biker culture scene of the first quarter of the 21st century, as well as investigating the many misconceptions surrounding this most feared of subcultures.

Bikers: Legend, Legacy and Life by Gary Charles is an excellent look at the biker world, written by someone who's part of it, rather than an academic outsider, and packed full of great pics from both the US and the UK (I recognised a host of faces in it). It's a great coffee table book, both very readable and also perfect for picking up and flicking through.

It costs just £16.95 in a very high-quality hardback from all good book shops and online retailers.



SIDI DISCOVERY BOOTS

Discovery is the new name for Sidi's excellent Courier boots, but that's all that's changed about them – they're still strong, warm, waterproof, and easy to fasten (three simple buckles), and yet light enough (compared with out-and-out motocross boots) to allow you some feel on the rear brake and gear-change. The steel tip on the sole makes a satisfying manly noise as you walk too. This is actually my fourth pair of Couriers... sorry, sorry, Discoverys (they don't wear out – they tend to get 'borrowed' by mates, never to be seen again), and I doubt it'll be my last as they are good.

They cost £249.99 from anywhere that stocks the Sidi range – go to www.feridax.com to find your nearest stockist and/or for more info.



WEISE OUTLAST SIRIUS GLOVES

Top class waterproof winter gloves, these Weise Sirius gloves are warm, thick and, most importantly, dry. They have a padded (for protection) full grain leather and textile palm, Weise's renowned Outlast temperature-regulating thermal liner, a fleece waterproof, windproof and breathable liner, padded knuckles, adjustable Velcro-retained cuffs and elasticated wrist, and stretch panels on the fingers.

They cost £74.99 from anywhere that sells the Weise range – go to www.weiseclimbing.com for more info or to find your local place.



WEISE MARIN TROUSERS

Now that we're deep in the clutches of winter one needs decent winter trousers and these, ladies an' gennulmen, are just that. They're actually all-season trousers, although they may be a little warm for our summers (the quilted thermal lining is removable though), and as such are made of a heavy-duty polyester with stretch panels in the knees and upper legs for comfort, are waterproof, windproof and breathable, have removable CE-approved armour in the knees and removable and adjustable braces, and the bottoms of each leg unzips to allow you to slip them over big winter boots.

They're very warm, and very waterproof (I've ridden through some fairly torrential days in 'em), and they cost just £119.99 from anywhere that sells the Weise range – go to www.weiseclothing.com for more info or to find your local place.



ZODIAC MICRO LED TAIL-LIGHT

This super-small E-approved LED tail-light, with brake light function, is only 1.18" (30mm) in diameter, and 0.59" (15mm) deep, and is easy to fit with the M6 centre stud on the rear. It's now available at your Zodiac dealer, in a choice of clear lens with red LEDs or smoke lens with red LEDs, or from www.zodiac.nl



CABERG XTRACE HELMET

This very light, very comfortable adventure-style helmet is perfect for normal bikes too; it has a wide viewing aperture, a visor that locks in place so doesn't fly open/slam shut if you ride with it open a notch, a useful drop-down sun visor, an inner chin-guard to stop draughts blowing upwards, and a simple-to-use, quick-release chin-strap.

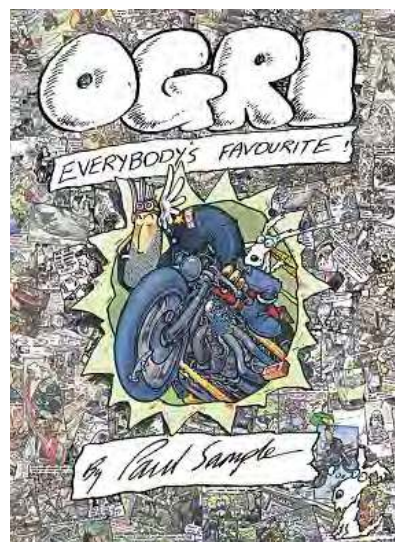
Available in a choice of matt black, matt black/grey/silver, and matt black/grey/fluoro yellow, it costs £179.99 from anywhere that stocks the Caberg range – go to www.cabergcares.co.uk to find your nearest dealer or for more info.

OGRI - EVERYBODY'S FAVOURITE

Following the sell-out success of 2017's private subscription edition Now to Make My Getaway; The Complete Compendium of Ogri strip cartoons 1972-2013, Laughing Gnome Books has enlisted the help of lifelong fans to help compile a lighter, slimmer and considerably more aerodynamic volume: Ogri – Everybody's Favourite.

Featuring the 150 most popular strips from

the cartoon character's 41-year history of monthly periodicals publication over 176 pages, 'Everybody's Favourite' has been selected by crowd-sourced nominations from the character's tens of thousands of fans. The book also features an interview with creator Paul Sample on the creative process, and never-before-seen illustrations drawn from his private sketchbooks. Ogri – Everybody's Favourite costs £24.99 from www.ogri-book.co.uk or all good online retailers.



BULL-IT TACTICAL HOODIE

Armoured hoodies are a brilliant idea as they're as equally protective as, but much more casual and stylish than, a conventional textile jacket. The only problem with them is that they're not remotely waterproof so, if you get caught out in the rain, you get very wet.

This new Bull-It Tactical Hoodie changes all that though; it's waterproof up to about half an hour (if you're out in one any longer than that in the rain then perhaps you put the wrong jacket on before you went out), warm (it has a removable thermal liner), and very protective (it's made from Bull-It's well-proven Covec material, and has armour in the elbows, shoulders and back), and is very comfortable. All the zips are taped to keep the elements out (which can make them a little fiddly, but no big deal), and there's a clever little throat flap to keep the draughts out too.

I've been wearing one for three or four weeks now, with a lightweight waterproof over it on damper days, and it's pretty much replaced my usual winter textile jacket. It costs no more than a decent textile, £199.99, and you can get one, or more info, from www.bull-it.com or anywhere that stocks the Bull-It range.



Need to agree, or even disagree, with something you've seen in the mag? Heard a bloody awful joke you think we should groan at? Email nik@backstreetheroes.com or send it snailmail to the address in the front (somewhere) of the mag!

DEAR BSH,

Please can I use your pages to ask a favour of BSH readers? I'm in the process of writing a book on the history of British bikers, and I'd like to ask if there are any MCC or MC clubs who'd be happy to submit photos?

I'm particularly interested in photos showing the 'then and now' type of thing, clubs or groups, in the 1970s or '80s, at rallies, and how they are today. I'd be grateful for photos or posters depicting shows or rallies or charity events such as toy runs etc.

It'd also be helpful if they could give a few lines on their club, and what has held it together for so long. For example, do they share common values or rules which've helped them to bond/ride together for longer?

Please reply by emailing me t.hadden@hotmail.co.uk

TONY HADDEN

DEAR BSH,

Incoherent rambling ahead!
Last weekend, as I sat beside the A11 because the trike'd had one of its nervous episodes about leaving Norfolk and had another breakdown, I watched as 36 motorcyclists rode past me – not one of them pulling over or even acknowledging that they'd seen me sat beside the road, with bits off the trike and tools spread out on the grass. Now, one or two not seeing a firkin great trike broken down, I can understand, but 36 is just plain ridiculous.

Then it occurred to me what the problem was – technology, and disposable income. See, what I figured was, technology has created jobs that require no mechanical knowledge to do. More and more, we just have to sit in front of a screen and punch a few buttons for eight hours before we go home, and stick ourselves in front of another screen.

This translates down to motorcycles because, as a species, we naturally want a bit of excitement in our lives, so a fair proportion of us go out and buy motorcycles. Some of us buy a frame, an engine etc. and build a bike or trike to get us back and forth to work, and go out to a field at weekends to commune with others with similar ideals and intents. Others, and these appear to be in the majority nowadays, go to a motorcycle dealership, buy the latest GSXZZR WSB 1880RZ from Honda/Suzuki/Kawasaki etc.

and then they go out, flicking on the ABS/cruise control/traction control et al, thinking they're whatever digital hero they admire on whatever Xbox racing game they played last, treating the roads as their personal race-track, before they pop into the bike dealers and trade it in for this month's latest must-have. Then they sit around at work, pressing a few buttons, and bragging to their mates about their purchase, and whichever bimbo off Love Island they w**ked over before their mum called them for tea.

Right, what's my point? I'm not sure to be honest. I think what I'm saying is – stop being arseholes, get off your screens, take a look around you, and if you see another biker/triker or even a motorcyclist stopped by the side of the road, pull over, see if they need help, or even just give them a nod to let them know you've seen them.

PAUL

Thirty-six? Amateur... I watched 50 (I counted them) members of a HOG chapter ride past me one day, and then in excess of another 30 non-club bikes. The only guy who stopped was a bloke on a 'Blade on his way back from the Nurburgring, and he couldn't really help, but at least he stopped.

Motorcyclists/bikers, no one stops these days... well, 'cept me, but honestly you'd think I'd come to kill some of them the way they look at you... N.

DEAR BSH,

I just knew I was tempting fate by writing 'On the Road Again' last issue as the docs are still holding on to my licence... oh well, at least I had it for some of the summer.

Anyway, it's a Monday and, for the first time in my adult working life, no Monday blues. They've let me retire early and, with the package they offered, they're effectively just paying me to stay at home for a couple of years – just need to focus on getting my licence back now! In the words of Roger Daltrey (and NOT John Inman): "I'mmmmm Freeeeee"!

I DO like Mondays

My first retirement week and don't I just love it?

I've finally told the boss just where he can shove it.

My hard-working life has drawn to a close, time to chill, relax, chew the fat... ...whoa, hang on, hard-working life?

No, sorry, maybe not that.

My spell in their sweat-shop I surely won't miss,

But the lads, the banter, the taking the piss?

Perhaps one last chance to offend? I've made it, over the wire, escaped,

and, yes, I'm a jammy old fart, I've had that last 'double-edged sword' day, when old work colleagues must part,

The trials and tribulations're now distant nightmares in the past, The mick-taking and the laughs are the memories that'll last.

No more endless corporate posters only 'inspiring' depression

Or worries about the industry, and thoughts of recession,

I'll enjoy my lie-ins, read my paper, have that third cup of tea,

The only 'bar code' that'll trouble me now is: "Was he in front of me?"

Some mornings I'll wake up and it's nearly 6.30,

My rucksack'll be empty, and my work boots'll be dirty,

Thinking: "They'll all be clocking on soon, but I'm retired, what luck", Roll over, go back to sleep, bollocks to the time, who gives a fk?**

And so, a whole new phase begins – more getting out on me bike, hopefully.

KEITH



The best letter each issue will now receive a free T-shirt from those lovely people, Laura and Mark, at **Fat Maggot T-Shirts** (www.fatmaggot.com) – get all your rally shirts etc. from them, they're triffle!

DEAR BSH,

Now you know me, I'm not one to complain but....

It's some while now since I passed my driving test... well, 35 years for the car, and 41 for the bike, to be precise, so perhaps things've changed but, as I recall, back in the day the small orange lights situated on each corner of the vehicle were referred to as 'indicators' or 'trafficators'.

According to the Highway Code they were to be used to 'indicate' an intended or anticipated change of direction, and it was highly recommended that they were used in conjunction with the sequence of 'mirror/signal/manoeuvre' so as to alert other road users as to your wish/intention to perform a manoeuvre. Okay, the Highway Code may've been written some time ago now by Mr Cholmondley-Warner, and read aloud by Danvers Walker on Pathe News, but, as far as I know, it still applies.

Anyway, back to the little orange lights – when all four were flashing simultaneously, it was to alert other road users to a breakdown of the vehicle, or an accident, thus presenting a hazard to road users, hence the expression 'hazard lights'. Clearly this function's now been rescinded, and they're now predominantly used as "get the f**k out of my way, I'm coming out" lights, used by mindless, inconsiderate, self-centred muppets when turning across the path of oncoming road users, or as 'park anywhere' lights used by hipster parents in VW vans with patina/rust vinyl wraps, and ubiquitous surf stickers, when abandoning vehicles in ridiculous places while dropping little Jethro and Molly off at pre-school pilates clubs, or when just popping into the local artisan bakery to pay £9.99 for a mung bean and falafel sour dough loaf.

Now, sadly, it would appear the traditional function of traffic lights're going the same way; no longer do they signify an instruction to stop/go in order to control traffic flow – no, now they're simply an inconvenience to be ignored at will. Only the other day I was stopped at the lights when they turned green, so I checked it was safe to pull out, and narrowly missed having my front wheel hit by a car going straight through the now-red lights to my left. I threw out the anchors, stopped, hit the horn, and cast aspersions on the driver's self-

initiated nocturnal immersions (called him a "f**king w...anchor".

Once I'd gathered myself, I took a deep breath, and proceeded upon my way. Half a mile up the road, I'm perfectly legally using the bus lane to filter past a line of almost stationary traffic when, lo and behold, who shall we come across but Mr Traffic Lights, who now takes it upon himself to swerve, illegally, in and out of the bus lane, presumably in some half-baked attempt at impeding my progress. Needless to say, I passed him and, once again, called him that name before riding away.

Minutes later I'm sat at the next set of lights, still in the bus lane, when I saw in my mirrors Mr Traffic Lights again, this time driving up the bus lane, ignoring the fact that he's not allowed in it, flashing his lights, blowing the horn, and making gestures out of his window. Now I like to think of myself as a tolerant and forgiving individual, but I have my limits. I'm 6ft 4in tall, and 16 stone, and I have two black belts in martial arts. I worked the doors up in Glasgow back in the day, and I now work on secure units in mental health so, as you can imagine, I'm quite used to the odd scuffle. I thought to myself: "Well, you've had two warnings" so I parked the bike in front of a vinyl rust-wrapped VW, that was conveniently abandoned in the bus lane, half on and half off the pavement outside said artisan bakers (which was perfectly fine as it had its 'park anywhere' lights flashing), before walking back to discuss the matter with Mr Traffic Lights.

Upon arrival at the car window I observe that Mr Traffic Lights and his wife/partner/significant other, both bedecked in Adidas shell-suits, are merrily quaffing away on cans of supermarket own-brand super-strength lager, with a number of empty cans already deposited on the back seat. Now, forgive me if I'm wrong, but as far as I remember drinking and driving is also illegal? "What's your f'ing problem?" remonstrates Mr Traffic Lights. At this point I decided that good old-fashioned kerbside justice was called for, so I reached into the car, clutched him by the shirt front, twisting my grip to apply a well measured, but

not insignificant, amount of pressure and functional restriction on his windpipe, drew him closer to me (well, as close as the door frame'd allow) and spoke softly thus into his shell-like: "My friend, I have many problems in life, anger management being just one of them, but right at this moment you are my problem – you ran a red light, attempted to swerve and knock me off, and you're drinking and driving so, unless you want me to drag you all the way through this window and stamp on your head, I'd recommend you proceed home forthwith, download a copy of the Highway Code, read and inwardly digest its content", adding: "Because if you so much as utter another word, I am going to cause you not insignificant long-term pain and suffering... do I make myself clear?"

For the duration of this conversation I continued to restrain him in a safe, but effective, shirt-front grip, so by now he's using his remaining breath in an attempt to apologise, while his sophisticated debutante of a passenger is shouting, screaming and throwing empty beer cans at me out of the passenger side window so, in true Columbo fashion, I begin to release my grip, allowing him to return to his car seat before forcibly dragging him back to the window aperture before saying, in a very calm, controlled and paced manner: "Just one more thing, you should keep her on a shorter lead."

As I walked away, one pedestrian witness was clapping, a bus driver shouted: "Well done, mate, don't worry I got the w**ker on film", and the hipster came out of the artisan bakery clutching a mung bean and falafel sour dough baguette, for Jethro and Molly to tear-and-share before after-school mindfulness classes.

The moral of this rant? Well, there isn't one really... except perhaps for never trust the lights, forget everything you ever read in the Highway Code, and remember that not all bearded bikers are hipsters – some of us are old school... oh, and just one more thing; I didn't live this long by chance.

TTFN.

GRUMPY OLD GIT





PISTON ~~SHOVEL~~ HEAD

ONE OF THE THINGS
ABOUT BIKING,
CUSTOM BIKING, THAT
FASCINATES ME IS THE
WAY THE SCENE HAS
SO MANY SEPARATE
FACETS, SEPARATE SUB-
DIVISIONS, THE MORE
YOU LOOK INTO IT.

WORDS & PICS: NIK



ALC. VOL
0.5
%





Y

ou have folk who are into bike trikes, folk who are into car trikes, folk who are into streetfighters, folk who are into old-skool cafe racers, folk who are into new-skool cafe racers, folk who are into street scramblers, folk who are into flat-trackers, folk who are

into rats, folk who are into bobbers, folk who are into this, folk who are into that... and in the chopper world there are even more sub-divisions; billet choppers, rat choppers, long-fork choppers, lowriders, streetfighting choppers, '70s choppers, '80s choppers, '90s choppers, the list just goes on and on.

Vince Summers, the builder of this rather stunning Generator Shovel, is into very period-specific choppers – the ones from the late Fifties/early Sixties. He's made a name for himself building them, and he's the man behind one of the most respected gatherings of them; The Assembly Chopper Show (as featured in this 'ere mag). It was there that he met the people from Pistonhead, a new and cool beer brand, as they were one of the event's main sponsors and, after the event, he stayed in touch with them. Shortly after, they got talking about a new alcohol-free product, Flat Tire, that they wanted to aim towards car and bike guys 'n' girls, and a launch party in London, which then led on to him asking: "Why don't I build you something to advertise it?"

He admits that, no sooner had he suggested it, he was concerned that they might have some odd ideas of what a chopper was (beer can foot-pegs or a keg-shaped gas tank or something equally awful), but they'd seen his previous bikes and knew what he was about, and it was soon decided that the

vintage bomber nose art/hot rod styling of the Pistonhead logo would lend itself to the early '60s 'bar hopper' style he favours – stock or period parts 'massaged' to suit, simple sissy-bars and 'pegs. Remember, early street choppers didn't have tons of moulding or long front ends – they were just small, tight bikes that handled, but had a bit of class.

So that's what he built; the frame came from his own '51 Panhead project, as did the original Danny Gold 'Cobra' seat, the tank and rear 'guard were donated by Lowbrow Customs (originally for the bike he built for the Born Free show in the US), and the '69 Generator Shovel engine (the motor to have in the retro Harley world!), with its Shovelhead top end on a Panhead bottom end, came from his friend Dan, and only needed a top end refresh (hone and gaskets). The gearbox is the stock kicker four-speed with a jockey-shift fitted, and a 1.5-inch BDL belt primary ties the motor and 'box together.

Dick Smith of The Baron's Speed Shop hooked him up with a skinny pre-unit Triumph front end (which he lowered, and fitted with stronger sidecar springs and heavier oil), and modified a BSA brake plate to match the Triumph drum/hub, and now the bike stops a lot better than any H-D drum ever would. Rich of Wheels in Motion laced it to a 21x1.65" Borrani rim, and another, in 18x2.50", with a stock H-D drum, was used for the rear. The tyres are Avon SM front, and a Firestone rear.

All painted (by SDC Design) and put back together, the bike runs like a champ, and rides great. The S&S Super B carb is a great carb if they're dialled in correctly, and give great mpg if you're not in a rush and, besides, chops like these are so light they don't need a ton of power anyway. 

ENGINE:

1969 H-D 74" (1200cc) Generator Shovel, Andrews J-grind cam, S&S Super B carb, BCM air filter, BDL primary, points ignition, 4-speed hand-shift gearbox, one-off exhausts

FRAME:

1951 H-D rigid, 30-degree rake

STUFF:

3.00x21" Avon tyre, 21" Borrani front rim, 1950s pre-unit Triumph hub/drum brake/forks/yokes, modified BSA brake plate, 12" narrow apes, Lowbrow Wassell tank/Manta Ray rear mudguard, Danny Gold seat, stock horseshoe oil tank, 18" Borrani rear rim, stock hub/drum brake, 5.00x18 Firestone tyre

FINISH:

Vintage Mercedes blue paint by SDC Design (07971 652839), polishing by owner

THANKS TO:

"My family; Pistonhead; Dan; The Baron's Speed Shop (01689 638733 or www.baronsspeedshop.com); Works Renovations Ltd (07971 652839 or www.worksrenovations.com); & Wheels in Motion (07837 003279)..."



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RED, 2005, 55148 MILES,
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YAMAHA XV1900 RAIDER
BLUE, 2009, 22934 MILES
£8999



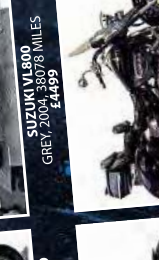
YAMAHA XV61300A
MIDNIGHT STAR, RED, 2009, 15044 MILES
£5499



YAMAHA XV21300 VENTURE STAR,
PURPLE, 1999, 25471 MILES
£5999



SUZUKI VL1800
GREY, 2004, 38078 MILES
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SUZUKI VL1600
BLACK, 2002, 26999 MILES
£6999



SUZUKI C50
MAROON, 2000, 10076 MILES
£3999



SUZUKI MB001 INTRUDER
2015, BLUE, 1686 MILES
£3499



YAMAHA XV1700 WARRIOR
RED, 2008, 7199 MILES
£6999



HARLEY DAVIDSON XL1200C
SPORTSTER, BLUE, 2001, 32772 MILES
£5499



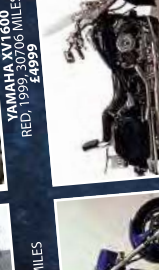
HARLEY DAVIDSON XL1200C
BLACK, 2014, 15763 MILES
£7999



ROYAL ENFIELD CONTINENTAL GT 64,
RED, 2018, 324 MILES
£4499



YAMAHA XV1600
RED, 1999, 30706 MILES,
£4999



YAMAHA XV650 DRAGSTAR,
BLACK, 2005, 24551 MILES
£4699



YAMAHA XV1900 RAIDER,
RED, 2008, 1999 MILES,
£8999



YAMAHA XV700 WARRIOR
BLUE, 2009, 19397 MILES
£4499



HONDA CL1500
YELLOW, 1999, 41419 MILES
£6499



YAMAHA XV1700 WARRIOR,
BLUE, 2002, 24419 MILES
£5499



YAMAHA XV1900 RAIDER
RED, 2008, 15171 MILES
£8999



YAMAHA XV1500
RED, 2011, 6708 MILES
£7999



HONDA VTX1800C,
RED, 2003, 40266 MILES,
£5999



SUZUKI C90 BOULEVARD,
BLACK, 2007, 25023 MILES,
£5499



HARLEY DAVIDSON FXST SOFTAIL
BLACK, 2004, 22288 MILES
£6499



KAWASAKI VN2000
RED, 2003, 29286 MILES
£6999



YAMAHA XV1500 TOUR DELUXE,
RED, 2003, 38235 MILES
£6999



YAMAHA XV1900 RAIDER
BLACK, 2009, 61320 MILES
£7999



YAMAHA XV1900 RAIDER,
RED, 2008, 14717 MILES
£8999



HONDA VTX1300S
RED, 2007, 14714 MILES
£5499



KAWASAKI VN1600 NOMAD,
GREEN, 2006, 1708 MILES,
£7499



HONDA F6-C VALKYRIE INTERSTATE
BLACK, 1999, 60479 MILES
£7999



HARLEY DAVIDSON HERITAGE SOFTAIL NOSTALGIA,
BLACK, 1995, 40462 MILES,
£6999



KAWASAKI VN900 BBF CLASSIC
BLACK, 2008, 26524 MILES
£3999



KAWASAKI VN800 CLASSIC
RED, 2001, 8728 MILES
£5499



KAWASAKI VN2000
BLUE/GREY, 2005, 77442 MILES
£5499



YAMAHA V-MAX,
BLACK, 2002,
5986 MILES
£6499



YAMAHA XV950R,
BLUE, 2017, 4000 MILES,
£5999



HONDA VT1300 STATELINE,
SILVER, 2012, 13279 MILES
£7999



HONDA VT750 C2-B,
SILVER, 2009, 31522 MILES,
£4799



KAWASAKI VULCAN EN500A
RED, 2009, 31630 MILES
£3999



KAWASAKI VN1700,
BLACK, 2009, 25755 MILES,
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EVENT

CCW RUN TO PENDINE SANDS

WORDS & PICS:
JOHN BOLT





I THINK MOST PEOPLE'LL KNOW BY NOW THAT THE CHOPPER CLUB HAS RUNS AND PARTIES MOST WEEKENDS, AND THESE'RE FOR MEMBERS ONLY, BUT AT MOST OF THEIR EVENTS THEY ALSO HAVE A RUN OUT, AND A CUSTOM SHOW, AT THE RUN'S DESTINATION THAT'S NOT ONLY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, BUT IS FREE AS WELL!

The Chopper Club Wales' recent run was to Pendine Sands in Carmarthenshire, which's been home to speed record attempts and sand racing since the 1920s, and where Guy Martin rode a push-bike at 112mph... on sand!

Not only were there some of the best custom bikes in the country to look at, but the Vintage Hot Rod Association were holding their annual beach racing event on the same day – talk about a petrolhead overload! People come from all over the world, but racing's only open to members of the VHRA and their pre-1949 hot rods and customs, and although the cars are old, speeds regularly exceed 120mph. The sound of the V8s burbling while heading to and from the start, and then getting on song when the driver stomps on the loud pedal's quite something to hear! Add to this all the bikes turning up en masse, and you can imagine the auditory delight!

The club puts on these shows not only as a public showcase, and to possibly attract new, younger members, but as a

spectacle too – the judging takes place while everybody's enjoying the sights around town. The prize giving, however, doesn't take place until later that evening back on the run site and, of course, as it's a club that's noted for building some of the best custom bikes out there, if you win a trophy, then you know you've earned it.

At the end of the afternoon, after sights were well and truly seen, and ice creams consumed, the Chopper Club Wales led the assembled masses back in the well-oiled fashion that they've perfected over the years to enjoy the evening's entertainment. Good day! 🏆



SHED BUILT



A red and white custom motorcycle is leaning against a wall made of rusty, corrugated metal. The wall has a weathered, peeling paint appearance. The motorcycle's front wheel, with a black tire and silver spokes, is prominent in the foreground. The front fork is red, and the headlight is white with a red stripe. The background shows a glimpse of a dark car and a stack of tires.

Rumble in the 'Jumble

A BIT FROM HERE, AND A BIT FROM THERE – IT'S PROBABLY THE MOST CLICHÉD WAY TO BUILD A BIKE BUT, LIKE ALL GOOD CLICHÉS, IT HAS A SOLID BASIS IN TRUTH AND HONESTY.

WORDS: DAVE MANNING

PICS: GARRY STUART



A

nd, to be totally frank, it's perhaps the only way that any of us actually do build a bike. After all, who has the wherewithal to obtain all the parts from one place at one point in time? The nature of building customs is in finding all the right parts (and, yes, that includes raw material for making true custom components), and that never happens all in one fell swoop, does it?

Martin Whittaker took 12 months to assemble this very cool, and deeply desirable, BSA, spending many of his weekends scouring the vans, trestle tables, plastic crates and spread-out tarpaulins of the Garstang autojumble and the Stafford Show. He admits that sourcing individual parts in this way isn't the most economical way to build a bike, as it'd be far cheaper to start with a complete bike, but it's certainly a very nice way to undergo the process – rather than having all the bits together at one point in time, there's the ability to work on parts of the bike one at a time, while also having the chance to take a break to have a wander around an autojumble to look for the other bits that you'll need.

Consequently, he was able to strip and rebuild the A10 engine without panicking about having to build up the rolling chassis at the same time, having to step over bits and bobs to get to it, or worrying about the open motor getting full of dust and debris from the drill, grinder or welder. While much of it remains standard, the barrels were bored to suit a pair of pistons 40 thou' over-size (taking the capacity to marginally more than the 646cc of the original), while an Amal 928 Concentric (28mm bore, slightly larger than stock) carb's bolted to the single port aluminium head (prior to 1955, A10s had cast iron heads). The standard gearbox was retained, but there's a Norton clutch, and an open Hayward belt primary drive to reduce vibration, noise and leak potential, while a remote oil filter conversion helps to keep the vital fluids free of detritus. By using a siamesed exhaust with a single trumpet silencer on the right-hand side, the left of the bike's cleared up and, in conjunction with the open primary, gives a very industrial and mechanical look to the bike.

The chassis is all A10 (frame from 1957 so it's tax exempt!), only modified to suit the centrally mounted aluminium oil tank, while the tank is Yamaha DT175, and the seat is from a Royal Enfield. The shocks are Hagons, and both hubs were re-spoked to an 18-inch rear rim and 19-inch front respectively by Martin himself, and trued by his mate Colin Ashcroft (and his DTI gauge). Colin actually proved to be a great help with the build, and he also undertook the fabrication work, welding and some of the polishing too. With just a tail-light, the wiring loom's correspondingly minimal, while the eye-catching orange/white paint is, again, Martin's work, while all the powder-coating (frame, 'bars, rims, cylinder head) are courtesy of Tillings in Longton.

The end result is a cafe racer with a touch of flat-tracker/street-scrambler thrown in – you could swap the tyres to knobbies, and it'd give the bike a totally different feel, with either style still having that 'want to ride' vibe... although, on that note, if you feel that you really want to have a go on the Beeza (he reports that it "rides beautifully") then, if you can persuade him to stop enjoying it himself, it could just be for sale – ring him on 07719 676125. Given that he's spent a lot of time at autojumbles over the year it took to build it, he's also collected a significant number of bits for other builds... so he might be glad of the spare time? 🍷

ENGINE:

BSA A10 Rocket, +40 barrels, Amal 928 Concentric carb with velocity stack, Norton diaphragm clutch, Hayward belt drive kit, remote oil filter kit, Lucas K2F magneto, 2-into-1 siamesed exhaust with tulip can

FRAME:

1957 BSA A10, standard footrests/hangers/controls

STUFF:

100/90x19" Continental front tyre, stock wheel/shuttle-valve forks/yokes, 4mm aluminium straight 'bars, eBay grips, Yamaha DT175 tank, Royal Enfield seat, one-off aluminium oil tank/side panels by Colin, one-off steel number-plate holder, stock swingarm, Hagon shocks, stock rear wheel/brake, 120/90x18" Bridgestone tyre

FINISH:

Orange/white/lacquer by owner, powdercoating by Tillings Auto Wheel Refurbishing (07767 344959 or www.tillingsalloywheelrefurbishment.co.uk), polishing by owner/Colin Ashcroft

THANKS TO:

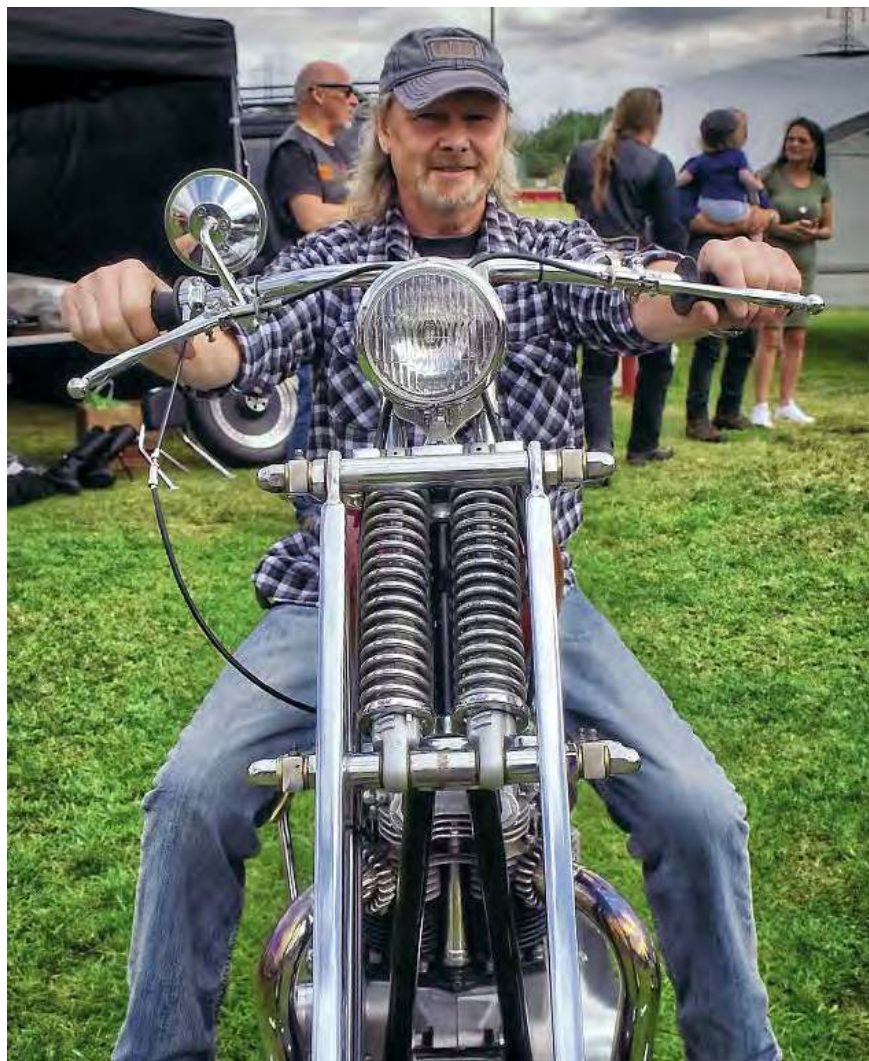
"Caroline for the brews/leaving me alone in my garage; Colin Ashcroft for his engineering skills/patience; & Tommy Tilling for the endless powder-coating..."





TIGER MCC KILMARNOCK RIDE-IN SHOW

EVENT



SATURDAY 6th JULY SAW THE TIGER MCC'S SIXTH RIDE-IN SHOW (AND ROCK NIGHT) RETURN TO THE KILMARNOCK RUGBY CLUB, AN IDEAL SITE FOR SUCH AN EVENT WITH CAMPING AND TOILETS, AND THE TOWN ONLY A FIVE-MINUTE WALK AWAY.

S

tall holders started arriving at 9am and, by 11, there were more than 20 stalls on site selling all things biker, with clothing and gifts to suit everyone. New this year was the BAFS (Bikers As Friends Scotland) – a charity that aims to help vulnerable children, and offers a point of contact in local schools.

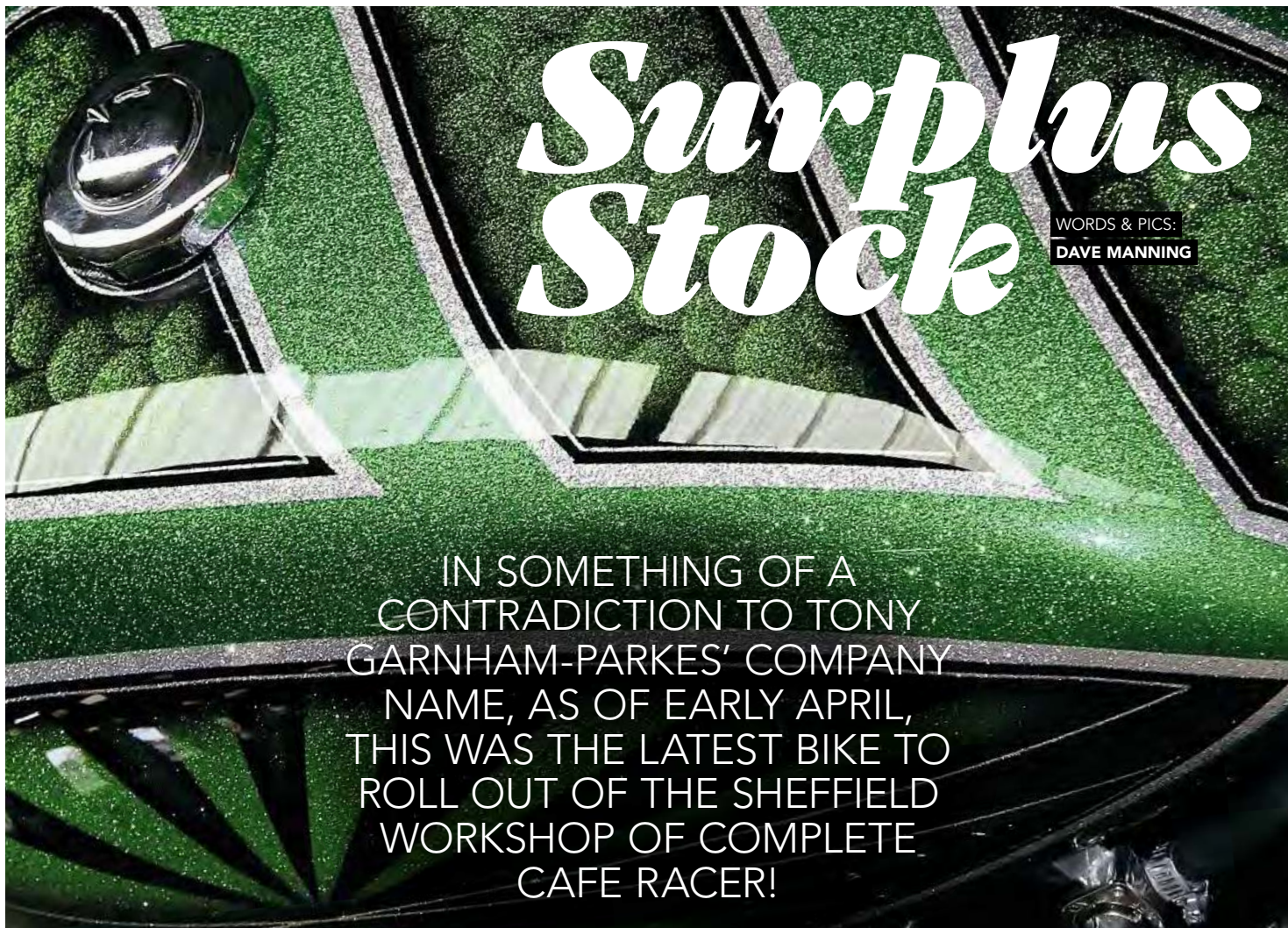
With the showground ready, bikes started arriving, and it soon became clear that this was going to be the busiest show to date. It was soon obvious that it was going to be a difficult job for the judges – the showground was soon overflowing, and bikes were having to park in the club car park. It's at this point I must apologise to all winners as I lost my list with all

your names, but I do know that this year's 'Best Custom' trophy was going to be presented in honour of Colin Rutherford of Area 51 Customs, presented by Stuart Baillie, his former business partner and friend. The trophies were presented around 4pm, and then the crowds slowly drifted away but only for a short time as the rock night was to start in the club a little later. This year's band was The Dead Flowers, who went down a storm, and had the dance floor full all night.

A great day and night was had by all, and we'd like to thank all the clubs that attended, everyone who rolled in with their mates, all the families that came along, the staff of the Rugby Club who worked their asses off, and last but not least, all members of the Tiger MCC who put so much effort into putting on the show. 🍻







Surplus Stock

WORDS & PICS:
DAVE MANNING

IN SOMETHING OF A CONTRADICTION TO TONY GARNHAM-PARKES' COMPANY NAME, AS OF EARLY APRIL, THIS WAS THE LATEST BIKE TO ROLL OUT OF THE SHEFFIELD WORKSHOP OF COMPLETE CAFE RACER!



ENGINE:

Kawasaki Z750E, Kawasaki Z1000J carbs, Complete Cafe Racer bell-mouths, Dyna electronic ignition, Delkevic stainless downpipes with home-made slash-cut baffled stainless silencer

FRAME:

Kawasaki Z650, hardtailed, standard hangers/alloy pegs, chromed side-stand

STUFF:

Maxxis 100/90x19" front tyre, Kawasaki Z650SR wheel/discs, Triumph 4-pot calipers/master-cylinder, one-off adaptor plates, Kawasaki GTR1000 fork bottoms, Kawasaki KLE500 stanchions, wide billet yokes, braided Venhill brake lines, flat 'bars, 10cm risers, alloy controls, Lucas-style horn button/high/low switch, CCR GPS speedo with high beam warning light, modified Honda CM200 tank, one-off seat, unknown rear mudguard, one-off battery box, Kawasaki Z650SR rear wheel/

disc, underslung Triumph caliper/master-cylinder, one-off caliper mount, Suzuki GSX-R torque arm, Maxxis 140/90x16" tyre, minimal loom, Bates bottom-mount headlight with oil warning light, CCR L3 tail-light/number-plate light

FINISH:

Medium silver flake/candy green/emerald green/moss green/airbrushing by owner, powdercoating by Craftwork Coatings, polishing by Portland Polishing

ENGINEERING:

Complete Cafe Racer

THANKS TO:

"Martin/Kev/Marcin/Tony/Siobhan at Complete Cafe Racer (0114 250 8421 or www.cafacerseats.co.uk); Pete at Craftwork Coatings (01709 719246 or www.craftworkcoatings.co.uk); & Nick at Suzuki Performance Spares (07900 362809 or www.suzukiperformance.co.uk) for the Dyna ignition..."

had struts that only needed a few minor modifications to look right), so some thought then went into finding a tank that suited the look. They tried all sorts, peanut tanks, Sportsters etc., but nothing looked right until Kev the laminator found his old Honda CM200 tank – it proved to have the ideal proportions, and only required a little bit of brazing/filling before it'd fit just so.

A four-cylinder Z750 engine was bolted in (essentially a bored-out Z650), fuelled by a bank of carbs that originally saw life on a Z1000J, now equipped with CCR bell-mouths, and burnt hydrocarbons exit via a set of stainless Delkevic downpipes allied to a one-off slash-cut silencer can (more like a 'pencil pipe' of the Seventies, rather than a true exhaust 'can'). Internally baffled, it's actually far less offensive than a Piper or Alpha of the era, with a pleasing tone that's still loud enough to let bystanders know it's there.

With the chopper profile sorted (including the drag 'bars on tall risers), the only thing now required was an eye-catching paint job. Tony does all the paint for the Complete Cafe Racer projects, and he spent over a week on the paint alone, laying down the heavily flaked silver base coat, adding the black shading and detailing, and the three different greens (candy/moss/emerald), and finishing off by using more than a gallon and a half of lacquer! It's little wonder that the paint looks deep enough to swim in! Even in the moodily lit cattle halls of Stoneleigh Park, the 'flake shines through, and to see this bike in bright summer sunshine'd put one's retinas at serious risk!

The build was, he says, fairly straightforward, with no nasty surprises or problems, as everything was done in-house – as one of Tony's customers once pointed out, despite the company name, "Complete Cafe Racers don't just build cafe racers, they build cool bikes." 

C

learly, it's not a caffeine-fuelled road racer that owes its styling and heritage to the Ton-Up boys of yore – perhaps its influences lie with Billy, Wyatt, and a trip from Los Angeles to New Orleans?

Tony was undergoing something of a clear-out as Complete Cafe Racer was relocating to a new unit, so they were trying to offload as much stock as they could to ease the trauma of moving so much stuff from one workspace to another. In the process, he realised just how much stuff he had, and not just stuff that pertained to the core focus of his business. He admits he's a bit of a hoarder, and not only did he have rather a lot of two-stroke Suzuki parts, but also a lot of air-cooled Kawasaki bits too. Somewhat conveniently, a friend was also having a clear-out of a hardtailed Z650 frame and rear mudguard so Tony decided to, rather than just get rid of stuff, do a deal on the frame, and build a complete bike.

The next step was, as he puts it, "just grabbing bits from the parts unit and throwing them at the frame". The wheels are SR650 (the factory custom variant of the Z650), the yokes were originally on a GPz1100 A2 streetfighter, and were machined to suit 41mm GTR1000 forks with KLE500 stanchions to give some extra length, and a pair of Triumph Trident 900 calipers were, with a couple of adaptor plates made by CCR's mechanic Martin, bolted on to them. He now had a rolling chassis that had a nice stance (the rear fatbob-type mudguard already fitted

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CUSTOM HEROES AT MOTORCYCLE LIVE!

WORDS: NIK

PICS: SIMON EVERETT

DESPITE THE FACT THAT IT'S DARKER THAN A HELIOPHOBIC'S UNDER-STAIRS CUPBOARD, AND OFTEN SO WET EVEN OTTERS HAVE TO FABSLIP THEIR POCKETS, NOVEMBER IS A BIG MONTH FOR THE BRITISH MOTORCYCLE INDUSTRY AND, SOMEWHAT SCARILY, THAT CATCH-ALL TITLE INCLUDES US SCRUFFY REPROBATES TOO.

EVENT



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EVENT



Thanks to all who brought their bikes to Custom Heroes – we couldn't've done it without you! And thanks very much to Zodiac (www.zodiac.nl) for their help with the Championship, and Motorcycle Live! for putting the event on!

away with a big trophy, had dinner and a night in a posh hotel, AND won £500 (£250 from Motorcycle Live! and £250 from our excellent sponsors Zodiac), so it's worth entering your bike in the Champs next year, y'know?

A first for this year was the fact that we had some of the most skilled artisan craftsmen in the land working (well, doing demonstrations anyway) on our stand too; Steve Slight (Joeby's Airbrush Art) for the first four days, displaying the prowess with an airbrush that he's become famous for; Tony Reynolds (Tony the Engraver) on the Wednesday

and Thursday, showing off his incredible metal-sculpting skills; and Claudio Nosari, a very impressive up-and-coming new leather-worker, showcasing his mastery with carved bike seats and bags etc. Huge thanks to all of them!

Away from the BSH stand, there were customs aplenty too as more and more folk in the industry realise that custom bikes are so 'in' right now. Devitt Insurance had a ruck of them; Carole had, as usual, one of Destiny Cycles'; Krazy Horse, as you'd expect, had a good few, including the flat-track Indians they've become well known for; Indian themselves had a display of modified bikes; and almost everywhere you looked, especially on clothing stands, there were groovy customs.

There were some rather funky electric bikes too (I know, I know, heresy), and while most of them are, for our purposes, kind of irrelevant at the moment, I was quite taken with the Evo from Artisan – a very cool, little, Grom-style 'leccy bike that does 60mph, has a 50-mile range (which, granted, isn't much, but'd be fine for most folk to go to work or down the shops on), and costs just £3,400 (about the same as a genuine Grom). With the way the world's going, electric bikes are, much as many of us hate to say, the future, and the Evo, while only being a tiddler, is at least a step in the right direction in that it look like a real bike, not some tree-hugger's styling exercise.

So that, ladies and gentlemen, was this year's Motorcycle Live!, and Custom Heroes at it. It was, as you'll know if you went, a good show, and we'll be back next (well, okay, this...) year with another display of the best custom motorcycles in the land... and, hopefully, proper signs to try and stop know-nothing numpties from sitting on them! 🙄

N

ovember is, of course, the month when Motorcycle Live! is held at the NEC in Birmingham, and pretty much the whole UK motorcycle industry (warning, cheese alert) gears up (sorry) to show itself off to a whole host of people from all around the land. It's the biggest bunfight in the land, running over three halls and eight days, and while the right-on and the world-weary might piss and moan, it's still a good place to go to see just how strong, and diverse, the British motorcycle industry is... and, if you're truly mercenary, get your hands on some real bargains too.

As always, us lot at BSH have a he-owge stand on which we display the best, and only the best, custom bikes in the UK. This year it was renamed 'Custom Heroes', and we had 15 of the very best there are; Pete Roberts' post-apocalyptic 'Thunderdog' Gold Wing, the BSH project Katana, Pete 'The Druid' Sayers' 'Spirit of Albion' Triumph Saint (featured in issue 420), Layla Leatham's riot-in-a-candy-factory BSA A10, Andy Carter's newly finished Attitude Cycles-built 'Grand Fin' Harley, Carter Harris' luvverly slammed '38' (cover bike last issue), Martin Bradbrook's rather wonderful Ironhead digger (soon to be featured), Jamie Anderson's insane twin-turbo Gixer chop (again, soon to be featured), Vince Summers' just lovely Pistonhead Shovelhead (cover, this issue), and my ex-BSH project 45 (some 24 years after it was last there!).

As well as those shining examples of the custom builder's art, we also had the five winners of the 2019 BSH Custom Champs; Dave Brentley's sublimely 'flakey' Triumph (Best Custom), Dave Tarner's beautiful but brutal Spondon-style turbo Bandit (Best Engineering), Chris Sims' gobsmacking 'Black Pearl' (Best Paint), Tony Groom's uber-cool 'Rat-Racer' XL500 (Best New Skool), and John Ward's glorious S&S Shovel (Best Chopper AND Best Overall!). Congratulations to them – they all came



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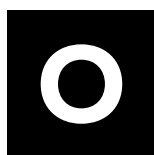




BEFORE THE NOW FAMOUS DEMISE OF ERIK BUELL'S RENOWNED BUELL BRAND, THE BIKES THAT BORE HIS NAME WERE KNOWN FOR THEIR GRUNT, THEIR HANDLING, AND GENERAL F**KOFFNESS.

BUELL 'FIGHTER!

WORDS & PICS: NIK



kay, so the later box-section bikes didn't have the legendary 'hooligan torque beast' reputation of the early, skinny, tube-frame ones, which to this day are still some of my favourite production bikes ever, but

they were still pretty damn good, and I'd happily walk past rows of identikit Japanese sports bikes to check out a Buell, especially if it's one of the older tube-framers.

I'm obviously not the only one either as two Italians, Luca Mammarella of Buell Service and Simone Conti of Simone Conti Motorcycles, have created a frame kit, in the same way as the likes of Harris, Spondon etc., that turns the later Buells into something akin to the skinny headbangers of yore. Their bike, christened the XB.5, won a major award at the respected Verona show at the beginning of the year, and now they're offering a kit to turn your Buell into something that looks like theirs.

The kits will be available to convert all the Buell XB models (9s and 12s), and will consist of a replacement frame, new billet yokes, a new tank, a new seat unit, a new airbox and fuel pump assembly, funky new left and right air-intakes, and a very in-ye-face headlight assembly. It's designed to accept all original Buell components (forks, swingarm, wheels, switchgear etc.), but there are many, many upgrades for other parts too (exhausts in titanium or stainless steel, rear shocks, forks, anything else that takes your fancy), and you can mix and match components to suit. The non-structural parts that're aluminium at the moment (this is the first bike, remember) will be made from carbon fibre on later kits (the tank, the airbox, the seat, the air intakes), and so will look even more high tech and desirable.

If you'd like to upgrade your XB Buell from already cool to positively Antarctic, then you can

ENGINE:

Buell XB-12RR, Pike's Peak tune (150bhp), Buell Service XB.5 airbox/fuel pump assembly

FRAME:

Buell Service XB.5, aftermarket rear-sets

STUFF:

Buell 1125 brake/forks, aftermarket cooling duct, Buell Service XB.5 yokes/headlight fairing/air intakes/tank/seat, aftermarket 'bars/controls, Buell XB-12R rear wheel/brake/swingarm

FINISH:

Buell Service XB.5

get a kit, or even parts of a kit, from Nick Sadler at Retro Moto Engineering, sole agent for the UK, in Suffolk on **01842 814918** or via their website at **www.retromotoengineering.co.uk**

They'll be sold as kits predominantly, but should anyone want theirs built for them, he's happy to discuss a build (and the costs involved, of course).

So that's how you make your nice, friendly Buell into something that looks like it'd rip your head off and spit down your neck. The only thing yours won't do is go like theirs; this particular bike has a Buell XB12 RR engine installed, an ex-Pike's Peak race engine with around 150bhp, and arm-stretching amounts of torque, but I'm sure if you ask him nicely he'll be able to put you in touch with someone who can. Then you truly will have, as everyone wants, a true hooligan torque beast. 



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GYPSY

WORDS & PICS:

OLD EMPIRE MOTORCYCLES





THIS BIKE STARTED WAY, WAY BACK – IT'S BEEN A PROJECT THAT'S BEEN ON THE BURN FOR SOME TIME. THAT SAID, THE BEST RESULTS USUALLY COME FROM THINGS LONG MATURED AND REFINED!

WE

were approached by a Welsh gentleman after he'd seen the Vulcan CB250 we did many years ago now, but initially declined the build because we're so busy. He wasn't to be put off, though, and began stockpiling suitable parts – a Honda CB250 donor bike, Aprilia RS125 forks, and so on.

As with anything we build, once it's done we always look back and wish we'd changed this or that or done something differently. In this case we had a thorough look at what we disliked about the Vulcan (not much really, just small things); firstly, the stance – it was too high at the front so, for this bike, we shaved off an inch, and lowered the top yoke right down on top of the headstock. Secondly, the tank was too big for the right lines, so that was carefully narrowed/angled/tapered to get the right profile. Thirdly, it lacked oomph, so we decided on the US 360cc version of the engine.

The fun began when we found that the engine needed a full rebuild. This was undertaken by our good friend Willy Valentine and, after soda-blasting and a repaint, was good to go. The frame was carefully cut, and manipulated in all the right places, to get the shortened look, and a tight loop on the back was made, along with little notches for the leather side-bags we envisioned. A neat little tail/brake light was embedded in the back, and we remounted the rear shocks as the angle looked too severe (and



to raise it slightly at the back too). We also cleverly mounted our PIN indicators on the shock mounts, mimicking the fronts where they're bolted into the yoke's pinch bolts.

Wheels-wise, we re-laced the original hubs to 19-inch stainless rims, and shod them in what are perhaps not the most well-performing tyres, but ones that certainly look the part. A swanky new brake disc, and CNC adaptor plate, was made by Demeanour Customs (01953 681308 or www.demeanourcustoms.com) to mount the front wheel to the new forks, and the new yokes were used as a mount for a custom triangular headlight with a very delicate aluminium cowl that was stretched and formed around it. Similarly, the 'bars, which're integrated into the top yoke on this model of Aprilia RS125, we used to our advantage to mount our signature Empire controls and KustomTech levers.



ENGINE:

1976 Honda CB360, re-bored/rebuilt, Mikuni VM carbs, vinyl-covered air-filter shield, one-off stainless exhaust with internal baffles

FRAME:

Honda CB250, modified, new rear loop, powdercoated, Old Empire leather-covered footrests

STUFF:

Avon Roadrunner 19" front tyre, modified Aprilia RS125 forks/yokes, OEM integrated clip-ons/controls/leather grips, Kustom-Tech levers, OEM disc/caliper hanger/front cowl/seat pan/'shooting brake' Bugatti leather seat/vinyl-covered electrics box/curved side-mounted number-plate/leather side-bags/triangular tinted headlight/integrated rear stop/tail-light, modified Honda CB250 fuel tank with T800 cap/48mm speedo, Avon Roadrunner 19" rear tyre, Hagon shocks, modified stock swingarm, custom loom, Motogadget M-unit, PIN indicators, Shorai battery

FINISH:

Metallic British blue paint by Black Shuck Kustom (07794 127223 or www.blackshuckkustom.net), powdercoating by Aerocoat (01493 488455 or www.aerocoat.co.uk), Ceracoated forks/yokes/accessories by Flying Tiger Paintwork (01284 599003)

ENGINEERING:

Bike built by Old Empire Motorcycles (01379 898987 or www.oldempiremotorcycles.com)

THANKS TO:

"Flying Tiger Paintwork; Demeanour Customs; GB Upholstery; Aerocoat; Willy Valentine; Motorcycle Wiring Specialists; Ekquire Motorcycles; & Black Shuck Kustom..."



The tank was then remounted, and a custom-made OEM 48mm electronic speedo nestled in its neck. All the electronics needed redoing so, after a completely new charging and ignition system was installed, we hid all the components, and the Shorai battery, in an aluminium, vinyl-covered box under the seat. A Motogadget unit controls everything, and it's all linked together in what has to be said is one of the neatest looms we've ever seen, provided by the talented Richard at Motorcycle Wiring Products (0115 930 5454 or www.vehicle-wiring-products.eu).

The whole bike was given little leather touches here and there, with our Empire grips and 'pegs, and handmade leather satchels (by the customer in fact!), and a beautiful hand-stitched seat using Bugatti 'shooting brake' aniline leather by GB Upholstery (01284 388777 or www.gbupholstery.co.uk). The finishing touches by Flying Tiger Coatings were all the Ceracoat work on the front end (and almost all of the rest of the bike too), along with a deft touch of the spray gun from Black Shuck and, finally, a tune-up by the boys at Ekquire Motorcycles (01284 765434) in Bury St Edmunds left us with what we think is maybe not one of our most radical builds, but something that makes us smile nevertheless. 🇬🇧

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EVENT

ATTITUDE CYCLES' BARBECUE



WORDS & PICS: NIK



IT'S A CHUFFIN' LONG WAY FROM UP HERE AT THE *BSH* EDITORIAL ORIFICE IN DEEPEST DARKEST SUFFOLK TO ATTITUDE CYCLES IN THE HIGH-TECH METROPOLIS OF SOUTHAMPTON (YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW, I'VE BEEN TO SOUTHAMPTON BEFORE, I'M BEING FACETIOUS), BUT IT'S ALWAYS WORTH THE TRIP.

I'M

sure you know, Attitude are probably the most prolific custom shop in the land, turning out a quite staggering number of customs each year, and their customers nearly always become friends and keep going back to them again and again. This means that when they hold one of their informal events, like this barbecue, which they do a couple of times a year, a whole host of folk on cool bikes, and a fair few in cool cars too, turn up for them.

And this bash was no exception; the shop's forecourt, rear yard, the street outside and the car park round the corner were packed with cool choppers, mostly Harley-powered, pretty much all day, and the crackle



of open 'pipes bouncing off the walls of the local buildings, and passing cars, provided a nice soundtrack to the day.

As with a lot of one-day events, nothing much really happens. There's no 'entertainment', no bands, no disco, nothing like that, but there doesn't really need to be, y'know? That's not what days like this are about – they're about bikes, about people, about just wandering around checking out the assembled machinery, eyeballing the bikes being built in

Attitude's cavernous workshops, being jealous that you haven't got anything as cool as a lot of the bikes there. Oh, and having the odd beer and burger too, of course.

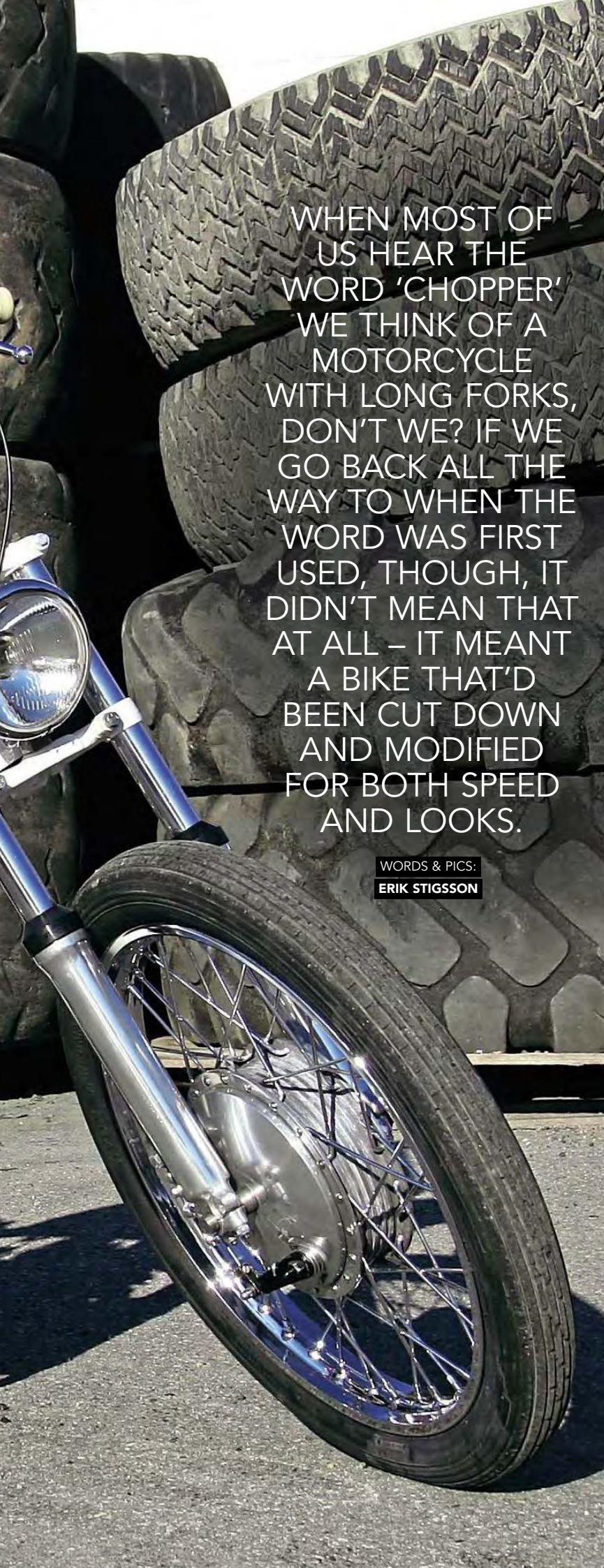
At the time of writing, the dates of next year's events haven't been released (or possibly even thought about), but keep an eye on Attitude's social media, and the *BSH* events guide too, to be kept informed of them. Oh, and try and get there early on the day if you want a decent parking spot... especially if you're in a car! 🏍️



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OLD SCHOOL TRIUMPH





WHEN MOST OF
US HEAR THE
WORD 'CHOPPER'
WE THINK OF A
MOTORCYCLE
WITH LONG FORKS,
DON'T WE? IF WE
GO BACK ALL THE
WAY TO WHEN THE
WORD WAS FIRST
USED, THOUGH, IT
DIDN'T MEAN THAT
AT ALL – IT MEANT
A BIKE THAT'D
BEEN CUT DOWN
AND MODIFIED
FOR BOTH SPEED
AND LOOKS.

WORDS & PICS:
ERIK STIGSSON





too. The tank started life as an ordinary Sportster item, but he welded metal ribs on to it, and then moulded fibreglass around them to give it a more personal look. He was also going to make his own rear 'guard too, but a good friend, Simon, who's also very skilled in metal work, made one for him.

Another friend, named Hakan, took care of the paint. Spraying through a thin curtain with flower motifs was a custom painting trick often used in the late '60s/early '70s, and he used this method when he sprayed the rose metallic on to the white base, and this's really helped achieve the old-school look he was after, with hints of the 'flower power' period round 1970, and he's used a genuine Bates headlight and seat from

the same era, and installed that cool little rear light atop the sissy-bar.

Finally, we come to the engine; the 1954 650cc engine (from either a Thunderbird or a Tiger 110, depending on when in 1954 it was made) is more or less stock... except, of course, for those rather wonderful exhausts that he made specially for the bike. Oh, and the very neat hand-change with its piston top... and the fact that the kick-start can be turned through 180 degrees and used as a side-stand. Apart from that, it's just been rebuilt, painted and polished, and looks great.

It took a lot of work, he says, but he's managed to build a bike that could very well've been put together during the heady days of early '70s California, as this is the way they often turned out back then... although seldom did they look as good as this one. 



That meant that lots of parts were taken off, and only what was really needed for the bike to run was kept. Big mudguards were removed and only small ones put on if any were used at all (usually a cut-down front one on the back), and large tanks swapped for smaller ones, and it was only later on that the term 'chopper' came to mean a modified bike that often had extended forks.

When Patrik Nordlund from Moliden in Sweden got this bike, it was a traditional Swedish chopper with extended forks. Back then, the 1954 650cc Triumph engine'd been fitted into a modified H-D Sportster rigid with forks originally from the same bike but, since he hangs out with friends who're more into old-school bikes than ultra-long Swedish choppers, he soon decided to modify it to give a cool retro look. He started by swapping the Sportster frame for an old Triumph one that a close friend offered for a good price (extended at the rear as it looked a little short), and picked up a set of forks from a '70s Honda, shortened them by three inches, and put up the lowers in a lathe, machining them to make them look skinnier. The frame needed a little tweaking too to get the Honda forks in, but you guessed that anyway, didn't you? He kept the Sportster front hub/brake, getting it laced into a 21-inch wheel, while the rear now runs an 18-inch rim with a Triumph hub/brake.

Patrik works in the body shop of a big car company, and fixes the bodywork of damaged cars and, as such, he was in a good place to do the tinware on his bike. He's handmade the oil tank, the sissy-bar, the handlebars and lots of other small parts

ENGINE:

1954 Triumph 650, rebuilt, polished, one-off exhausts, one-off hand-change, modified kick-start

FRAME:

Modified Triumph 650, extended

STUFF:

21" front wheel, H-D Sportster hub/brake, 3" under Honda forks, one-off yokes, one-off 'bars, modified Sportster tank, Bates seat, one-off rear mudguard, one-off oil tank, 18" rear wheel, Triumph hub/brake, one-off sissy-bar, one-off loom, Bates headlight, aftermarket tail-light

FINISH:

Paint through a curtain by Hakan, polishing by owner

ENGINEERING:

Owner & friends

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EVENT

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WORDS & PICS: BOSUN

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With more than 450 bikes racing, and lots of supporters, the organisers say it was the busiest yet, but it never felt overcrowded. Tracks were all marked out on various fields around the main house, an old stately home, and in the centre was the main area where exhibitions and food were available. It's very much a family affair, with lots of children, and people having picnics, and it's eclectic – there is a class system for bikes, but I never did quite work it out, and you had Harley choppers racing against 1960s Husqvarnas, scooters against modified home-built Kawasakis. There always seemed a great melee of throbbing engines around the start-line, and in the paddock, but what struck me most was, despite the damp, the smiles – no one was chickening out, and there was a great sense of camaraderie.

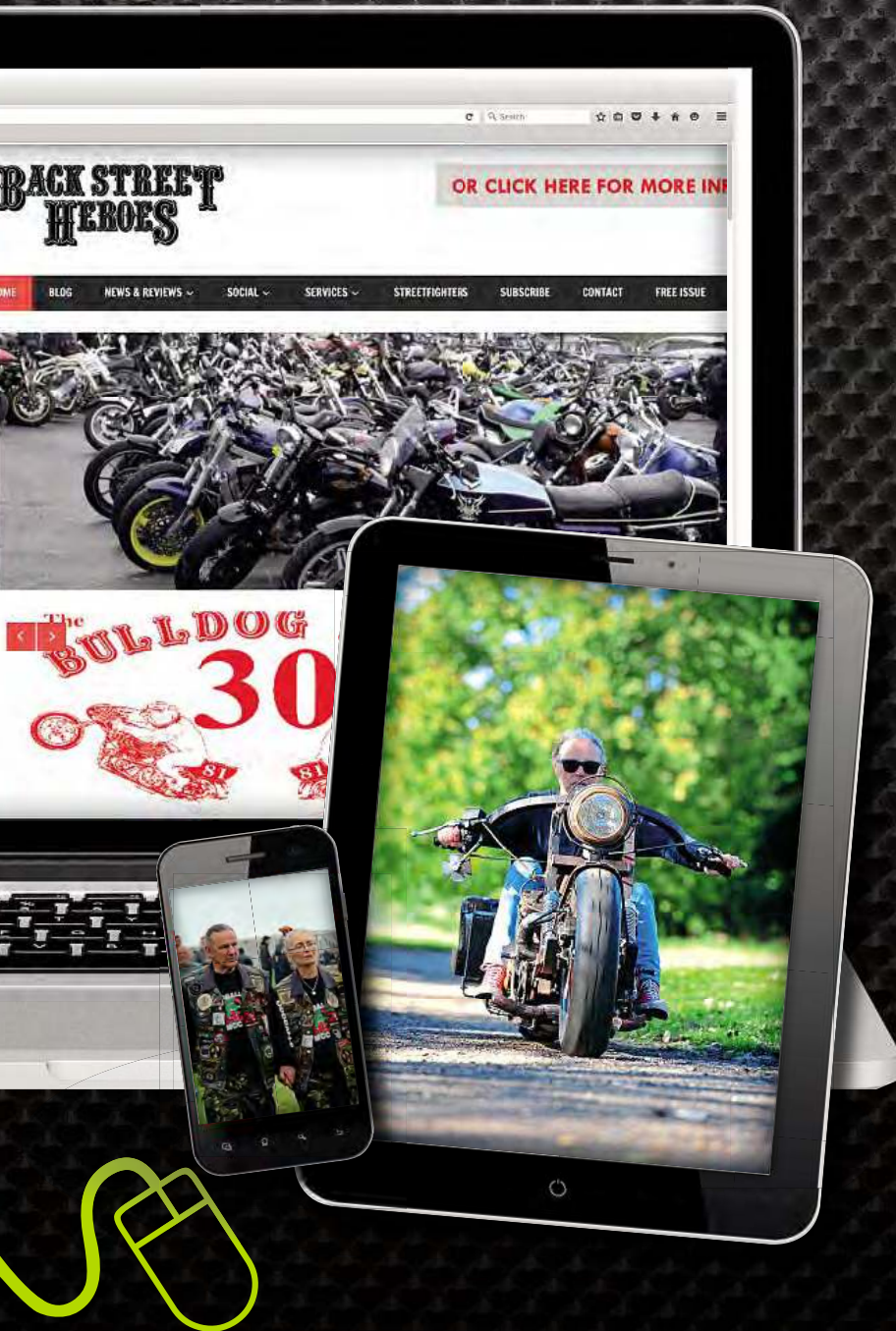
As the racing continued the sun came out and the bin-bags came off, the outfits became more garish, and the racing more frantic as the track got sloppier and muddier, creating even more

of a challenge for those on road tyres (it's the first time I've seen a 250 Super Dream be entertaining to watch!). It meant more egging on by the crowd too as they tried to persuade riders to go faster, and they did – they really did! I'm not sure that the guy on the hand-change Harley'd thought this through or not, but he was definitely going for it. All the tracks (there were several) were attacked with gusto, and the commentary from the guys in the mobile commentary truck was brilliant. There was a race for juniors with children racing on motorised bikes and bicycles, and in a nod to new technology there was a zero-emissions race won by Slaughter House Customs on their much-modified Swiss electric postal bike. 🇨🇭

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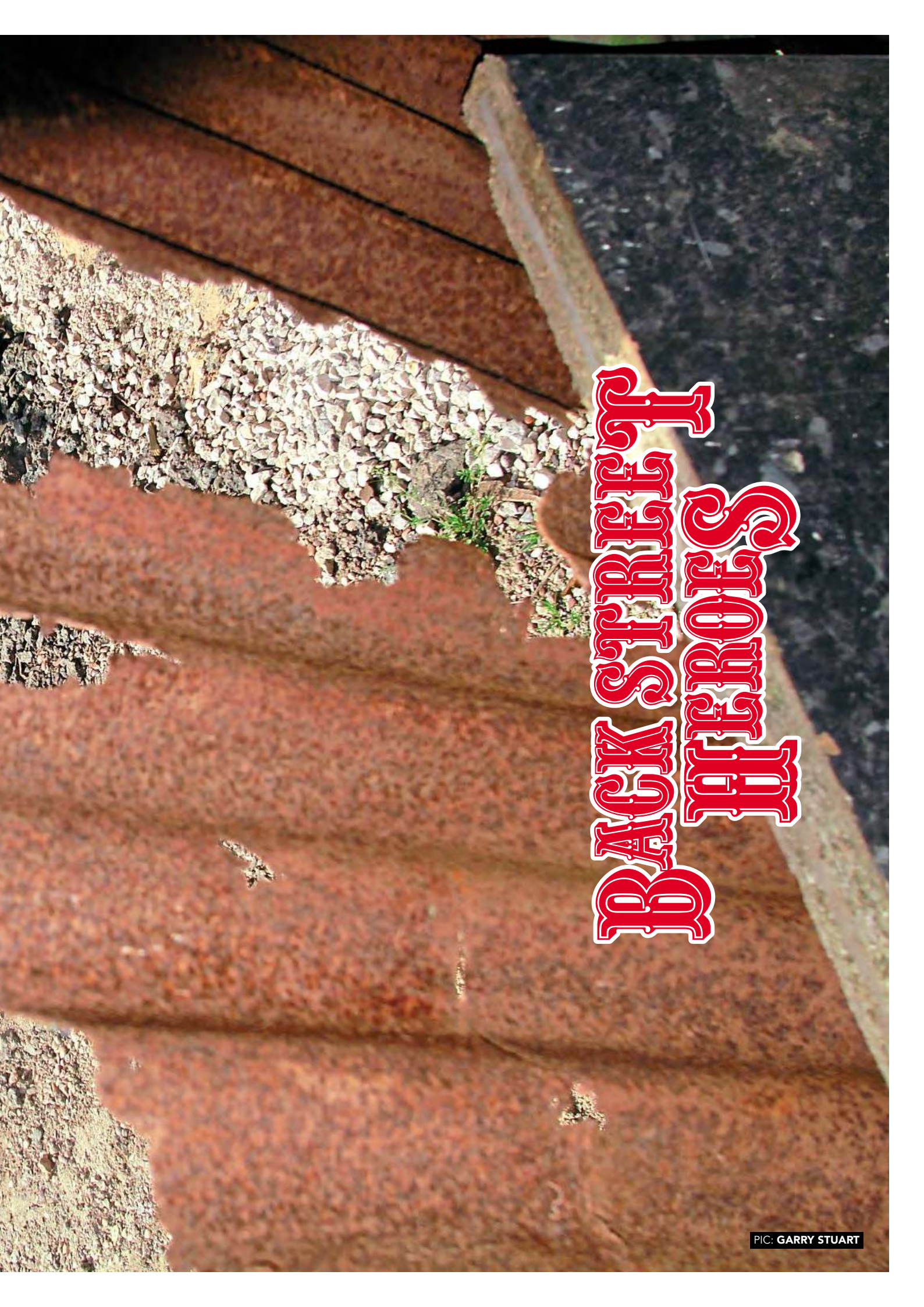
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A photograph of a rusty metal structure, possibly a bridge or a large container, with gravel and asphalt in the background. The metal is heavily rusted and shows signs of wear. The gravel is light-colored and the asphalt is dark.

STORM TAKES BACK

PIC: GARRY STUART

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A LOOK AT THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE AND BREATHE CUSTOM BIKES



PHIL KNOWLES THE TRIKE GUY

WHILE PHIL KNOWLES, AND HIS COMPANY, THE TRIKE GUY, MAY NOT BE KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD (YET, ANYWAY!) HE, AND IT, HAVE CERTAINLY BECOME WELL-KNOWN IN THE TRIKE SCENE.

The business has been going a few years now, and recently moved to a new and much larger showroom, and workshop, in the small Peak District town of Chapel-en-le-Frith in Derbyshire. It specialises in German-built trikes (Rewacos, Booms etc.), and Rewaco, in particular, were so impressed with his knowledge, professionalism and dedication that they offered him a Rewaco dealership, and now The Trike Guy is an official Rewaco Main Dealer.

(Harald Schmitz, Rewaco's founder, travelled from Germany to be at their, sadly very damp, official opening day!) It's now become the biggest-selling trike dealer in the UK and, as well as new and second-hand trikes, The Trike Guy offers packages tailored to the customer's requirements, as well as servicing, maintenance, spares, clothing and trike goodies.

WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU DO?

I'm Phil Knowles, 'The Trike Guy', and I specialise in German trikes – we import, buy, sell, service, refurb and customise them.

TELL ME ABOUT THE TRIKE GUY?

Some six/seven years ago I was buying, selling and customising Harleys. Then I went on to purchase a couple of old German trikes, and refurbish them, and the company

went from there. Soon after we decided to specialise solely in German trikes, and this became the main focus of our business.

WHERE DID THE NAME COME FROM?

Having been a regular visitor to Daytona Bike Week in the US I noticed that a lot of the traders there had catchy and personalised company names so I came up with the name The Trike Guy based on theirs.

WHEN WAS IT SET UP? AND WHO WORKS THERE?

I opened the doors for trading some six or seven years ago, and we moved to our new premises this year (2019). It's me, my son Josh (who's been riding bikes since he was in nappies!), Chris, our mechanic (who has more than 16 years' experience in all types of engines), and Grant, a friend of Josh's who's been around our family, and the bike scene, for many years.



THE BIZ

AT WHAT AGE DID YOU GET INTO BIKING?

I first got into biking at around the age of nine or ten – I bought a Puch 50 out of some guy's back garden, and turned it into my first field bike. From there, me and my friends got old Honda C90s, and raced them around a home-made circuit in a nearby field every single night until the sun went down. At 16 I got an RD50 Yamaha, and at 17 an RD125. When I passed my test, I got into LC350s, and then GSX-R 1100s and the like.

AND THEN CUSTOMISING BIKES? AND WHY?

Just about all were customised to some extent – the usual stuff, Micron exhausts, streetfighter fairings, custom paint, tuned motors, rear-sets, any shiny parts we could get our hands on in those days. Pretty much every bike I've ever had's not been stock, and that's continued on to the trikes these days – I feel the need to customise everything! S'pose you could call me a parts junkie!

WHERE DO YOU FIND YOUR INSPIRATION?

I get great joy and satisfaction working in the industry I've always loved, and had a great passion for. For me, to've built a successful business, and dealt with people I consider my own, is what drives me.

WHO ARE YOUR HEROES?

As you can probably tell from the list of bikes above, I like speed and racing, so probably Kevin Schwantz, the 1993 FIM 500cc world champion, and the great Valentino Rossi. On the custom side of things, many, but two stand out – Arlen Ness, and the late, great Indian Larry.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BIKE YOU'VE BUILT? AND WHY?

In 2004 I purchased a Harley Road King Custom, and spent the next 12 years customising – 110 cubic inch motor, PM wheels, custom paint etc., etc. I think, in the end, only the frame was standard! It worked too – I did many BSH 'Run To The Sun'

rides to Faro on it, and it's still in the family as I gave it to Josh as we could never see it leave the family.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE CUSTOM SCENE GOING IN THE FUTURE?

I think it's just going to go from strength to strength – over the years I've seen more and more new, and different types of, people getting into the scene; everything from trikers to bobber riders etc., etc. As long as the powers-that-be don't shut us down, I can only see it getting bigger. 🍻

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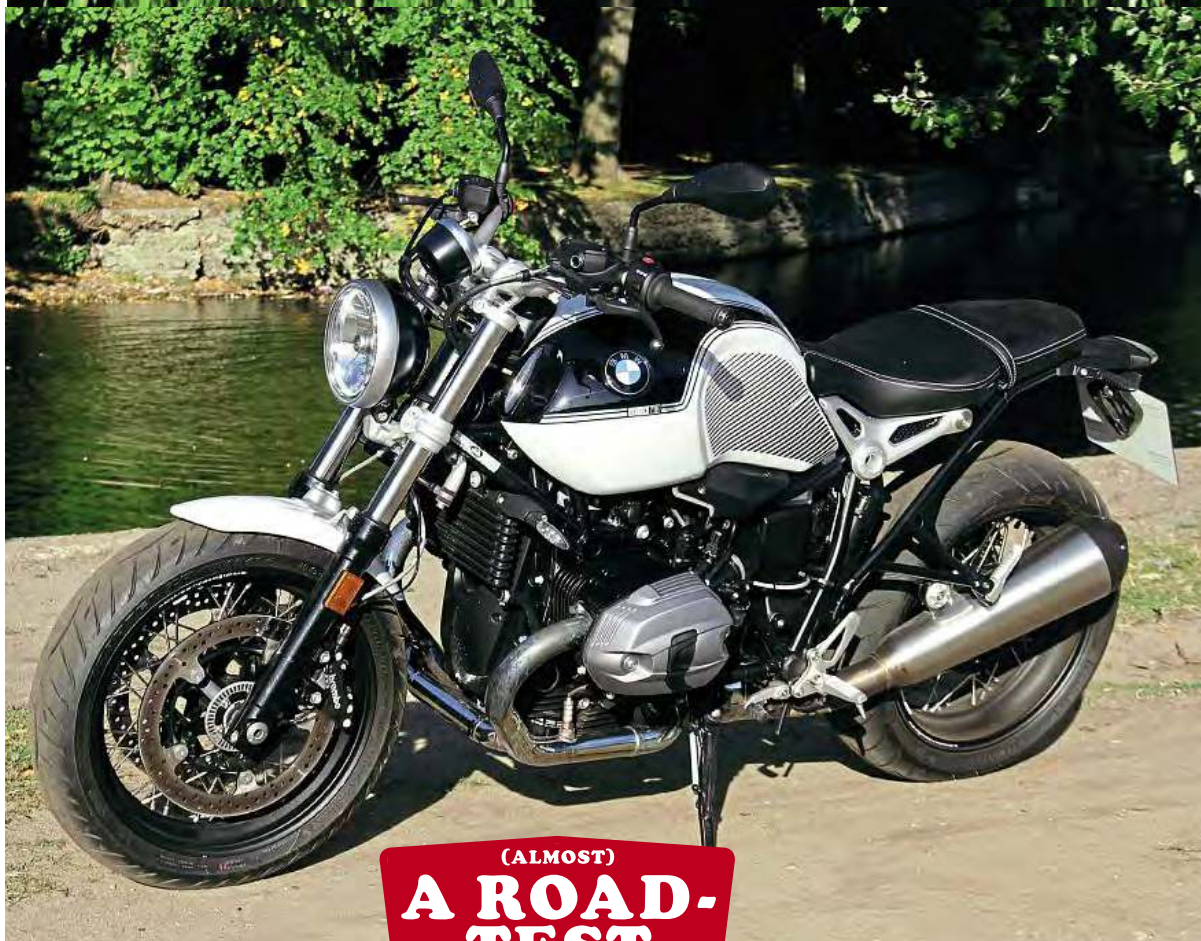
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(ALMOST)
**A ROAD-
TEST**

WORDS: **NIK**

PICS: **EMMA TANEY**

BMW RnineT PURE

WHEN THE BMW RnineT WAS RELEASED IN 2014, IT WAS VERY WELL RECEIVED BY A SECTION OF THE MOTORCYCLING WORLD WHO DRINK A LOT OF COFFEE, WEAR A LOT OF PLAID, AND'RE VERY PROUD OF THEIR BEARDS. SHORTLY AFTER, WHEN THEY'D ACTUALLY RIDDEN IT, THE REST OF US DECIDED IT WAS PRETTY GOOD TOO.

The success of the naked, roadster-style Boxer (flat-twin) inspired BMW to create an RnineT family, and there's now a basic RnineT, a very trendy Scrambler, a slightly more sporty Racer, an off-road Urban GS, and this one, the road-biased Pure.

The theory behind the Pure is the brand's much-advertised suitability for customisation – buying a brand new, top-of-the-range bike, and then removing perfectly good parts to fit accessories can quickly get expensive. BMW do offer a huge range of aftermarket goodies for the range, and so

if that's the sort of thing that floats your boat, buying one of these, slightly cheaper and less lavishly equipped, might make a lot of sense.

Like its siblings, it's powered by an air/oil-cooled, 1170cc, DOHC Boxer engine that puts out 110bhp, and a healthy flat torque curve, and the bike has a three-part tubular steel frame (front and rear main sections, and a bolt-on sub-frame designed to facilitate quick removal of the pillion seat if you so desire). Suspension is basic 43mm right-way-up forks, and a simple rear shock (adjustable for preload and rebound), the wheels are cast 17-inchers, the front brakes



(ALMOST)
**A ROAD-
TEST**

**BMW
RNINET
PURE**

are four-pot Brembos, and the 17-litre petrol tank's made from steel. There's a dual seat (unlike the Scrambler or the Racer) which, at 805mm (31.6 inches) may sound tall, but is slim enough to allow most of us to get both feet on the ground. It's quite odd really when you think about it – it seems that the Germans, traditionally quite large folk, make bikes that're small and quite lithe (except for their off-roaders and tourers), and the Japanese, traditionally quite small people, build bikes too tall for a lot of riders... weird.

Anyway, instrumentation is limited to just a single, round speedo (with a digital insert showing time and trip info), and the 'bars are fairly flat and fairly wide. There're no rider modes or any malarkey, but do we really need them? My only concern was a lack of fuel light (because, yes, I am that idiot who's run out of fuel more times than I care to remember), but the warning wosname, when it comes, is pretty difficult to miss so that's fine.

So what's it like to ride? Well, if you've been brought up on a diet of big Jap fours, then you may well, like me, be under the impression that BMW motors are, on the whole, pretty asthmatic; they go well at low revs, thanks to the flat-twin engine's torque, but run out of steam at higher revs a little. I was kinda expecting this from the Pure too, and so was pleasantly surprised when it was nothing of the kind. Yes, there's definitely plenty of low-down grunt, but it's good

in the mid-range and higher up too. Motorways and dual carriageways don't trouble it at all, and getting off them on to more interesting roads (you know, ones with bends in) you get to revel in the (relatively) light weight (219kg fuelled), and excellent throttle response. As you sit bolt upright, it feels quick, and yet still smooth, and there's a nice bark from the left-exiting exhaust too. Engine braking is good, as it (nearly) always is on twins, and the basic, yet competent, chassis did exactly what it should – the steering is light and neutral.

I have to say that, despite my earlier reservations, the Pure did make a good impression on me – I wasn't sure that it was going to have that essential spark that makes bikes fun for me, but it did; it's quick (if not fast), it handles, and it's comfortable – what more can you ask for? ●



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LONG TERM TEST

YAMAHA NIKEN LONG-TERMER

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PART
SIX

AT THE END OF THE LAST PART OF THE LONG-TERM NIKEN SERIES LAST ISSUE, I SAID: "NEXT ISSUE: THE NIKEN RIDDEN AS MOST PEOPLE NEVER WILL!" AND, AS I'M SURE YOU'LL AGREE HAVING LOOKED AT THESE PICS, I WASN'T KIDDING!

The gentleman aboard it is not, of course, me (he's about half my body weight for a start!), it's Mr David Coates Esquire, one of the UK's top stunt riders, and a man who's been making motorcycles stand on only one of their available wheels for a very long time. He and I worked together through the Nineties when I was at the helm of the fledgling

Streetfighters magazine, and he's been associated with Yamaha for a good while now, riding their MT-series bikes on their MT Tour, and doing a number of shows each year of his own too.

Pretty much from the moment I collected the Niken, Yamaha's marketing supremo Jeff Turner asked if I was going to take it to Dave, but as he lives so far away (well, from Suffolk anyway) in Darlington, the opportunity to do this didn't arise until the beginning







of October when he was booked to do the stunt show(s) at the Copdock Motorcycle Show. I, and my good lady Pam (who's on the back in a couple of these pics), met him the day before, and these photos are the result (there's also a video on the BSH channel on YouTube too, and on the BSH website).

I'll hand over here to Dave, and let him tell you himself what it's like to ride a Niken in this way: "As soon as I saw some images of the Yamaha Niken back in 2017 (I think), my first thoughts were 'I wonder what it's like to stunt? It looks fairly big and in your face, it must look great doing a wheelie or a stoppie!', and two years later I finally got the chance to find out.

"When I first swung my leg over one earlier this year and sat on it, my initial

feeling was of how big and wide the front was, and how the dash seems to be further away from you than normal. It all feels big and sort of imposing. Also I couldn't see both the front wheels, which again felt pretty strange to me. I remember thinking to myself 'This is going to be a handful!', but as soon as I put it in first, and set off, the moment the wheels started turning it was like a switch'd been flicked – it immediately felt like a normal motorcycle... albeit a rather large motorcycle.

"So, what's it like to stunt? Surprisingly good! The enormous amount of front end grip takes away any worries of losing the front while doing stoppies. They come up fairly easy, and are very controllable – I



"Wheelies? Well, the Niken will wheelie quite happily, but it does take a bit more effort than normal to hoist it up, and it comes up a bit slower, so you need plenty of room to get any decent height. Also there's a fair bit more weight hanging up there and so, if it's not perfectly straight, it'll go where it wants to and there's not much you can do about it. It is fun to wheelie, though, and looks great doing it."

"In fact, the Niken is so capable of stunting that I'm going to be using one in my shows next season. I'll change the gearing slightly just so it'll lift a bit quicker when I haven't got much room to play in, but I'm looking forward to using it!" BMW

Next issue: BACK TO REALITY – WINTER... JOY.

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actually feel that the front end's more sensitive to changes in direction from the handlebars than on a conventional bike, and you do feel as though you're really high up when doing them. The only problem, if you like, is if you're not ready and straight when the back wheel comes back down, it can be a bit of a hard foot-plant to try to keep the bike from falling over – the bike does feel heavy then. When I rode Nik's Niken, for the first few times it pulled to the right, and I wondered if one of the tyres had slightly more air than the other? It got better the more I did, though, so I'm not really sure what the initial problem was. Could've been one of the brakes binding slightly? I don't know, but it cured itself anyway and was fine after that.

"Again, the great front end grip makes for worry-free burnouts and drifting; you can basically forget about the front washing out, and just concentrate on controlling the spinning back tyre. Counter-steering in donuts is effortless – whatever the steering system Yamaha've developed for the Niken is, it definitely works!"



PROJECT

JUST LIKE BLOODRUNNERS KATANA, JACK'S... PART 14

WORDS: NIK PICS: PHWF

ONE OF THE ORIGINAL KATANA DESIGN... UMM, CRITERIA OR PARAMETERS SOUNDS A BIT POSH, DOESN'T IT, IT WAS MORE LIKE ANDY FROM LITTLE BRITAIN GOING 'I WANT THAT ONE'... THINGS WAS THAT I WANTED THE BIKE TO SINK DOWN ON TO ITSELF WHEN YOU TURN THE IGNITION OFF, AND IT'S THIS THAT'S CAUSED SOME OF THE BIGGEST HEADACHES.



Front support legs



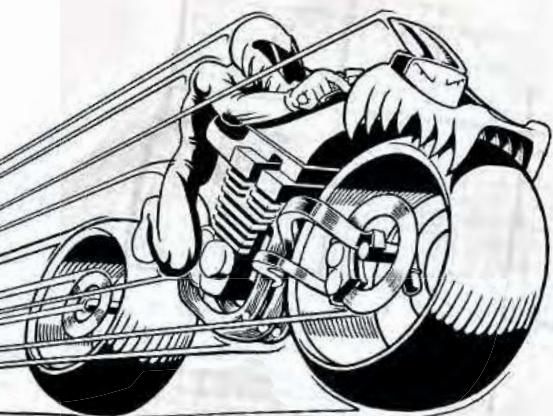
Belly-pan template



Front piece ready to be welded in



Sides and front welded together



Y

eah, I know you can just buy off-the-shelf air-ride systems that'll lift and drop a bike (Legend, Dirty Air etc.), but anyone can do that, and Paul and Luke at Pointy Hat kind o' balked at the idea of spending the fairly substantial amount of money that such systems cost when they could make one that worked just as well for a lot, lot

less. It's been a bit of a 'mare, and we'll talk more about it in a forthcoming issue, but this time let's talk about something that's very directly related to it – the belly-pan and, as part of it, the exhaust.

I'm not usually that much of a fan of belly-pans as they usually look, to me anyway, like a very obvious aftermarket addition, not part of a bike's original design, and that's because, in the majority of cases,

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Belly-pan material



Sides mocked-up



Test-fit showing the rolled rear section



New exhaust flanges and stubs

they are. As the Kat is going to sit down on itself, though, it needs something to sit on as, kind o' obviously, just dropping on to the frame and/or the underside of the motor isn't ideal. Rather than just have a belly-pan, though, I wanted something functional and, also, somewhere to hide the exhaust as, if you look at the bike in the original Bloodrunners comic, the Kat doesn't really have an exhaust per se and, as has been mentioned

before, one of the main challenges of building this bike is to try and keep it looking as minimal as the one in the original cartoon is.

The plan, then, was to hide the exhaust in the belly-pan, with the only signs of it being the headers, which'll be tucked up in among the morass of tubes under the fairing, and an outlet down on the right-hand side. I didn't want just a round 'ole though, as that wouldn't look right, but I'd seen

the way that certain expensive cars (Range Rovers and the like) have a dual parallelogram outlet, and I like that. (A parallelogram, in case you nodded off during geometry classes as I often did, is like a rectangle, but with its opposite sides parallel – a bit like one that a fat bloke's sat on.)

So, the belly-pan; in order for it to be strong enough to support the full weight of the bike, the first job was to make a kind of

PROJECT

collector/can that'll nestle beneath it). Each piece was shaped, its edges smoothed, and then was carefully welded together to minimise distortion, and then the welds were flush-ground to make

back to turn 90 degrees to the exhaust can... oh, and they had to make new collets and flanges too for the head.

Now, you may've heard that while two-stroke engines need



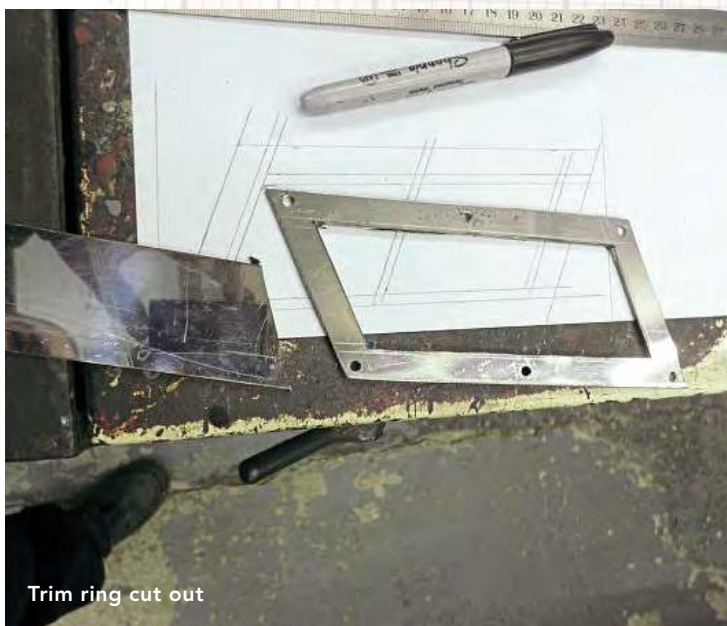
No 1 header funky cut to allow it to join No 2



Roughly cut hole in No 2 to take No 1 header



Belly-pan with exhaust tip template



Trim ring cut out

support framework underneath – three support legs, with braces, in a triangle pattern as, geometry again, a triangle will be more stable on uneven ground. Next, after making up and shaping cardboard templates of the 'pan itself, they cut the required pieces from 2mm alloy sheet – two sides, a front air-dam (shaped so that the exhaust headers fit through it where they need to), and a rolled rear edge (to hide the exhaust

them disappear.

Once they were happy with the 'pan itself, they turned their attention to the exhaust. Now because of the limitations imposed by needing to get it inside the belly-pan, this was always going to be a convoluted system that'd need a bit of working out, and they decided on a four-into-one that collected just below the engine roughly in line with the barrels, and then a straight section that runs

exhausts of the correct length to run properly, four-strokes don't, and that's true to a certain extent – four-strokes will run, yes, and without damaging themselves (unlike a two-stroke) with short 'pipes, but they're better when they have headers (downpipes) of an equal, and reasonable (about a foot is good), length. In such a confined space this was always going to be difficult, and Paul and Luke've done it as best they can,

and it wasn't easy as No 1 and No 3 had to be cut at a funky angle to allow them to join with No 2 and No 4, and a link pipe had to be made from the conjoined 4 and 3 to mate up with 2 and 1 and,

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...and welded in



Slip-joint to make Nos 3 and 4 join up with 1 and 2



Zorst tips and trim ring



...and in belly-pan

while this was going on, the angles involved had to be made smooth and flowing so that the exhaust gases can escape freely without hindrance too. See what I mean about convoluted?

At the time of these pics, taken the day before the Kat was due on the Custom Heroes stand at Motorcycle Live! at the NEC, they hadn't quite finished the straight section and the can (which'll be made from the usable parts of

the very battered one that was on my Harris), but they had made the exhaust tips, and the stainless trim ring that goes around them to protect the paint that's going on the belly-pan from the heat. By the next instalment that should be all done and, fingers crossed, the complications with the air-suspension should be sorted too! 🙏

Next issue: The reworked air-ride... hopefully!

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TECH

#18 HAVING A BASH...

WITH ALL THE ELECTRICAL STUFF MOUNTED, THERE ARE ONLY A FEW THINGS LEFT TO MOUNT ON THE KLR; SOME SORT OF EXHAUST, SOME SORT OF RADIATOR FAN GUARD, AND A FRONT MUDGUARD.

WORDS & PICS: MR. BRIDGES



T

he fan guard was easy – I just stole it off the power supply from a desktop computer I was throwing out (Fig.1). I got Paul to take the fan out of it too as it does the same job as the one I bought, but has black fan blades. The exhaust is a relatively straightforward job, or at least it will be once I've bought a silencer to mount to the subframe, and connect to the original front pipe.

That just leaves the front mudguard, which is much more of a problem since

the KLR originally had a high-level plastic effort which wouldn't look at all right. I want something that sits on the tyre, which is a bit of a problem as there isn't any provision for mounting a mudguard on the fork sliders. There are a couple of M6 threaded lugs that were intended for locating the speedo cable and brake hose, though, and the tops of the sliders are machined so some sort of clamp arrangement should be doable. The problem with mudguards is that while they come in various radii, they very seldom come in exactly the

radius you want to fit the wheel and tyre combination you're using. Last time I had that problem, I used a shrinker/stretcher to shrink the mudguard lip, and reduce its radius, but that had a relatively square cross-section, and no rolled return on the lip, as opposed to a rounded cross-section with the lip folded under, so it lent itself to that approach to altering the mudguard. For the rounded cross-section I want, rather than buying three or four mudguards at random until I find one that fits, I generally make them. That isn't exactly

easy, but it's not so much the difficulty of the job as the physical effort involved. Most people seem to leap to the conclusion that this's going to need an English wheel, and those are expensive and take up a lot of space. In fact the job can be done with little more than a tree stump with a hollowed end, and a mallet made from a fence post, by the way of specialised tools (Fig.2).

dish shape. The bossing mallet was made from 18" of 3"x 3" fence post by cutting each of the four corners off with a compound cut that was 1" away from the corner on each of the three sides that met the corner, before using the grinder to sand it into a ball shape. The handle is a piece of 1" (25.4mm) tube knocked into a 25mm through hole drilled with the same spade bit as the

a good spherical dolly, but cast iron balls aren't that hard to get as they're used in making gates and railings, and are available in various diameters from around 1" up to 6". A 6" solid one costs around £20 plus the VAT. You can find them online, but it might be worth checking to see if there is a local gate-maker who'd order them in for you as the postage might be a bit excessive.



I hollowed the tree stump out many years ago by drawing a series of circles on the end of it, and drilling rings of holes with a 25mm spade bit, with the holes getting shallower as they moved out from the centre (Fig.3). I drew out the curve I wanted for the bowl on a piece of card, and measured the depths for each ring of holes from that. After that I knocked the wood between the holes out with a lump hammer, and an old plain screwdriver, before smoothing it with a sanding disc on the grinder to make a regular

tree stump was hollowed out with. (You could bell the end of the tube, or drill it for a pin if the head comes loose, but mine seems to stay put as is).

As well as the stump and the bossing mallet, some smaller hammers, a few "dollies", and a flat surface to work the metal on are going to be needed. A "dolly", in this context, is a lump of metal that you can hold in your hand, and has a curved face to use as an anvil as the work progresses. I've got a solid steel ball that normally lives on my fly-press too (Fig.4), which makes

That's really all you need to make mudguards, but if you add in a sheet of plywood and a jigsaw to make templates from, then you can make perfectly adequate fuel tanks using the same equipment too. This does sound a little unlikely but, if you consider medieval suits of armour, it starts to make more sense. To start making the mudguard, we measured the tyre to see how wide the flat sheet'd need to be to get the look I wanted (Fig.5), and then added 1/2" (12mm) to allow for 1/4" on each side to fold under to make a

finished edge. After that we laid the tape around the tyre to mock up the kind of length I was thinking of (Fig.6). Because it's a little tricky to control the shape at the ends of a mudguard, I tend to add at least 2" of extra metal at either end as it's easier to trim the

but that's not something everyone has access to. If it's marked out right, it's possible to cut accurately with tin snips (Fig.8), although it is hard work. I also have an air-powered shear (Fig.9) that's easy to use, but isn't the most reliable way to cut a straight edge. To get

the blank were parallel before I sanded the second edge straight (Fig.11). This is also a useful technique for keeping things square if you're folding up a battery box or similar.

Once the edges of the blank are de-burred, it's time to start hammering



mudguard down than to put the extra work into the ends, so the measured 22" meant cutting the blank at 26".

With the size of the blank worked out, it was time to cut it out of some 1.2mm (18 gauge) steel sheet (Fig.7). You could probably use 0.9mm (20 gauge) for this, but that was what I had to hand. Making sure that your blank has straight, parallel edges'll make things significantly easier than if you're trying to work with wobbly edges that run off in random directions. Cutting the steel on a guillotine is the obvious answer,

round this, I cut the blank outside the lines, and then clamped it between two pieces of angle-iron that I knew were straight (Fig.10), with the line just visible next to the angle-iron, and then used a sanding disc on the grinder to knock the wobbly bits off (using a stone or a flap disc is liable to chew lumps out of the angle-iron and cause problems).

With one edge trued up, I turned the blank around, and clamped the other edge between the angle-iron. Measuring off the back of the angle meant I could check that the edges of

on it. Initially, a series of light blows along the centre line of the work-piece will start it curving in the right directions (Fig.12). It doesn't take long to end up with something really quite curly, but not at all mudguard-like (Fig.13). As the blank curls round, it forms "tucks" on the edge as excess material is squeezed together (Fig.14), and the trick to making it mudguard-like is shrinking the tucked-up material with a hammer, which is what I'll look at in detail next time... when I've bought a new camera that'll take usable pictures. 📷

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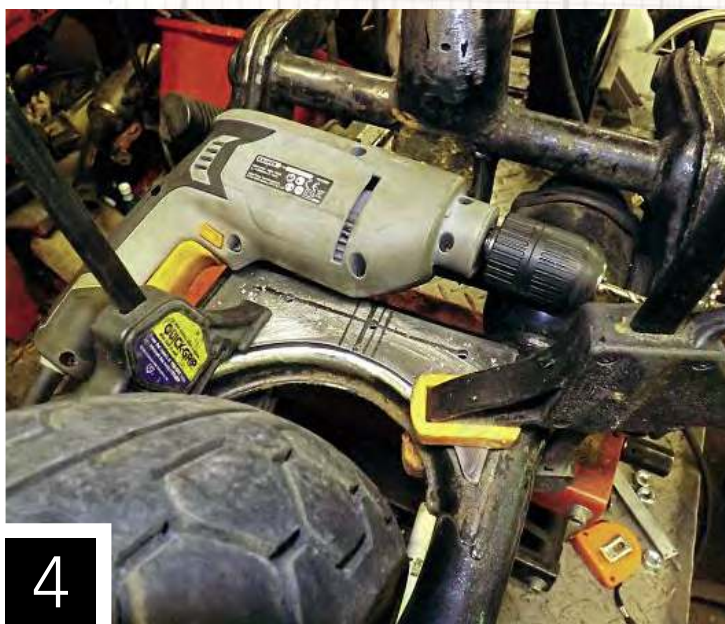
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HAVING EXPLORED SPRING RATES A LITTLE LAST TIME, THEN THE REASON FOR USING AN ER6 DIRECT-ACTING SHOCK THAT'S MOUNTED ABOUT HALFWAY UP THE SWINGING ARM FOR A CX500 DIRECT-ACTING MONO-SHOCK SETUP THAT HAS THE SUSPENSION UNIT MOUNTED HALFWAY UP THE SWINGING ARM SHOULD BE FAIRLY PLAIN.

WORDS & PICS: MR. BRIDGES



Despite the fact that there must be hundreds of CX500s with the setup running around now, I'm not keen on the idea of mounting the suspension unit directly to the gusseting at the front of the swinging arm for several reasons; it's a departure from the sort of lever ratio that the suspension unit was designed for; it puts a bending load on the swinging arm fork; and that gusset that the mount's welded to is a 30-plus-

year-old box that's not sealed against the weather, nor is it painted on the inside. A happier solution, to my mind, was going to be an over-braced setup that did away with the bending loads on the swinging arm, made the lever ratio a bit closer to that of the ER6, and let me check that the gusseting wasn't corroded. Before I could make that, though, I needed to find a position for the suspension unit that gave a fairly linear wheel rate. In an ideal world, you could just crib the measurements from the ER6, but that would've meant

mounting the suspension unit off to one side, and while I did toy with the idea, I decided to stick with the original. As long as the distance from the swinging arm pivot to the fixed and the moving ends of the suspension unit is the same, the wheel rate'll be linear because the angle between the suspension unit and the other two sides of the triangle remains equal. Problems start occurring when the change in angle between the suspension unit and the other two sides of the triangle varies a lot from end to end – think of the over-centre gas rams



on the tailgate of a hatchback, and it's clear that geometry has a big effect on the effective rate.

To avoid the worst of that, I positioned the suspension unit so that a line from its bottom eye to the swinging arm pivot was at less than 90 degrees to the centre line of the unit. That meant

gusset (Fig.3), and marked and drilled it for three 10mm holes (Fig.4). Then I removed the swinging arm, and drilled matching holes through the gusset that were $\frac{5}{8}$ " in diameter. That let me check that the inside of the gusset wasn't corroded before I welded in three pieces of $\frac{5}{8}$ " tube (Fig.5) to provide

to fit the original suspension mount (Fig.9). Finally I made a shaped 5mm plate to bolt to the reinforced gusset (Fig.10).

With all those attached, I bent up a 'U' shape in $\frac{7}{8}$ " OD 2.5mm wall tube that met up with the tabs I'd bolted to the old suspension unit mountings, and



that, as the suspension compressed, the angle would approach 90 degrees and everything should remain reasonably consistent. Having worked out where I wanted it to go (Fig.1), I made a template for the brackets for the top eye of the unit, and band-sawed out a couple of brackets from some 5mm steel (which was probably a bit of overkill, but made things simpler than making something more complex from 3mm steel). With the top of the unit attached (Fig.2), I made another 5mm plate to sit on top of the swinging arm

some crush support, and that let me bolt the reinforcing plate I'd made for the top and a simple rectangular one underneath (Fig.6), and weld them in place.

Next I unscrewed the suspension mounting pin from the bevel drive box (Fig.7). This was a weird thread, so I'm going to helicoil it to a thread pitch that I can get a bolt for, but in the meantime I used the pin to bolt a 5mm tab to the bevel box (Fig.8). On the other side, I used more of the $\frac{5}{8}$ " tube, and some 3mm tabs I cut out, to make a mounting

ran under the position of the lower eye of the mono-shock unit (Fig.11). With the 'U' tacked in place, I cut and shaped another piece of $\frac{7}{8}$ " to brace the 'U' to the plate on the swinging arm gusset (Fig.12). This was a bit fiddly to get right so, once I'd made one, I wrapped a piece of card around it, and made a template of it. By wrapping the template with the 'inside out' around another piece of tube, it was easy to make a mirror image of the tube for the other side (Fig.13).

With the support tubes tacked to the swinging arm plate and the upper tube, I made some card templates for the bottom of the suspension unit, and then cut them from some more 5mm plate (Fig.14). The plates were tacked in position with them bolted to the suspension unit. To avoid damaging the rubber bush in the suspension unit, I used some 12mm threaded bar, and four nuts, to keep them in place while everything was fully welded (Fig.15).

While making the top bracing bolt on was a bit pointless, it did at least make fully welding it easier because it could be removed to get at the inaccessible bits (Fig.16). With it all bolted back on, the motorcycle was once again capable of standing up on its own (Fig.17), but I left it on the ramp because it's time to start making yet another seat sub-frame... 

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QUEASY RIDERS

WORDS: THE LATE JIM FOGG RIP

ILLUSTRATIONS: LOUISE LIMB

Maybe I was wrong to blame the beefburger, but thinking back it was sure as hell glistening ominously as the girl stuck it between two halves of a bun. The onions looked a bit metallic too, like the last oil to drain out of a gearbox, and the relish resembled a slow hedgehog in repose for eternity on a night-time road. Whatever caused it, I had two-and-a-half unpleasant days to think about it... when I wasn't praying for death and calling up God on the Great White Telephone.

I don't understand why I'm always ill on my days off from work, but that weekend was the ultimate bummer. I ran over a bottle with the XV750 as I was riding into my backyard, and just had enough time to watch the front tyre deflate before nature called pretty urgently. I dropped the bike on to its prop-stand, and disappeared up the stairs for the next three hours, gritting my teeth hard, and doing a rapid quick-step out of my Levi's, wondering which end was going to blow first...

When I came down, the Yam'd toppled over off its stand, and had fallen on to my 350 Jawa. Jawas being what they are, there wasn't a mark on the Czech superbike, but it'd nearly written off the goddam XV750.

Maybe I ought to explain about the Jawa? Well, it seemed a snip at £50, and I thought I could do with something to ride around on when I send my V-twin off to Crazy 'Odge for a piece of mild customising this winter. Nothing excessive, you understand; just removal of the air

filters and a bit of re-jetting to let those two 40mm carbs breathe a little better before the hot air blasts out of the turnouts, a nice rawhide seat, oh, and purple metal-flake paintwork with gold scrolling. Maybe a bit of engraving, brass-plating, maybe a nice mural on the tank... you know how these ideas tend to grow until they've used up all your money. Be that as it may, like I said the Jawa seemed a good idea, even if it was a rusty two-stroke with no class, and the ability to cover everything in a fine mist of superheated oil. In fact, it reminded me of one of my first bikes, a Villiers-engined Excelsior, which isn't too surprising considering Jawa used the same engines as a lot of British firms pre-war. All the firms who used to use them in this country had the good sense to go bankrupt, though...

Actually, the Jawa is a dog, but it's a reliable dog, even if the footrests keep unscrewing themselves, it doesn't have a choke to aid easy starting, and you have to travel everywhere with a gallon of two-stroke oil, and a kidney-donor card, just to be prepared for any eventuality. I threw away the Barum tyres and fitted a pair of Korean Swallow tyres, and they don't seem bad... although I still have doubts about a product designed to keep you on the road which proudly advertises on the sidewalls "100% Nylon, No Natural Rubber Used". This might be taking ecology too far, maybe even at the expense of humanity. None of this worried me that particular weekend though, I was too busy puking and crapping... quite often at the self-same time too.

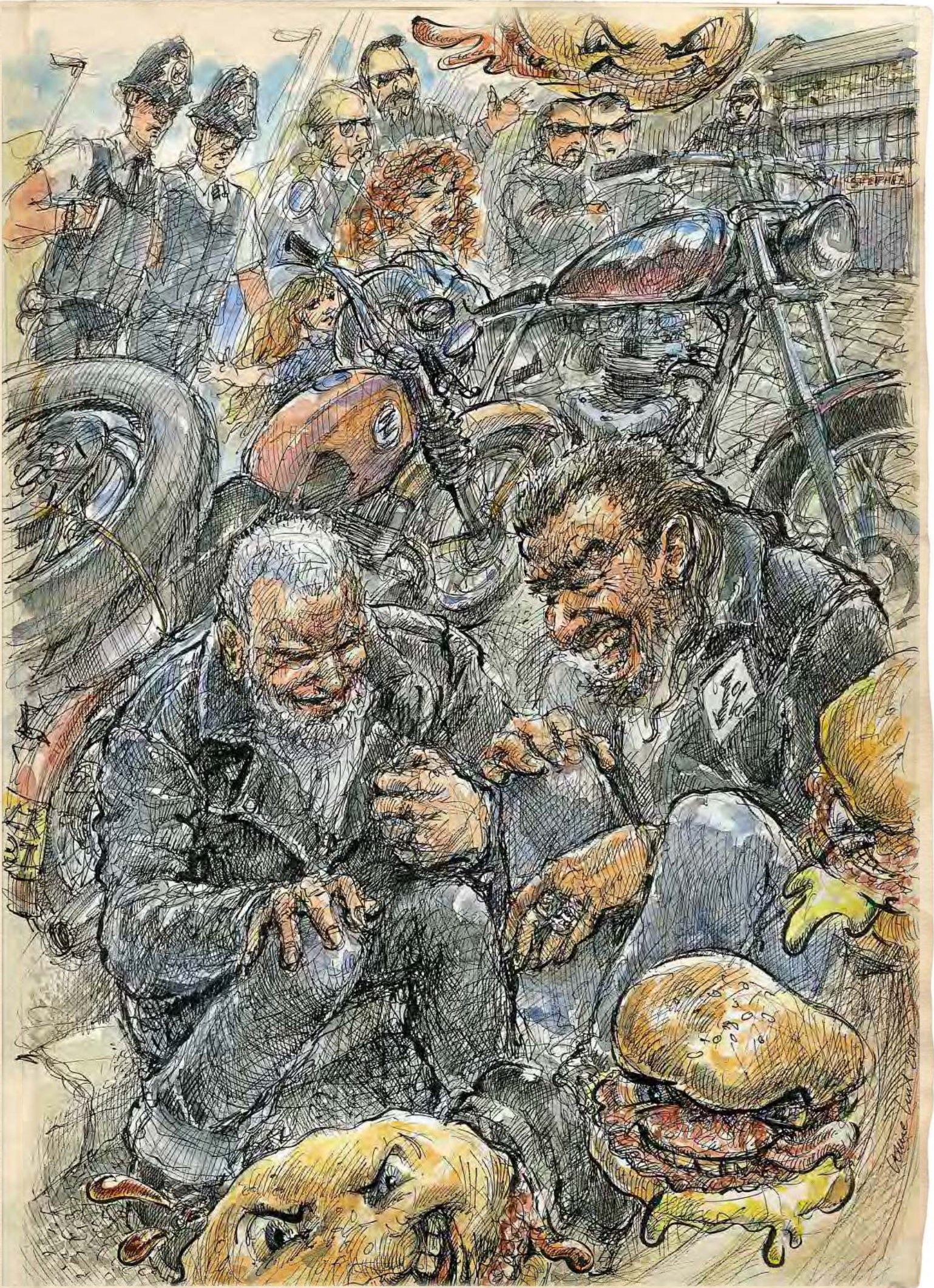
The first day I was wondering whether I'd got campylobacter, salmonella, or any one of a few novelties produced by bacillus coli, which is harmless in the colon but not too good anywhere else. The second day, when I realised that I couldn't even phone for the doctor because I'd lost my voice through all that puking, was when the odd spell of panic set in... or it would've done if I hadn't been spending most of the time lying on the bathroom floor moaning hoarsely. By that time, I wasn't too bothered about anything at all, although it crossed my mind that I'd've traded both bikes for a bottle of the famous Indian Brandee or the odd litre of kaolin-and-morphine (not that they tend to sell anything that makes you feel good in chemists' these days... and that includes a lot of interesting cough medicines, too).

By that time I was feeling pretty hungry, but I hadn't been able to do any shopping, so all I had in the house was All-Bran, and lots of tins of baked beans, which I thought I'd better try.

You don't really want me to tell you what happened then, huh?

Monday morning, after a trip to the local bakery for a granary loaf, which went down quite well with a quarter bottle of Scotch I'd been keeping for such emergencies as toothache, snake-bite, and visits by relatives, I was feeling a whole lot better, so I decided to answer the insistent knocking on my front door, and give the world a personal appearance.

It was a dishevelled middle-aged lady of distinctly Romany aspect, and she thrust a large bundle of white heather into my face. They caught in my beard,



QUEASY RIDERS

and it hurt like hell when she pulled them out.

"Lucky white heather," she croaked. "Lucky white heather... don't forget it's bad luck to turn a gypsy away from your door, sir."

My usual answer to that is "Don't you know it's bad luck to be booted down a path by a biker?", but I noticed that her left hand and arm were heavily bandaged, so I didn't say anything, motivated by lack of voice as much as by charity I've got to admit.

"How much?" I croaked back in return.

"Ere, you taking the piss?" she answered hoarsely, in much the same voice. "It's bad luck to..."

"... take the piss out of gypsies," I finished. "Just give me the bloody heather, huh?"

"All of it?" she asked, and I nodded wearily, and crossed her palm with cupro-nickel.

As she was leaving, wishing me a long life, many children, and success in all I did, I asked her about the bandages.

"How did you hurt your arm?" I asked.

"Got bit by a badger," she told me, "while I was picking lucky white heather..."

That cheered me up a lot.

Well, just think about lucky rabbits' feet, too – if they were that lucky they'd still be attached to the rabbit's legs, and not dangling from key-rings.

I went into the backyard and, a couple of days later than I'd intended, picked the Yam up from where it was lying obscenely across the Jawa. The front tyre was still flat (even lucky white heather has its limitations, obviously) and, not only that, but I noticed that the tread-pattern was getting a little thin, so I thought I might as well get a new Dunlop while I was in the process of taking the wheel to Frank's, so I set about removing it, once I'd got the bike back on the centre-stand.

Everyone knows how easy it is to get a front wheel out these days, because the manual tells you how easy it is. Manuals never seem to mention, though, how the split-pin in the wheel

spindle nut breaks off, with one broken half sliding up your thumb-nail, then when you pull it out you notice how rusty it was, and how much blood there is. Then the nut itself has obviously been tightened on by King Kong's big brother, and you end up standing on an eight-pound adjustable wrench to try and loosen it off, until finally you take up a three-pound lump hammer and beat the wrench until the bastard finally begins to move. Not to mention that the wheel spindle itself takes the application of the same hammer to a large steel spike to start to move it sideways and out of the fork eyes. That's when the wheel falls out, but you can't lift it free because there's not enough clearance between it and the mudguard because you should've put the bike up on blocks before you started, but you've forgotten. I'd reached that stage when there was a rattling burble down the back-alley, and an acquaintance rode up to show me his latest purchase.

"Thought you'd like it," Carrots told me brightly. "Well, you're into Yams, aren't you?"

"Not at this effing moment," I assured him, and straightened up wearily, sweat dripping into my eyes. "Why'd you get rid of the LC?"

When I tell you that Carrots is a gangly teenager with red hair, who wears the biking wimp's uniform of full-face motocross helmet, 38-buckle steel-splined scrambler's boots, and a cut-off with a Newcastle Brown bar-towel sewn on it, you'll know why I was expecting his next remark.

"Dropped it," he told me, with a look of bemused pride. "And then it wouldn't run right afterwards."

It's my opinion that two-strokes were never designed to run right in the first place, but LCs maybe run better than most... until everything wears out that is, which happens periodically, by which I mean about once a month.

I looked at the XS250. It was red, some of it, and a slimy black, oily colour where the engine should be. The seat was covered in a mosaic of carpet-tape, the front mudguard had the worst case of Jap Pucker I'd ever seen around the rivets, and was starting to

bend upwards as the chrome and steel rotted, and there were an awful lot of wires sticking out doing nothing much in particular.

"It's a four-stroke," he assured me. "It sounds like a real bike..." I was beginning to start to like Carrots, and then he blew it. "...just like me mate's Superdream," he finished. "What's up, Foggy? You're looking a bit strange."

"I haven't been well," I told him, and the noxious exhaust-fumes from his arrival were beginning to make my guts rumble worse than a Triumph with a seizing main-bearing. "I've had the runs, and I haven't eaten much for a good few days."

He produced a parcel from the front of his cut-offs. "Have some of this," he offered, and unwrapped a greasy pizza that looked like a set of melted-down traffic lights. "It's green and red peppers, and there's a slice of black pudding on top... bloody 'ell, Foggy, you've gone a funny colour. Err, I was wondering if you could rewire me bike for me?"

I nodded, it didn't seem wise to open my teeth at that particular time, and he rode away, scattering nuts, bolts and something that might've been third gear all along the alley.

I finally heaved the Yam's front wheel free, and wearily began to rope it to the top-box on the Jawa.

"My, that's a good idea," a cheery voice said. "A spare wheel's always handy, isn't it?"

"Yes, Vicar," I replied, taking the line of least resistance, and not feeling up to explaining the disparity between Yamaha's swirl-cast alloy wheels, and Jawa's skinny spoked jobs.

"I'm just down here visiting Mrs Wilson," the vicar told me, which wasn't too informative since nearly everyone along the row is called Wilson except me. "She's had a rather nasty tummy bug, and I always think you need cheering up after something like that, don't you?"

"No," I croaked. "What you need is leaving bloody alone."

The vicar smiled nervously, probably aware of all the heavy ironmongery lying around in my backyard, ready to

hand, and noticing the strange expression starting to spread over my sweaty face. He bade me good day, and I grunted in reply.

The Jawa started up fifth kick and, once it'd warmed up, and the blue vapour'd cleared, I set off. If you're not too well, it's hard to remember that a Jawa gearbox works the other way round to a Jap's, but the first couple of bends bring a certain clarity of mind – especially when you think you're accelerating out of them, the revs hit the three million mark, and it feels as if you've just ridden into the surf at Malibu, and you realise that first gear is where you thought third was.

When I got to the local bike shop, the place was full of German and French bikers, and they were all buying tyres in a multilingual babble that left old Frank there entirely unmoved. It was complete chaos until he decided he'd had enough. He held up his arms, and the babble died away to a mutter.

"Sort yourselves out," he told them, and then caught sight of me. "How are you doing, eh? What's the problem?"

"Can I have another of these, Frank?" I asked him. "Oh, and a new tube, and some rim-tape, too?"

"Course you can," he said amiably. "Get the lad to look one out for you."

An irate-looking German biker stepped forward, and posed Frank a question. "Vhy," he growled, "are you dealing with this people first, when ve haf been here already for many minutes?"

I wasn't inclined to argue, since the German lad topped me by about five inches, looked as if he had muscles in his spit, and was surrounded by six equally frustrated big blond companions.

"Because," Frank told him, enunciating clearly. "I know him, and

I don't know you. All right?"

A certain stony silence settled on the gathering, so I thought I'd better do my best to foster European relations. Unfortunately, my mind'd gone a complete blank (this isn't all that uncommon, even when I'm not suffering from the after-effects of bacteria) so the first thing I said was, "Err, pity about the back brakes seizing on the new BMWs, isn't it? Not to mention the problem with the fuel-injection?"

A French guy sniggering from somewhere in the middle of a cloud of smouldering Gauloises, brought to mind that humour was what drew peoples of all nations together, although I can't explain why I then said, to the assemblage of French and Germans: "Course, you know why all the avenues in France are lined with trees?"

There were blank looks from everyone.

"Well," I told them brightly, "it's so the Germany Army always has somewhere to march in the shade when they invade."

Everyone laughed at that when it first appeared in the pages of *The Sun*, but no one seemed to find it very funny in Frank's bike shop that day, which obviously proves to me that you shouldn't try to tell jokes when you've been ill.

I was saved from whatever fate was going to befall me by the arrival of the lad, who handed over the wheel with a new Dunlop, still with its rubber whiskers in place. I signed the cheque, and left the shop with around 14 pairs of foreign eyes drilling malevolently into my back.

In the car park, while I was roping the wheel to the Jawa, I was just in time to witness the arrival of a newly built lowrider, with its owner, one of the local outlaws whose name I didn't know, and'd never bothered to solicit, aboard it. It's an interesting point, but I've become aware recently that more people know me than I know. This might be the price of fame, in which case I can live with it. Mr Myatt assures me that I'm well on the way to becoming a cult figure – apparently, he was told this when he was down at the last Kent Show, when somebody said: "Ere, that Fogg's a real cult, isn't he, huh?" Well, I think that's what the guy said, anyway...

"How's it going, you geriatric old bastard?" the owner of the lowrider asked me, as I grunted back and peered at his bike.

I don't know why I was surprised, as the French do it all the time, which is what you'd expect the way they ride



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bikes, but I was taken aback to see a set of Jap forks and a cast wheel in a British hardtail frame – they didn't go at all well with the spoked 5.00x16 rear tyre, but then not everyone's a purist like me. What did look okay, enough for me to think about getting 'Oddie to fit one on the Yam, was the neat little CX500 Custom tank nestling on the frame top tube – it seemed to go very well with the black-barrelled pre-unit BSA motor.

I looked up at the owner. Under all the grime and stubble his face looked a distinctly odd shade, a bit like putty when the linseed oil in it has gone rancid, a bilious greenish-grey.

"Okay," I told him, "and I like the bike. You okay, though? You're not looking too good?"

"Bloody burgers," he answered, and I knew exactly what he meant. He got off the saddle wearily, and put the bike on its prop-stand. "Or it might have been the prune punkaluna," he added morosely. I might give you all the recipe for prune punkaluna someday, if I can ever remember it... or if I want to, because fermented prunes aren't something you'd want to drink a lot of, and I don't really hate anybody that much, but it's my experience that if you're poor enough there isn't a thing you won't try to ferment.

"It'll be the burgers," I reassured him, "punkaluna only eats the lining of your..."

I got no further. The BSA hurled itself off the prop-stand, and toppled sideways in majestic slow motion, right on top of the Jawa, which crunched into the tarmac under it. This time, Czech engineering and British iron being what they are, neither bike was much damaged. Laughing like a couple of deranged dingoes, the outlaw and I dragged up the BSA, righted it, and then did the same to the Jawa.

"Thank Christ your bike isn't bent," I told him, "and the Jawa seems pretty undamaged, too."

He looked at the vast expanse of rust, dirt, oil and paint the colour of lead primer, and at the cracking seat and Honda topbox, and the different makes of footrest rubbers, grips and

indicators, and a smile started to cross his tired and grey face.

"Jesus, Foggy," he cracked out, "how can you bloody tell?"

The sight of two bikers sitting on the tarmac laughing like maniacs didn't unnerve too many people, although it was noticeable that no one got too close either.

"What are they doing, Mummy?" a little girl asked her hippy-style mother, as they both ambled past in long dresses, orange blouses, and plaited headbands. The hippy lady, not a bad-looker with her long brunette hair and scrubbed-clean face, gave us a quick look, and decided some reassurance was necessary for her offspring.

"They're meditating, Dawnlight," she said, "just like Daddy and I and the rest of us grown-ups do."

"But why are they laughing?" the little girl piped up. "They're not serious." Quite right, you can always rely on a kid for incisiveness, which is more than we got from a red-faced gent with a bristling white military moustache, who hustled his matronly wife past with some speed.

"...drugs, no wonder the country's in a mess," I caught him saying, "just like those people in Malaya..."

"I think it was Borneo, dear," his wife put in.

"...natives, anyway," he continued, "high as a kite, then they'd run amok, chopping people up with meat-cleavers. You'll see, it'll be in the papers tomorrow."

A passing policeman, walking along in blue shirtsleeves, watched us closely for a minute or two, and then walked over.

"Now then," he started to say, and then recognised me. "Bloody Nora," he continued, "I thought you were dead!"

"I nearly have been," I told him, and explained the weekend's events, aided by graphic descriptions of the BSA owner's similar malady.

The world is full of comedians. "Mind how you go," the copper said. "Oh, and mind where you go, too. Evening, all." It was 3.30 in the afternoon.

We got to our feet, wobbled over to the bikes, and started them up – it

seemed wise to get on our ways before the patrol cars arrived.

"Fancy a brew?" I asked the outlaw, from out of the centre of a cloud of blue fumes. He nodded, and we set off back through town. I was in front, then all of a sudden there was a roar alongside from his BSA, and he shot past, shouting something I could only just catch the tail-end of...

"... real bad," I heard him say. "Gotta get to one fast..." From which it seemed likely that his gastric problems were taking a new turn for the worse, so I followed him fairly rapidly until we came to a public convenience. Like a Pony Express rider changing horses, he leapt from the saddle, kicked the prop-stand down with the bike still ticking over, and ran towards the green-painted building. When I caught him up, it was just in time to see a look of acute pain cross his already-grim face. I read the typed notice on the door, barred and padlocked like the entrance to Fort Knox, over his shoulder. It read: "These conveniences have been closed for the season owing to vandalism, and for maintenance. Your nearest conveniences are at Marine Road Central (Promenade), Morecambe.' Five miles away.

"Try the Ladies," I said. "Round the other side, I'll bet they haven't been vandalised or closed."

When he emerged, fortunately without being disturbed by any female intrusion, he was actually grinning. "Hey, you wanna see the graffiti in there," he told me. "There's a good one about how you've got a real small..."

"Just get on your goddam bike," I said.

He fired the BSA up, and he was laughing so much he was shaking even more than guys on BSAs normally do. We set off back to my place via the scenic route, along quiet country lanes leading up hill and down dale, smelling the wild garlic and honeysuckle as we went, and hearing the bird-calls and the insistent buzzing of bees. For the first time in a day or two I began to feel pretty good, which proves what sun and warmth, and the absence of

misplaced peristalsis, can do, and how the richness of life and its quality can be enhanced by something so simple as not having to sit on top of the load of porcelain holding a bucket.

We rode round a bend between two drystone walls, almost home, and I suddenly saw a bike lying on its side in a gateway, engine ticking over, chain still driving the back wheel. There was a lot of noise, a lot of dust, and it looked pretty bad when I saw the helmet lying close to the bike. The outlaw and I stopped, cut our engines, and got off to look for any trace of a body. The bike looked familiar; it was a ratty-looking 250 Yamaha, and I was trying to remember where I'd seen a red XS250 when I spotted the tangle of untidy wiring.

"Christ, it's somebody I know," I said to the Beesa owner. "He must've taken a dive over the wall when he came off the bike."

"He's not going to be too good, then," he answered. "It's about 15 feet into the field."

We walked slowly over to the gateway, and looked over the gate into the field. No sign of anyone.

"Maybe someone's already picked him up," the outlaw said. "Yeah, he's probably in hospital by now. You'd've thought they'd've taken the bloody trouble to move his bike, though." I nodded, and then my eyes caught something further along the field, on the way to a clump of stunted bushes, almost at the far end. It was a bike boot, steel-shod, and with many buckles. Once I saw that, I began to make out other items of clothing discarded in a hurry; a sock, another boot with the sock still in it, and a pair of Levi's. A carrot head emerged from the bushes, looked round, saw us, disappeared, and then emerged again.

"Err, hi there, Foggy," Carrots shouted weakly across at me. "Err, have you got... err, any paper?"

"Give him this," the outlaw said, and handed me an official-looking typed document. It was a form from the Social Security telling the BSA owner that the findings of the tribunal were that he had been dismissed from his

employment for a legitimate reason (namely, striking his employer), and therefore he would not be entitled to benefit for six weeks.

"Seems reasonable," I told him. "For the purpose Carrots intends for it, I mean."

Carrots emerged about 15 minutes later after we'd handed him his clothes; and he proved once again that the resilience of the young is a truly sickening virtue. "Fancy a pizza?" he asked us brightly, as he walked back to his bike, now silent and restored to stability on its centrestand. "Go on, I'll treat you both. A pizza apiece, a malted choc-o-milk, and some battered sausages, how's that sound, huh? All that crapping don't half make you hungry."

I looked at the outlaw, and he looked at me. "No-one'd ever find him," I said.

"Not if we dug him in deep enough," the owner of the BSA lowrider assured me. "And we could drop his bike on top of him, too."

"Not a trace," I answered. "No-one'd know."

"Hey, come on, you two," Carrots squeaked, backing away with a look of considerable disquiet on his spotty face. "I was only joking, Foggy, there's no need for the two of you to get uptight."

"Do you want your wiring doing?" I asked him, and he assured me that this was so, and that he would be grateful if I could.

"Don't ever, and I mean ever, mention food while I'm around," I explained to him. "Food is a taboo subject, a dirty word, never to be discussed in front of me. Okay?"

"Well, okay," he said. "You old blokes don't half get touchy about some odd things, it must be your hormones." And young people wonder why other people take mole-grips, torque-wrenches and small planks to them, huh?

I relented, and said to Carrots: "Get on your bike, and follow us. I'll get the wheel back in my own Yam, and then we'll try and sort out the wiring on yours..." which we did, the outlaw and me between us. Later we all sat in the backyard drinking beer while

the sun went slowly down, and all our bikes blocked up the back alley to access by all those Toyotas, Marinas and mopeds. It wasn't a bad end to a fairly eventful day, and the Beesa owner and I were talking quite a bit about old times, while Carrots listened in, probably wondering why we didn't mention Jap bikes all that much, and what the hell a Rocket Three or an Interceptor was.

"It must've been great in the old days," he said, quite a bit of the cheek in him mellowed by gratitude and beer. "I'll bet you could tell a few tales about some of the runs you had, huh?"

I grinned, feeling pretty mellow myself. "I think I might just write something about this weekend's first," I answered, and Carrots looked blankly at me.

"But you haven't been anywhere," he said.

"There are runs and runs," the BSA lowrider owner put in, and smiled a little more easily than he'd been doing earlier. "It's a goddam pun, Carrots, a play on words."

"Like a joke?" the red-haired young biker asked. "Like 'runs' meaning going off on bikes and 'runs' meaning you've got to go and spend a lot of time sat on the..."

"You've got it," the outlaw told him.

Carrots grinned too. "No, I haven't," he answered a little muzzily. "But I thought I had, sitting back there in that clump of bushes."

It suddenly occurred to me that the future of biking wasn't entirely lost as long as there were promising young-punks like Carrots around, and I started laughing all over again.

"How old are you, Carrots?" I asked him.

"Eighteen," he answered, looking puzzled.

I took another drink from the can of beer. "When I was your age, I was 18," I told him.

"I don't understand that," he replied, looking even more puzzled.

"You will when you're an old bastard like both of us," the outlaw assured him, and I reckon he's probably right, too, because that's the way it goes. 

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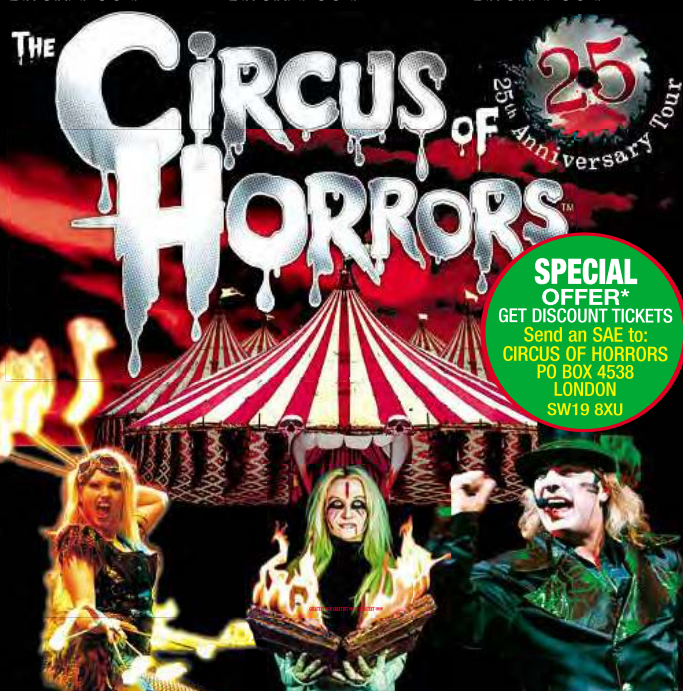
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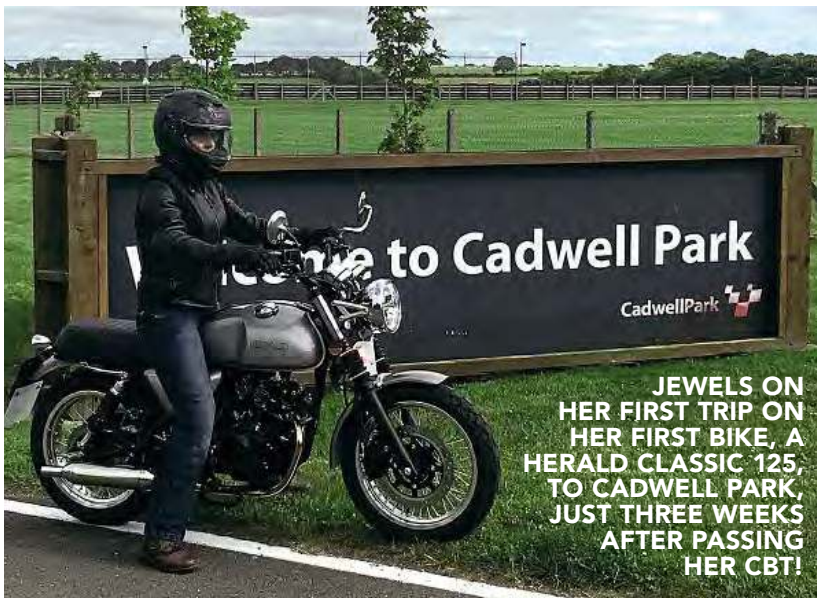
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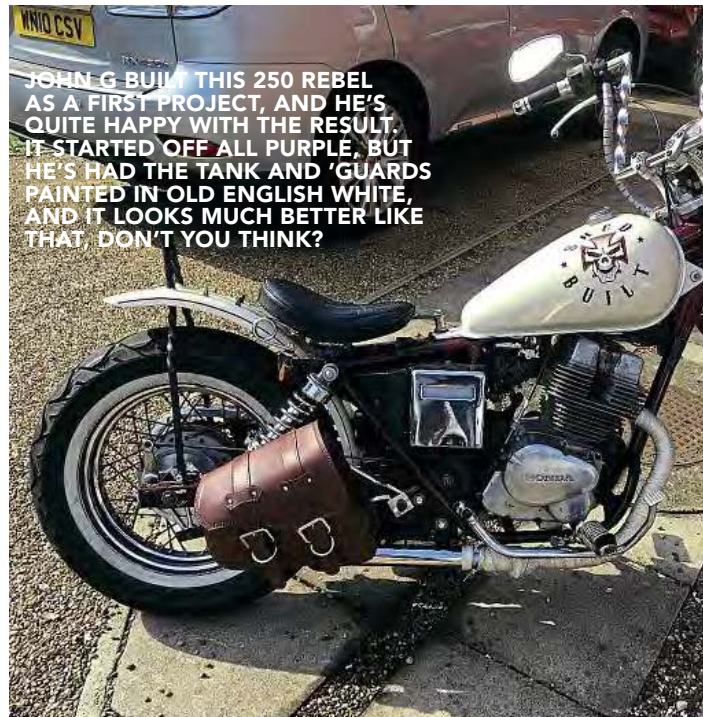
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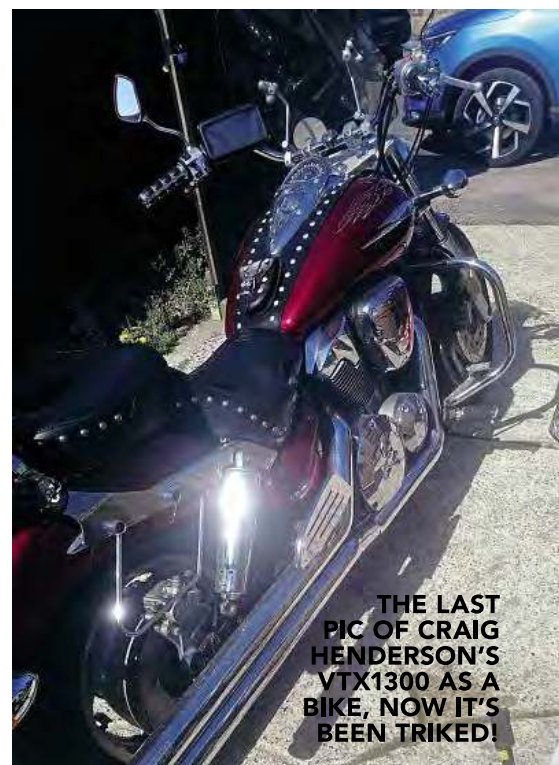
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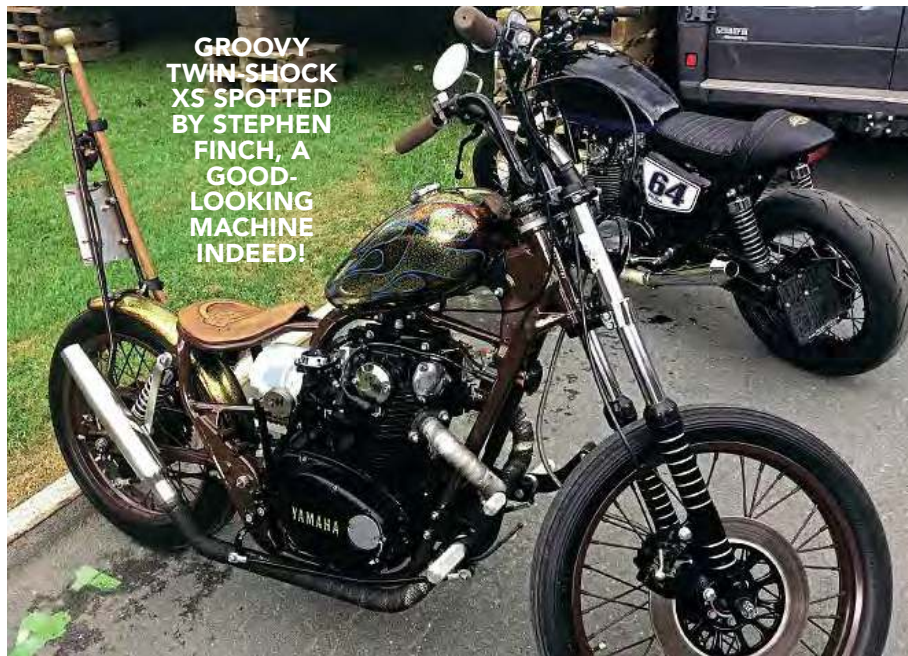
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Unless you've been stuck in your shed, working on your bike without any access to the media for the last month, you'll be aware that, as predicted by our very own Lembit Öpik, a date has been set, 12th December, for a General Election.

Aside from proving that our political unit is clued up, this also provides an ideal opportunity to take an interest in the next person to represent you in Westminster. They need to remember that bikers are voters too, and there are literally millions of us.

Some current politicians are not standing again, so there will be many new faces for MAG to meet and greet once the dust settles which, let's face it, will be after they've stuffed themselves with turkey (or possibly tofu) over the festive season. Please find out whether your MP is biker-friendly! Then be sure to thank them for taking the time to represent riders. Let us know and we'll follow up with them too.

Don't be fooled into thinking Brexit is the only game in Westminster. There are many plans afoot to change the way we travel, and these often involve draconian methods that smack of a dictatorship, rather than a democracy. Currently, if you receive certain means-tested benefits, or specified non-means-tested disability benefits, and live within the Greater London Authority Boundary, you could receive £1,000 for scrapping your bike and buying a newer one. That could be a nice Christmas present if you're thinking of upgrading a non-Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) compliant machine for one that's compliant. I don't know about you though, but I have a personal link to all my bikes – they're like members of the family and, compliant or not, I wouldn't want to see any of them crushed.

MAG's concerns go way beyond the thought of perfectly good machines being destroyed, though. We're concerned that this is false economy at an environmental level – 73% of bikes labelled as non-ULEZ compliant on Transport for London's (TfL) database passed the emissions targets when tested, and a new vehicle takes years, and thousands of miles, to save what it costs to build it in ecological terms.

Mixed messages are an ongoing theme of the transport versus air quality debate. If you've been subject to a fine under ULEZ, sold your bike because of it, or put it through the testing regime to gain an exemption certificate, do let us know at central-office@mag-uk.org

Elsewhere, MAG continues to search the web and respond to all consultations relating to clean air zones (CAZs). We're particularly concerned about the resulting proposals to restrict vehicle access to our towns and cities. Our list is regularly updated on our website – check it out, and if you see a scheme we've not included, get in touch at central-office@mag-uk.org

MAG's political unit, Colin and Lembit, continues to amass data relating to air quality. They're working on producing something in a condensed format that can be easily read, and shared, to challenge those threatening to charge, or ban, bikes based on half-baked data headlines rather than the truth. There are a number of routes we continue to pursue, and recently that has included a formal approach to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for a meeting. DEFRA is a key source of information on UK air quality, and we're keen to work with them on getting a fair representation of a rider's (tiny) impact on the air quality. In fact, there's plenty of evidence

to show that a shift from cars to bikes actually reduces emissions, so it beggars belief that the eco-fanatics fail to support one of the quickest ways to cut transport emissions, suggesting they're more into dogma than data.

Now a word about not-so 'smart' motorways; they're the ones that no longer have a 'hard shoulder' because somebody thought it was a great idea to tell you to stop and wait in the lane you break down in until somebody comes to help you! MAG met a road safety expert who seemed quite keen on them, but we're not convinced – if you get a seized engine in the outside lane, are you just meant to sit there, hoping nobody will wipe you out with a rear end shunt?

So here's an appeal from our political team; if you've been unfortunate enough to be stranded on a 'smart' motorway, tell us your story. Just send what happened to you to central-office@mag-uk.org

Previously I reported on this matter being raised at our Annual Group Conference, and we're now following up with our friends at Highways England. I stress again, the official guidelines are to stay with your vehicle, and dial 999... however, being stranded on two wheels in any lane of a motorway is a far cry from being isolated in the same way as when travelling by car (though even that is harrowing enough) – how much worse when you're sitting there with your helmet off, talking to the police, hoping they'll get to you before the Grim Reaper does?

We want to share riders' personal experiences with Highways England so we can all understand the best course of action to minimise risk to life.

On a happier note, I'm delighted that MAG's presentation by Colin was well received at the 2019 Smarter Tomorrows Conference. Colin spoke about the positive effects of promoting a modal shift to motorcycles, and the audience asked questions from the floor – a clear sign they were engaged with the presentation. Others approached Colin later for more details. It seems we are enlightening those who'd not previously

considered bikes as a vital component in the transport mix.

May your festive season be all you want it to be and... if you've got a mate that keeps 'meaning' to join MAG, call the office and sign them up for just £27 for a year, by calling us on 01926 844064. What you're really buying them is a stake in their own right to ride... and that's priceless.

Ride free
SELINA LAVENDER
CHAIR, MAG



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TO JOIN YOU CAN CONTACT CENTRAL OFFICE, VISIT OUR WEBSITE (WWW.MAG-UK.ORG) OR SIGN UP AT A LOCAL MEETING OR MAG STAND.

FIND MEETINGS CLOSE TO YOU OR EVENTS, BY VISITING OUR WEBSITE / FACEBOOK PAGES.

EVENTS

Advertise your events here for free and get them seen by everyone in bikerdom! Email the info to nik@backstreetheroes.com

DECEMBER

7th Dec: Southern Classic Off Road & Racing Show & Motorcycle Jumble at Kempton Park Racecourse, Staines Rd E, Shepperton, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey. More info from www.kemptonparkautojumble.co.uk

7th Dec: Santa's Toy Run at the Sammy Miller Museum, Bashley Cross Roads, New Milton, Hants. More info from 01425 620777 or www.sammymiller.co.uk

7th Dec: Three Amigos & Dollies Christmas Toy Run from Commons (SA71 4AE), Pembroke at 1pm. More info from Facebook.

7th Dec: Midlands Motorbikes' Crap Christmas Jumper Convoy from the BP station, Stonebridge Highway, Coventry, West Mids at noon. Tickets £5. More info from Facebook.

7th Dec: Black Shuck MCC's Christmas Toy Run from the Kingfisher, Hawthorne Drive, Ipswich, Suffolk at 10am. More info from Facebook.

8th Dec: Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

8th Dec: Paws 'n' Claws Pet Food Run at 11am from the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

8th Dec: 'Normous Newark Autojumble at Newark Showground, Drove Lane, Winthorpe, Newark, Notts. Tickets £10 early or £7 after 10am. More info from www.newarkautojumble.co.uk

8th Dec: Stinkwheel Charity Motorcycle/Scooter/Hot Rod Christmas Fancy Dress Run from the Victoria Bikers Pub, Whitwick, Coalville, Leics at

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3.30pm. Tickets £5. More info from www.vicbikerspub.co.uk

8th Dec: Roughleys Christmas Toy Run from Tesco Extra, Tiviot Way, Portwood Roundabout, Stockport at 11am. More info from Facebook.

8th Dec: Reading CMA's Reading Toy Run from Foster Wheelers, Shinfield Park, Reading, Berks at 1pm. More info from 01189 787095 or www.readingtoyrun.org

14th Dec: Dregs MCC's Christmas Party at the Salutation Inn, Hounds Gate, Nottingham. Free entry. More info from 07759 498054 or www.dregs-mcc.com

14th Dec: Unwanted MCC's Christmas Party at The Rockbar, Shobnall Sports Club, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. Tickets £5. More info from 01776 1931226 or www.unwantedmcc.co.uk

14th Dec: Widows Sons MBA Southern Chapter's Toy Run from the Kings Court Centre, Winchester Road, Chandlers Ford, Hants at 10am. More info from wsmba.southern@uponthelevel.co.uk or Facebook.

14th Nov: Mono Motorcycles Charity Quiz at the Pallant Centre, Havant, Hants. Tickets £15 per team. More info from www.monomotorcycles.co.uk

15th Dec: Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

15th Dec: Xmas Toy Run at 10.30am from the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

15th Dec: Xmas Carol Service at 7pm at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

15th Dec: The Big One Toy Run from Streetbike, Dudley Road, Halesowen, West Mids. More info from Facebook.

15th Dec: Haynes Biker Breakfast at the Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford, Yeovil, Somerset. More info from 01963 440804 or www.himmm.co.uk

17th Dec: Bikers Christmas Bash at the Kings Arms, Severn Drive, Newport Pagnell, Bucks. More info from Facebook.

20th Dec: Panthera MCC's Christmas Party at the Cottenham Club, High Street, Cottenham, Cambs. Tickets £5. More info from Facebook.

22nd Dec: Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

22nd Dec: NOTAS Xmas Toy Run from Salhouse Lodge, Vicarage Road, Salhouse, Norfolk at 11am. More info from 07720 756117 or Facebook.

26th Dec: Classic Bike Meet at the Pied Bull, Farningham, Kent. More info from Facebook.

26th Dec: Cold Turkey Meet at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

29th Dec: Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

29th Dec: Huddersfield Autojumble at the Old Market Building, Brook Street, Huddersfield, West Yorks. More info from 07795 505388 or www.phoenixfairs.jimdo.com

31st Dec-1st Jan: Unwanted MCC's New Year's Eve Party at The Rockbar, Shobnall Sports Club, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. Tickets £6. More info from 07761 931226 or 07870 474207 or www.unwantedmcc.co.uk

2020 JANUARY

5th Jan: The Brass Monkey Run from the Victoria Bikers Pub, Coalville, Leics at noon. More info from Facebook.

18th Jan: Rockers Reunion Winter Party at the Riverside Leisure Complex, Richfield Ave, Reading, Berks. Tickets £29 prebook or £32 on door. More info from 01689 860980 or www.rockersreunion.co.uk

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EVENTS

18th Jan: Unwanted MCC's Birthday Party at the Rock Bar, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. Free entry. More info from www.unwantedmcc.co.uk or Facebook.

24-26th June: BSE Mad Cows' Mad Cow Rally at the British Sugar Sports & Social Club, Hollow Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Tickets £15 prebook. More info from www.bury-st-edmunds.mag-uk.org

26th Jan: Talmag Trophy Trial at Hungry Hill, Aldershot, Hants. More info from www.talmag.co.uk

FEBRUARY

1st Feb: Uxonians' Kick Off Party at the Bradley House Club, Bradley Street, Uttoxeter, Staffs. Free entry. More info from Facebook.

1st Feb: Brigantia Rebels MCC's Birthday Bash at The Old Spring, Springs Road, Wigan, Lancs. More info from Facebook.

7-9th Feb: Dangermouse RC's 34th & Last Frozen Nuts Rally at Bignall End Cricket Club, Boon Hill Road, Bignall End, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. Tickets £15 (£16 if paying by Paypal) prebook or £18 on gate. More info from 07735 958566 or www.dmrallyclub.co.uk

7-9th Feb: Southport Original Cruisers' Rally in a Chalet at Pontins, Southport,

Lancs. Tickets £18. More info from 07732 696438 or Facebook.

15th Feb: Stunt Fest at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.StuntFest.co.uk

15th Feb: Unwanted MCC's St Valentine's Party at the Rock Bar, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. Tickets £5. More info from www.unwantedmcc.co.uk or Facebook.

21-23rd Feb: Oddballs MCC's Frozen Balls Up Rally at Sleep, Harmer Hill, near Wem, Shrops. Tickets £15 prebook only. More info from www.oddballsmcc.com or Facebook.

MARCH

8th March: Kenley Autojumble at the Portcullis Club, Kenley Airfield, Victor Beamis Avenue, Caterham, Kent (junc 6, M25). More info from Facebook.

13-15th March: Well Oiled MCC's Saddle N' Sup Rally at the Saddle Inn, Sidgreaves Lane, Preston, Lancs. Tickets £12 prebook or £17 on gate. More info from Facebook.

14th March: Straightliners Dakota Drag & Drift Day at Smeatharpe Airfield, Upottery, Devon. More info from www.straightliners.events

21st March: Unwanted MCC's St Patrick's Day Party

at the Rock Bar, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. Tickets £5. More info from www.unwantedmcc.co.uk or Facebook.

22nd March: Straightliners bike-only RWYB at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from 01484 718164 or www.StraightlinersOnline.co.uk

APRIL

4-5th April: Assembly Chopper Show at the Flatlands Motorama at the Autotron, Rosmalen, Holland. More info from Facebook.

9-12th April: Unwanted MCC's Ride-In Weekend at the Rock Bar, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. Free entry. More info from www.unwantedmcc.co.uk or Facebook.

10-12th April: Festival of Power at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.SantaPod.com

13th April: Devitt Southend Shakedown at Southend sea front, Essex. More info from Facebook.

17-19th April: Krazy Old Gits' Rally at the Brighton Ferry, Brighton, near Selby, Yorks. Tickets £10. More info from Facebook.

19th April: Kenley Autojumble at the Portcullis Club, Kenley Airfield, Victor Beamis Avenue, Caterham, Kent (junc 6, M25). More info from Facebook.

19th April: English & Proud St George's Day Parade from Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Mids at 6pm. More info from Facebook.

24-26th April: HDRCG Region 7's Drivers Rally at Llandovery RFC, Church Bank, Llandovery, Carmarthenshire. Tickets £15 members, £20 non. More info from hdrcgregion7@hotmail.co.uk

24-26th April: Ridgeway MCC's George to the Dragon Rally at a site near Oxford. Tickets £20. More info from www.ridgewaymcc.org.uk or Facebook.

25th April: Straightliners Dakota Drag & Drift Day at Smeatharpe Airfield, Upottery, Devon. More info from www.straightliners.events

MAY

1-3rd May: Yorkshire MAG's Into The Valley Rally at Sledmere, East Riding, Yorks. More info from www.yorkshire.mag-uk.org

2-3rd May: Springspeed Nationals at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.SantaPod.com

3rd May: Poundbury to Poole Prostate Cancer Run from Queen Mother Square, Poundbury, Dorchester, Dorset at 10am. Tickets £5. More info from Facebook.

8-10th May: Shadow Crew's Out of the Shadows at the St John's Arms, Knotting Road, Melchbourne, Beds. More info from www.shadowcrew.co.uk

8-10th May: NSRA Nostalgia Nationals at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.NostalgiaNationals.com

8-10th May: National Association for Bikers with a Disability (NABD)'s You've Been Nabbed Rally at the Cheshire Showground, Clay House Farm, Flittogate Ln, Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire. More info from www.nabd.org.uk

10th May: Stonham Motorcycle Show at Stonham Barns Showground, Pettaugh Road, Stonham Aspal, Stowmarket, Suffolk. More info from 01449 711111 or Facebook.

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14-17th May: BMF's Bears & Bikes at Traquair House, Innerleithen, Scottish Borders. Tickets £25 prebook non-BMF members or £20 members. More info from 0116 279 5112 or www.bmf.co.uk

15-17th May: Tyne Cyclones' Reivers Rally at Clennell Hall, Alwinton, Northumbria. Tickets £15 prebook or £20 on gate. More info from 0191 264 3506 or Facebook.

15-17th May: The Doorslammers at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.TheDoorslammers.co.uk

17th May: Loughborough Bike & Trike Show at Loughborough, Leics. More info from Facebook.

17th May: Chiltern Hills Vintage Vehicle Rally at Weedon Park, Aylesbury, Bucks. More info from www.chilternhillsrally.org.uk

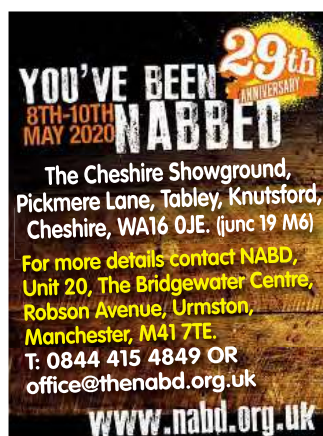
20th May: The Victoria Bikers Pub's John Coghlan's Quo at the Victoria Bikers Pub, Coalville, Leics. More info from www.wegotickets.com/thevictoriabikerpub

21-24th May: Kustom Kulture Forever at Zeche Ewald, Herten, Germany. More info from www.kustom-kulture-forever.com

21-25th May: Biker Fest Italian Bike Week. More info from www.bikerfest.it

22nd May: Warrington Wheels Youth Bike-Building Comp at Chaigley School, Lymm Road, Warrington, Cheshire. More info from 07949 337507 or bobtowler57@hotmail.co.uk

22-24th May: Beerhounds' Slurp & Burp Rally at the Plough Inn, Ploughley Road, Bicester, Oxon. Tickets £16 prebook or £18 on gate. More info from Facebook.



22-25th May: The Main Event at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.santapod.com

23rd May: Bideford Bike Show at Bideford Quay, Bideford, Devon. More info from Facebook.

23-25th May: Peterborough Festival of Wheels at Peterborough Lions Rugby Club, Bretton Park, Peterborough, Cambs. Tickets £2. More info from www.pbfov.co.uk

24th May: Chopper, Bobber & Rat Bike Day at Ryka's Café, Box Hill, Surrey. More info from Facebook.

25th May: Yorkshire Classic Vehicle Show at Ripley Castle, Ripley, Harrogate, Yorks. Tickets £7.50. More info from www.markwoodwardclassic-events.com

29-31st May: Rat & Survival Bike & Trike Show at the Ogr Clubhouse, Kemble Airfield, Kemble, Gloucs. Tickets £20. More info from Facebook.

29-31st May: South West Chopper Fest at a site in Devon. More info from www.southwestchopperfest.co.uk

31st May: Kent Modified Mash-Up at Faversham Showground, Faversham, Kent. More info from Facebook.

JUNE

4-7th June: Unwanted MCC's Bike & Trike Show at the Rock Bar, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. Tickets £9 prebook or £12 on gate. More info from www.unwantedmcc.co.uk or Facebook.

5-7th June: Leyland Eagles MCC's Tyred & Exhausted Rally at Edgehill Farm, Bolton Road, Withnell, Chorley, Lancs. Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from 07393 412265 or Facebook.

5-7th June: Naseby Field HDRCGB's Roundheads Revenge Party at Market Harborough Rugby Club, Northampton Rd, Market Harborough, Leics. Tickets £18 members, £20 non. More info from 07926 037867 or Facebook.

7th June: Kenley Autojumble at the Portcullis Club, Kenley Airfield, Victor Beamish Avenue, Caterham, Kent (junc 6, M25). More info from Facebook.

7th June: Dorset VMCC's Giants Run. More info from events@dorsetvmcc.co.uk

14th June: Ripon Classic Car & Bike Show at Ripon Racecourse, Boroughbridge Rd, Ripon, Yorks. Tickets £7.50. More info from www.markwoodwardclassic-events.com

19-21st June: Yorkshire MAG's Farmyard Party at Dunscombe House, Helmsley, Yorks. More info from www.yorkshire.mag-uk.org

19-21st June: HDRCGB Region 19's New Forest Rally at Trojans Sports Club, Stoneham Lane, Eastleigh, Hants. Tickets £15 members or £20 non. More info from 07887 746441 or region10@hdrcgb.org.uk

20th June: DirtDiggers Unorthodox Flat-Track Racing at the Eddie Wright Raceway, Normanby Road, Scunthorpe, Lincs. More info from Facebook.

21st June: Custom Bike Day at Ryka's Café, Box Hill, Dorking, Surrey. More info from Facebook.

26-28th June: AMOC (American Motorcycle Owners' Club) Rally at Kenley Airfield, Victor Beamish Ave, Canterbury, Kent. Tickets £10. More info from 07782 357067 or www.amoc1994.com

26-28th June: Punta Bagna French Alps Chopper Party at Valloire, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France. More info from www.punta-bagna-valloire.com or Facebook.

26-28th June: Summer Solstice Rock Festival at Southam Rugby Club, Kington Road, Southam, Warks. Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from www.ssrf.co.uk or Facebook.

28th June: Ton-Up Day at Jacks Hill Café, A5, Towcester, Northants. More info from Facebook.

28th June: Classic Cars & Bikes & Country Market at Hoghton Tower, Hoghton, Preston, Lancs. Tickets £7.50. More info from www.markwoodwardclassic-events.com

JULY

2-5th July: Unwanted MCC's Cock Out Rally at the Rock Bar, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. Tickets £13 prebook or £16 on gate. More info from www.unwantedmcc.co.uk or Facebook.

3-5th July: Wycombe MAG's Chinnor Bike Day

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EVENTS

at Little Horsenden Farm, Lower Icknield Way, Princes Risborough, Bucks. Tickets £15 prebook. More info from www.wycombemag.co.uk

3-5th July: Llandovery Motorbike Weekend at The Mart, Llandovery. More info from www.llandoverymotorbikeweekend.co.uk

5th July: Leighton Hall Classic Car & Bike Show at Leighton Hall, Carnforth, Lancs. Tickets £7.50. More info from www.markwoodwardclassicsevents.com

9-12th July: Northern Comfort Blackpool V-Max Rally at Villa Football Club, Stalmine, Blackpool, Lancs. More info from 07850 711788 or Facebook.

9-12th July: Rock & Bike Fest at Carnfield Hall, South Normanton, Derbyshire. Tickets £40 earlybird. More info from www.rockandbikefest.co.uk or Facebook.

10-12th July: Pre-Evo Party at Grevenbroich, Germany. More info from Facebook.

10-12th July: Tomintoul Motorcycle Gathering at Tomintoul, Moray, Scotland. More info from Facebook.

10-12th July: Dragstalgia at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.dragstalgia.co.uk

12th July: Mono Motorcycles' Summer BBQ at The Greyhound, Cocking Causeway, Midhurst, West Sussex. More info from www.monomotorcycles.co.uk

12th July: Motorbike Show at Beachside Holiday Park, Coast Road, Brean, Somerset. More info from Facebook.

17-19th July: TWATS' Zombie Rally at the Brighton Ferry, Brighton,

near Selby, Yorks. Tickets £21 prebook only. More info from 01709 648966 or 07766 308668 or Facebook.

17-19th July: HAMC Lincs' Bullfrog Bash at a site in Lincolnshire. More info from Facebook.

17-19th July: Road Dragons MCC's Over the Edge Rally at a site in Cheshire. Tickets £18 prebook or £20 on gate. More info from 07841 391345.

18th July: Hextable Motor Show at Hextable Park, Hextable, Kent. More info from Facebook.

18th July: Straightliners Dakota Drag & Drift Day at Smeatharpe Airfield, Upottery, Devon. More info from www.straightliners.events

18-19th July: Summer Nationals at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.SantaPod.com

19th July: Prescott Bike Fest at Gotherington, Cheltenham, Gloucs. More info from Facebook.

24-26th July: Halfway Heroes MCC's Leathered in Lincoln Rally at Carbourne Parva, Caistor, Lincs. Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from 07709 907745 or Facebook.

25th July: Calne Bike Meet at Calne, Wiltshire. More info from www.calnebikemeet.com

31st July-2nd Aug: FUBAR MCC's Feked Up Again at Marstons Sports & Social Club, Shobnall Road, Burton upon Trent, Staffs. Tickets £12 prebook or £18 on gate. More info from mrsknobhead.fubar@yahoo.com

31st July-2nd Aug: Yorkshire MAG's Yorkshire Pudding Rally at Escrick, near Selby, Yorks. More info from www.yorkshire.mag-uk.org

AUGUST

2nd Aug: Lytham Hall Classic Car & Motorcycle Show at Lytham Hall, Ballam Rd, Lytham St Annes, Lancs. Tickets £7.50. More info from www.markwoodwardclassicevents.com

7-9th Aug: Oddballs Rally at Abingdon Rugby Club, Lambrick Way, Abingdon, Oxon. Tickets £25. More info from Facebook.

7-9th Aug: The Big Barn Rally at White Bottom Farm, Etherow Country Park, Compstall, Stockport, Gtr Manchester. Tickets £15 earlybird, £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from www.thebigbarnrally.co.uk or Facebook.

14-16th Aug: HDRCGB Region 10's Back to Basics Rally at Beauvale Priory, New Road, Moor Green, Notts. Tickets £10 members, £12 non. More info from Facebook.

16th Aug: Northumberland Classic Vehicle Gathering at Tynedale Park, Station Rd, Corbridge, Northumberland. Tickets £7. More info from www.markwoodwardclassicsevents.com

21-23rd Aug: BOB Party at the Portcullis Club, Kenley Aerodrome, Victor Beamish Avenue, London. More info from Facebook.

21-24th Aug: Matchless & AJS Owners' Club's Jampot Rally at Vigo Rugby Club, Harvel Rd, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent. More info from Facebook.

26th Aug-2nd Sept: Lincolnshire Bike Week at the East Coast Showground, Skegness,

Lincs. More info from www.lincolnshirebikeweek.co.uk

30th Aug: Ripon Classic Car & Bike Show & Autojumble at Ripon Racecourse, Ripon, North Yorks. Tickets £7.50. More info from www.markwoodwardclassicevents.com

31st Aug: Kent Chrome & Cruisers at the Faversham Showground, Faversham, Kent. More info from Facebook.

SEPTEMBER

4-6th Sept: HDRCGB Region 28's Comeback Rally at Smallbrook Stadium, Aldermore Close, Ryde, Isle of Wight. Tickets £15 members, £20 non. More info from Facebook.

6th Sept: Classics Cars & Bikes & Country Market at Hoghton Tower, Hoghton, Preston, Lancs. Tickets £7.50. More info from www.markwoodwardclassicsevents.com

10-13th Sept: The European Finals at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.SantaPod.com

18-20th Sept: Cernunnos MCC's Mabon Rally at the Robin Hood, Church Lane, Clifton Reynes, Bucks. Tickets £10. More info from 07870 704533 or www.cernunnos-mcc.org

18-20th Sept: NSRA Hot Rod Drags at Santa Pod Raceway, Podington, Bedfordshire. More info from www.HotRodDrags.com

20th Sept: Kenley Autojumble at the Portcullis Club, Kenley Airfield, Victor Beamish Avenue, Caterham, Kent (junc 6, M25). More info from Facebook.

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RICK HULSE LA JOIE DE VIVRE?

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AS

my 60th birthday comes hurtling at me like a prosecco-filled Essex girl charging into a kebab shop, I've recently had reason to reflect on the toll taken on me by the ravages of my lifestyle.

In 1990 (almost half a lifetime ago, in my case), I was a physically fit, though gloriously unkempt, example of Homo Sapiens Libertas, in pursuit of excessive hedonistic pleasures.

At that time I'd ridden a hardtail Triumph Bonneville chop, with a 750cc Morgo conversion, all over the UK for more than three years, without a single item of waterproof clothing to my name (unless you count an old leather jacket, two layers of oily Levi jeans, and a 12-year-old pair of bike boots). Being a ruffy-tuffy biker I'd always shunned waterproofs as being a bit nancy and, in my trike-riding days, I generally held the wearing of crash helmets with the same level of disdain.

In 1991 my life changed quite profoundly when I was hit by a stolen car that was being pursued by the police as I exited a telephone box in a shitty area of north Manchester (younger readers may need to Google 'phone box'). From then on, I had to adjust to living with a disability and, eventually, having to admit to myself that I could no longer survive in the competitive world of electrical contracting. Many things changed that year, not the least of which was my income, but I was as determined as ever to seek-out and relish every opportunity for pleasurable excess in whatever form it presented itself, hence my career as a writer and stand-up comedian began.

As years passed by my refusal to grow up, or to slow down, began to take a physical toll. Arthritis became my constant companion, as did an array of anti-inflammatory drugs, which in turn led to chronic reflux Oesophagitis (featuring incredibly painful debilitating heartburn), and yet more prescription drugs to combat

that. A few more years went by, and my neck began to seize up and cause various neurological issues with my hands. This was my introduction to the wonderful world of spondylosis (a nasty form of spinal arthritis) in my cervical spine which then, probably due to overcrowding, began to also make itself at home in my lumbar spine.

In more recent years fate has blessed me with quite severe carpal tunnel syndrome in both wrists, which is far worse than wanker's cramp because you don't even have the pleasure of a good onanistic marathon to blame it on! (And, let's be honest, both wrists would be showing off.)

Last year, fate decided that I didn't have enough problems so it awarded me a new chronic condition in the form of ulcerative colitis (I won't go into detail in case you're eating – Google it if you have nothing more interesting to do today than explore an old man's illnesses). When I complained to my GP about the apparent injustice of this latest addition to the litany of malaise currently trying to interfere with my profligate lifestyle, his somewhat blithe response was, "Come on Rick, let's be honest about this. You've earned all of these problems!"

Now, I was willing to admit that the arthritis was no doubt, at least in part, due to too many years of riding in all weathers with little or no protection. I'd also concede that the spondylitis in my neck could probably be attributed to many years of head-banging in rock clubs, and the buffeting effect of riding into too many head-winds. No doubt the knackered lumbar spine could've been exacerbated by riding too many miles on hardtails and, perhaps, the knackered wrists were indicative of years of repetitive strain injuries caused by inefficient, but extremely cool-looking, handlebars, but I simply had to ask, "How the hell can riding motorcycles and trikes cause ulcerative colitis?"

He looked at me with a wry smile and said, "Tell me again how much, on average, you drink?"

It was a conversation we'd had before. I've never seen the point of hiding any aspect of my lifestyle from my GP as only a fool would hide probable causes from the person they entrust to care for their health. At one point a few years ago, my GP actually said to me, "You are, without doubt, the worst binge-drinker on my books". Considering the estate on which I live, this could seem a damning indictment, but I felt the need to clarify my position with a retort; "Actually Doc, I think you'll find that I'm 'the best' binge drinker on your books!"

In recent months I've been in and out of hospital, having numerous tests and scans to identify the root cause of some severe chest pains that've all but curtailed my hedonistic lifestyle (temporarily I hope) and, once again, I found myself discussing possible causes with my wonderfully non-judgemental GP.

"So, come on Doc, is it the frivolous drug use catching-up with me?" I asked, somewhat querulously.

Being fully aware of my long-term love affair with chemical stimuli, including copious quantities of LSD over many years, and my somewhat prodigious use of amphetamine sulphate, he seemed a little surprised to find himself saying, "Apparently not. Surprisingly, of all of the facets of your reckless lifestyle, the social drug use would seem to be the most innocuous!"

"So what the hell is it?" I asked in exasperation.

"I'm buggered if I know as yet," he replied, "but I'll bet whatever it turns out to be, you'll've had a lot of fun earning it!" He then concluded by saying, "If it's any consolation, I don't know anybody else who has packed as much enjoyment into their life as you have, but now you're paying the bills for it!"

I suppose we all have life's bills to pay. I can't help wondering if I should leave a tip? 🍷

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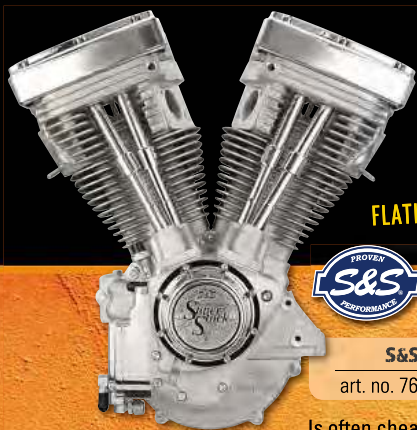


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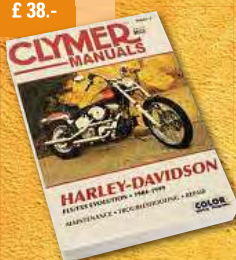


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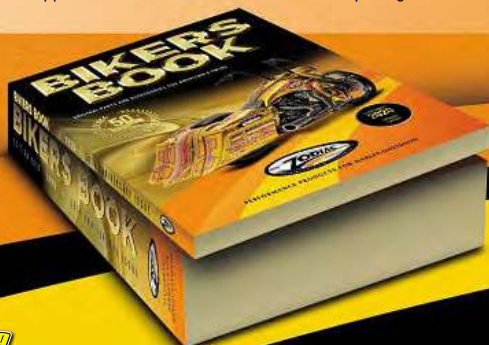
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