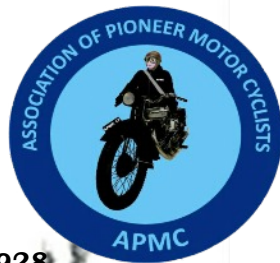


THE PIONEER MOTOR CYCLIST



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**2020 Winter
Supplement**

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EDITORS RAMBLINGS Geoff Davies



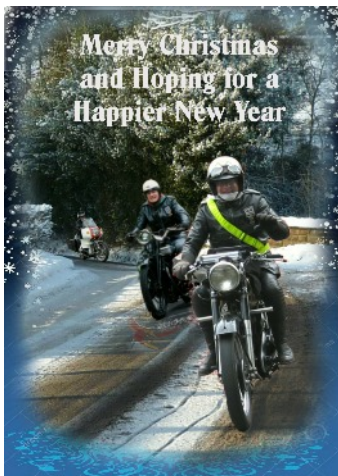
Christmas should be the time for good cheer, but I have sad news to pass on. Stan Dibben, famous sidecar passenger, and Annette Heath, Phil Heath's widow, both passed away in October. We did not get this information until well past the final date for the December magazine. Our deepest feelings go out to their family and friends.

We are still in the position of uncertainty for our activities next year. The vaccines may slow down the spread of corid virus, but may not close it down completely/ We just have to keep our spirits up. Keep active on those jobs you've always intended to finish.



This photo was take some time in the eighties near Warrington. I was on my green S7. I asked the owner why he had painted is Sunbeam bright yellow. He explained that when he bought it, it was dark blue. He realised this was not the right colour, so he

got s Dulux colour chart in B & Q, looked through it and found Sunbeam Yellow, and that's why. Just after the conversation it started to rain. He then donned his his bright yellow industrial waterproofs out of his rucksack. Put on his bright red helmet and rode off. It reminded me of a drink my mother was fond of. A 'Snowball'. A glass of Advocaat and Lemonade, topped with a cherry



DECEMBERS Magazine.

I've been asked who are the riders on the back page. Definitely members, who are skilled at riding in winter conditions. It's in North Staffordshire.

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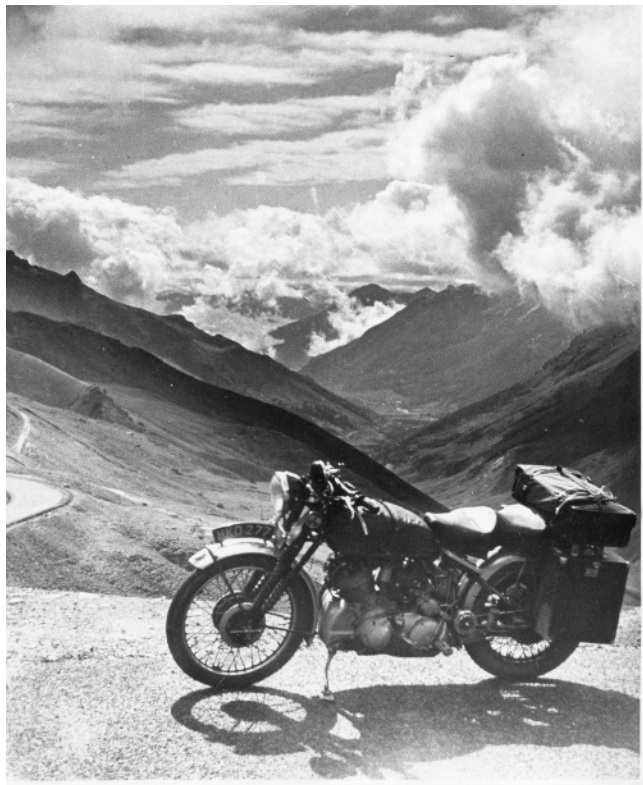
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6

A VINCENT IN THE CLOUDS

Some members of the Vincent Owner Club may recognise the late Gordon Griffith's Rapide on the Stelvio Pass. This photo was on the cover of Vincent book. I acquired the bike in 1992. It's passed through a few hands since then, but present location is not known. I have several photos and slides from when it was in Gordon's possession. I don't know where it is now, but the present owner may be interested in them.



"OK, so we got the tank and the seat off. But why did we do that, Graham?"

"Er, - I don't remember."



A BIKE FOR CHRISTMAS

Dave had been in the motorcycle restoration business for over 20 years, and while he would tackle most makes, he specialised in Triumph twins. He had accumulated a stock of new original and reclaimed parts through endless visits to autojumbles and auctions, and had a range of trusted contacts who did his specialist work like boring cylinders, valve guide replacement, wheel building, chrome plating and powder coating. With a couple of part-time assistants he aimed to sell about 8 or 10 machines per year at a premium price. He had gained something of a reputation for his restorations and would not compromise on quality. It had been a good year, with eight bikes completed, but Christmas was approaching all too fast and he had three to finish before closing for the holiday.

The first was a red 1969 Triumph TR6 650cc for Lucy who wanted it for a surprise Christmas present for her husband to mark their 30th Christmas together. James had bought it through the trade, it was in fair condition but lacked compression. A re-bore and new pistons had sorted out the engine. The steering head bearings were completely shot and the silencers were rotten. It needed a new clutch and sprockets, a paint job, and re-wiring.

The second was a silver 1952 Triumph T100 500cc rigid pre-unit for Ted who was treating himself to the bike he had always wanted in his youth but could never afford. It had been bought at the Stafford auction and was in poor condition. The silencers were holed, the engine was low on compression and the big ends knocked. The gearbox was fine and it was otherwise complete with matching numbers. It needed a complete engine re-build, powder coating, painting, new chrome, a new seat, new instruments and wiring.

The third was a rare 1959 Bonneville 650cc, one of only 450 of these machines with the Royal Blue/Grey paint. In September 1956, Triumph was able to push its motorcycle to 214.4 MPH to officially become the world's fastest motorcycle with the Jack Wilson-tuned 650cc engine at Bonneville. As a tribute in 1959, Triumph introduced a new model, the Triumph Bonneville. It was fitted with a head that allowed dual Amal Monobloc carburetors. A Lucas magneto furnished the ignition and they had a distinctive paint scheme.

It was owned by Leopold (call me Leo) and sister Sophia who seemed to have done very well for themselves in the City, and wanted a present to thank their father who had worked hard to put them through college. Leopold (call

8

me Leo) had bought it at Daytona in the Spring and had it shipped directly to James. The original paint had to be preserved but the engine had to be stripped and checked, the chrome re-plated, and the wiring loom replaced.

With Christmas approaching, the pressure to finish the bikes grew, and Dave and his two assistants worked long into the night completing the wiring and adding the finishing touches. Eventually all three were finished to his satisfaction, handled well on a test run, and didn't leak oil on the workshop floor.

Early on Christmas Eve Ted arrived to collect his silver 1952 Triumph T100. He was very pleased with the results, and reckoned Dave's reputation was well



deserved as he admired the red 1969 Triumph TR6 and the rare Blue/Grey 1959 Bonneville. He paid with a cheque and a sharp intake of breath, started it on first kick, and headed off smiling from ear to ear. Near home he coasted the last hundred yards, quietly pushed his new pride and joy down the garden path into the shed and covered it with a sheet, to be revealed to his wife at an auspicious moment.



Just before lunch Sophia and brother Leopold (call me Leo) arrived in their Range Rover with a rented trailer, signed a substantial

cheque without batting an eyelid, loaded the rare Blue/Grey 1959 Bonneville, and headed off. Just why Leo wanted a VAT receipt was unclear.

In the afternoon Dave loaded the final bike, the red 1969 Triumph TR6, and delivered it to Lucy. They unloaded it quietly, where it could not be seen from the house, and put it in the garage, covering it with an old blanket. Then he went back to the workshop to tidy up, and headed home for Christmas, stopping briefly at his bank.



On Christmas morning Lucy led her husband Ted, blindfold, to the garage to reveal his present, and shortly afterwards, daughter Sophia and son Leopold (call me Leo) arrived in their Range Rover with a rented trailer, bearing their Christmas gift..

John Garrett

"Do you feel safe with me, darling"
"Yes, so long as you keep going"



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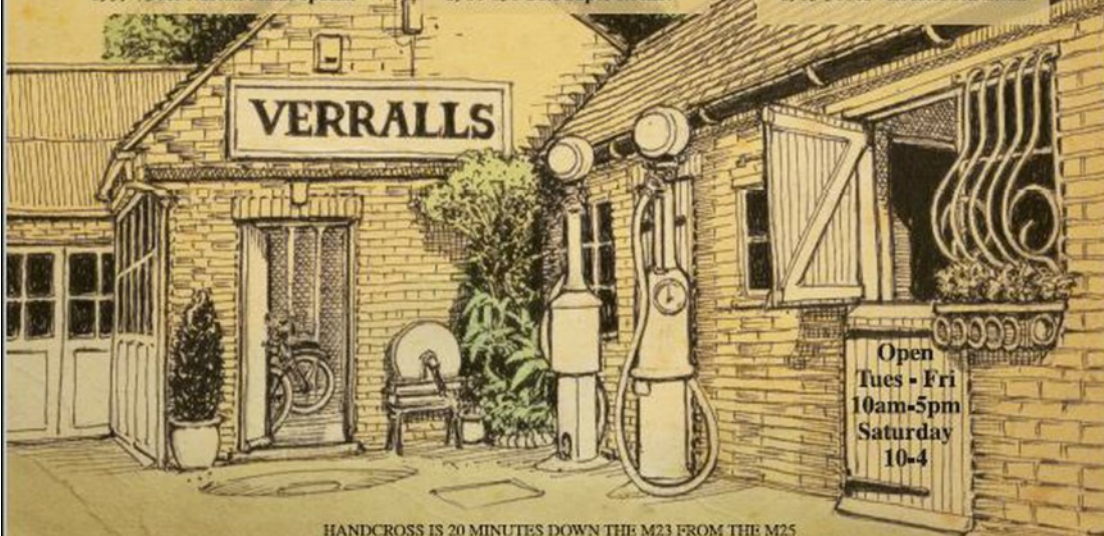
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EPIC RIDE *Alan Brodrick did several - here are the highlights*

Accounts of undertakings which are difficult, dangerous and uncomfortable make absorbing reading, but the story of a journey which goes exactly as planned, without incident, is of no interest to anyone", said Colonel Vladimir Peniakov ('Popski'), who planned everything meticulously and hated things to go wrong.

Looking back on a few epic trips (most journeys went well, fortunately) I often think "Must have been bloody mad to have done that, yet feel pleased that, after all, "it came all right in the end, didn't it?", as if that excuses downright foolishness.

Killing two birds with one stone one Christmas Eve I rode a new BSA Gold Star in full Clubman's trim from Poole to Bolton to spend Christmas with my parents and deliver the Gold Star to the eager customer in Warrington on Boxing Day. The lights failed in Marlborough and I rode 300 miles without lights, and not even a near miss. Another Gold Star based epic came after TT. I dislocated my shoulder in a practice crash, missed the race, cast off most of the surgeon's lashings and rode from Liverpool to Poole (300 miles again) with my left arm in a sling, one-handed on my clubman's Gold Star in full racing trim with clip ons, rear sets and a close-ratio gearbox. Most uncomfortable, and one of the daftest things I have ever done. No one was impressed by this 'pressing on' effort - "Silly sod, why didn't you put it on the train? Look at the state of you!"

Thirty years ago, we had quite heavy snowfalls, which usually arrived overnight and took everyone by surprise. We were never prepared for snow and floundered about whether on two wheels or four. Undaunted, I once pressed on for the 30-mile trip from my home to our Liverpool shop, feeling as noble as Captain Oates or Sir Ernest Shackleton. But I was greeted by the raised eyebrows of our Managing Director and the crushing remark: "Didn't expect to see you this morning - you don't expect to sell motorbikes in this weather, surely? You'll get all that caked snow off the bike as soon as you've got your clobber off, won't you?" In better weather, there were several rides, which were not epics, but were damned annoying. My young colleague took an immaculate BSA Golden Flash in part-exchange and I went home on this 'nice bike.' It was gutless and although I always carried half a dozen spare plugs I had used them all by the time I had done twenty miles and stopped six times thereafter to clean oily plugs as best I could. That Flash needed a sixty thou re-bore to clear the barrels and the job costs made a mess of the salesman's commission when it was sold. Serve him right.

The Kawasaki KM90 was a lively little 90cc bike - no bigger than a Honda monkey bike - and the boys dared me to go home on one "just for a laugh". That ride was no laugh. I was invisible, and learned once and for all that most car and truck drivers are blind fools. Stationary at traffic lights I was twice brushed by cars which came alongside; others overtook and pulled in to me before they were past, and those overtaking on narrow roads drove straight at me. Even on a pedal cycle or moped I have never had a more frightening ride; in broad daylight too! I felt like Gulliver amongst the giants. No epic that; more like an ordeal.

A very nice Ariel 500 Single with a small mileage used all its oil in fifty miles and began to tighten up. I was past the point of no return and filled up with Castrol Grand Prix '50s' grade, so thick that it could hardly crawl out of the tin. Either the piston had reshaped itself or the Grand Prix stopped the rot, but I completed the 250-mile trip and a 300-mile return without using any more oil. We did not investigate for fear of what we might find after the partial seizure and the Ariel gave no more trouble. The instruction book recommended Grand Prix for summer and XXL (40s grade) for winter anyway, so the rider was safe as long as he went by the book. We advised him accordingly.

One very wet, dark, winter evening a customer picked up his new machine and left his Honda CB750 outside. My R75/5 was new, polished and gleaming like a jewel and I did not want to get it filthy. So, I went home on the Honda, riding with "zest and confidence". In daylight, next day when I looked at the bike I nearly set off to get the train. Both tyres were quite bald (and it was still raining) and I rode into Liverpool keeping bolt upright all the way and never exceeding 30mph, correcting slides and slithers, with my heart in my mouth. Yet the previous evening I had not felt a thing. "Where there's no sense, there's no feeling" is an old Lancashire saying and very true. Not an epic ride, but an uneasy one.

In those days, there were Clubmans races for the up and coming lads and I entered my new Gold Star for one. It had gone well at Thrupton a week earlier, and was entered for the Clubmans TT in June. I left my digs in Poole very early one beautiful, silent spring morning and rode 130 happy miles over empty country roads to Silverstone, wearing my old leathers and racing boots, crash hat tied on the back. A startled pheasant rose squawking, flew headlong towards me and thumped me in the chest, knocking all the wind out of me before it crashed into the hedge. Cows stood legless in the morning mist. Time stood still and only the twittering, crackling exhaust of the Gold Star disturbed the peace. I greeted old friends at Silverstone, donned my helmet and raced. I had the reputation of being the world's worst kick-starter, but this time the Gold Star fired first kick, I got away first, increased my lead and actually lapped a chap on a Douglas Dragonfly. (I think that he must have been on one cylinder). I eased off a bit too much and Ken James from Christchurch nipped past on the last lap. First and second", said Ken, "not bad for two Dorset yokels". We rode home together on a perfect evening, happy as sandboys, and I got to my girl's house in time for supper. How did you get on?" she asked. "Not so bad -1 WAS SECOND!" A good ending to a perfect day out - and an Epic Ride.

WANTED

**Leg shields for a 1957 bantam D3, phone
Richard Bennett 07785545711**

A MOTOR CYCLIST IN RUSSIA

The Irish Cyclist and Motor Cyclist, February 27, 1918

Few of the band of motor cyclists who answered their country's call in the early days of August 1914; have to their credit such an adventurous career as Roland Jackson's. Before he joined up, he was with the well-known London motorcycle firm of Godfreys Ltd., and as his particular job was the tuning up of engines for racing at Brooklands, it may be assumed there was little regarding a motor bicycle that he did not know.

In three years, he fought in twelve countries, and was on each of the Russian fronts save Riga. He endured fierce extremes of temperature, from 57 degrees of frost in the Arctic Circle to the excessive heat of the southern plains. Naturally, his first job was in France and Flanders. Afterwards he transferred to the Armoured Car Section, and went to Russia, and for two and a half years he was wandering in Eastern Europe and Western Asia. He traversed Russia from north to south and back again, climbed the Caucasus twice, over unspeakable roads, and saw service on the Turkish front, in Armenia, Kurdistan, Rumania, and Austria. He has been twice blown up by high explosive shells and once was temporarily reported dead.

On the latter occasion, he was riding his motor cycle at the rear of the column. It was during the retreat in Galicia and the column was under vigorous shell and rifle fire. He could hear the bullets "pinging " against the car in front, and moved a little to the side of the road so as not to be in the line of such an obvious target. Just as he did so a shell landed plump on the spot where he had been riding, and the concussion threw him into the ditch, where he remained unconscious for some time.

However, he had sustained no injury beyond a severe shock, and was able to rejoin his squadron, where it was believed that he had been blown to pieces. Jackson returned from Russia towards the end of last summer, and has recently been home in Ireland on leave.

NO MOTORCYCLE TO CHASE SPEEDERS

Calexico Chronicle, 19 January 1940 MENDON, Michigan.

Because Mendon has a fire truck but no motorcycle for its police officer, William Davis, village authorities have authorized him to use the fire truck to chase speeders.



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CHINA'S NEW LITTLE CAR

This is not a joke, they will sell for \$600.00 and they won't be able to make them fast enough. Here's a one seat car that will get you back and forth to work on the cheap. This \$600 Volkswagen's car gets 258 mpg, 109.687 km/l or 0.9 litre per 100 km.

This \$600 car is not a toy; it will be ready for release in China next year. The single seater aero car totes VW (Volkswagen) branding. Volkswagen did a lot of very highly protected testing of this car in Germany; it was not announced until now where the car would make its first appearance. The car was introduced at the VW stockholders' meeting as the most economical car in the world. The initial objective of the prototype was to prove that 1 litre of fuel could deliver 100 kilometres of travel.

Its Spartan interior does not sacrifice safety; the impact and roll-over protection is comparable to a GT racing car. The aero design proved essential to getting the desired result. The body is 3.47 meters long and just 1.25 meters wide, and a little over a meter high. The prototype was made completely of carbon fibre and is not painted to save weight. The power plant is a one cylinder diesel, positioned ahead of the rear axle and combined with an automatic shift controlled by a knob in the interior. The Most Economic Car in the World will be on sale next year. Better than electric cars – 258 miles/gallon: IPO 2010 in Shanghai, a single-seat car, from conception to production, 3 years. The company is head-quartered in Hamburg, Germany. Will be selling for 4000 Yuan, equivalent to US\$600. Gas tank capacity = 1.7 gallons (6.4 Litres) Speed = 62 – 74.6 Miles/hour (100 - 120 km per hour) Fuel efficiency = 258 miles/gallon (0.9L per 100 km) Travel distance with a full tank = 404 miles (650 km).



The Legendary CBX

In the Mid-'70s, Honda Needed to Reassert Its Engineering Dominance and Kickstart Motorcycling Passion. The CBX Did Both.

As intense and successful as the early 1970s were for the Japanese motorcycle manufacturers, and as powerful as

Honda became during that period, a third of Honda's line-up had become stodgy and reasonably uncompetitive by 1975. After massive successes like the astounding CB750, Japan's engineering powerhouse seemed to have lost the plot.

By that point, Kawasaki's stunning 903cc Z1 had made a non-issue out of the CB750—a bike Honda had done nearly nothing to in the six years since its introduction. Yamaha sold its giant-killer RD350 like there was no tomorrow, and by '76 there'd be an even better RD400 and the GS750, a motorcycle that would make folks forget about Honda's SOHC 750. Honda introduced the GL1000 in '75, of course. But its automotive-esque design shouted "tourer" a lot more loudly than "performance," so it barely nudged the excitement meter. At the time, many felt that motorcycle division needed a serious shot of adrenaline, a flagship machine that would make people take a deep breath and say, "Whoa!". Fortunately, the men in the big office—Soichiro Honda and division president Tadashi Kume—knew the score and knew who to tap to make it happen: Shoichiro Irimajiri, Honda's head of R&D. Iri, as he was known, was already a bit of a legend at Honda. After graduating from Tokyo University in 1963 with a degree in aeronautical engineering, he joined Honda after finding no work in the aviation business. "Honda was my second choice," Iri said later with a smile.

Almost immediately, he began developing Honda's Grand Prix racers and, understanding that more cylinders were the only way four-strokes could compete with lightweight two strokes, helped design a range of exotic, multi-cylinder racers that quickly became legendary: the 1964 RC115 (a 50cc eight valve twin that revved to 21,000 rpm), the '65 RC147 (a five-cylinder 20-



valve 125 that revved to 19,500), and the immortal RC165, a 24-valve, six-cylinder 250 that redlined at nearly 15,000 rpm.

A decade later Iri and his team developed a new plan for Honda's excitement-starved street bike line-up. It included a couple of new twins to bolster the middle of the line-up (a vertical twin and a transverse vee that would become the CX line) along with two flagship concepts. One was an all-new CB750, which would become the twin-cam, 16-valve F-model introduced in late '78. The other would be a sporty, performance-oriented open-classer... But what that concept comprised, they did not yet know. The obvious direction was a high-end CB1000 based on Honda's successful RCB endurance racer. But Iri and his team knew that a 1,000cc four with two cams and 16 valves—as good as it would likely be—could be seen as merely “catching up,” not setting the bar higher, as they very much wanted. And that's when the idea for something completely different surfaced—something unique and stunning, maybe even something that recalled Iri's days in the GP.

Very little is known of the discussion that transpired after the very first mention of a six-cylinder production street bike based on that crazy, 250cc RC165 racer. We can imagine the excitement somewhere in Honda's then-new R&D facility in Asaka that day and do know that Project 422 was quickly green-lighted. Interestingly, upper management also approved the development of the 1,000cc four project, which would run concurrently with Project 422. The thinking here was based purely on competition: Let's see how each bike works at the prototype stage and then make our decision on which to actually produce.

A pair of teams quickly got to work. The styling team for the six-cylinder project, headed by Minoru Morioka and Yoshitaka Omori, began with rough sketches, which ran the gamut from an almost CB750 lookalike to a futuristic jet-fighter theme. Besides, a bit of semi-integrated bodywork and one attempt at a small cockpit fairing, the shapes were familiar. Slowly over the summer months, the shapes began to morph into ones we recognize now: the dramatically sculpted tank, wide at the front and narrow in back, and that bold, waisted engine leading the way without frame tubes marring the view. In truth, the first mock-ups had downtube frames, engineers using the reasonably stiff and functional cage design as a starting point. It had worked on the RC; surely it would be okay on the street bike. But two considerations removed it from consideration: One was aesthetics.

That engine, which Mr. Honda himself insisted must be sexy and beautiful in addition to being powerful, had to be seen. “Mr. Honda wanted the most powerful engine,” Morioka remembers, “and at the same time paid enormous at-

tention on how the engine looked.” Another problem was packaging. The new engine’s narrow cylinder pitch and the number of pipes exiting in such a small space made it extremely difficult to use traditional downtubes without serious angling of pipes and/ or tubes, which would spoil the look. So fairly early, engineers incorporated a downtube-less design, where the engine would bolt to the frame from above and in back. “If those tubes had to be bent,” Omori says, “it would look like hell. That’s why we changed it.”

Things moved quickly during the summer, each team motivated by excitement as well as pressure from above to finish quickly, as both open-class projects had been fast-tracked from the very beginning. Iri’s knowledge of the RC165 project helped the power plant team tremendously; he’d been there before, knew the ins and outs of such a wide and powerful engine, knew where problems would crop up, and knew how to fix them.

By early 1977, stylists had produced sketches of what higher-ups would confirm as the Six’s final look. Styling mules were assembled with as many pre-production pieces as possible, as well as sand-cast engine parts. The visual results were decidedly mixed; the bike’s front half was strong and sexy, but the back was lacking something. That something, according to Omori, was a tail section. “At that point,” Omori says, “we were already close to the final version, but there was no tail cowl. The R&D director said to me, ‘This bike has no punch. Can you do something with it?’ I then asked CB750F designer Hitoshi Ikeda if I could try something, and he agreed. I ended up making a winged tail cowl. Ikeda asked if it was a gimmick, so I asked Shinji Kakatani of the Blue Helmets [Honda’s in-house race team], who said it would be effective. When we contacted Mr. Morioka, who was away in Europe, for approval, we learned he was working on the same thing for the 750F!”

Prototype testing was by now in full swing, and Iri was worried. The biggest problem with the CBX was the weight; it had climbed to more than 450 pounds. The bike would soon go on a strict weight-loss regimen, getting aluminium triple clamps and handlebars and other lighter bits. But it still ended up being nearly 600 pounds full of fuel in production form. With the CB1000F prototype also up and running, (the bike would eventually become the CB900F), it was time to decide. “The 1000F was extremely light,” Iri remembers, “and actually faster than the CBX, especially on the track. But we felt there was something exhilarating and exciting about the Six that was lacking on the four-cylinder bike. The rumble of the exhaust, the feeling of acceleration, the vibration, its smooth, high-revving engine. There was something in the CBX that could not be measured, and that made it a very sexy machine.

There was a big discussion which machine to go with, but based on Honda's desire to build a totally new superbike, one unlike any that had been made before, they chose the CBX. Still, pre-production handling problems persisted, all connected to weight and frame-rigidity issues. "Honda knew how to make engines, but in our minds frames were not that important." Iri explained that, in those days, frame engineers weren't talking to the engine guys, and he realised after the CBX's release that Honda needed to find a way to make more rigid frames as its engines got more powerful.

In late 1977, a handful of pre-production machines were prepared for testing and some early press coverage. In November, Honda invited some American dealers and European editors to Suzuka, Honda's primary test venue at the time. At a local theatre the night before they learned of the CBX's existence, Honda showed a film that made many of them literally jump for joy. The sequence on screen was a pan shot, starting at one side of the engine, shot from the front, looking at the exhaust pipes. As the image moved left to right, you saw the cylinder block come into view, then one head pipe, then two, and then three. And when dealers noticed extra space for the cam chain after the third pipe, and realized Honda had built a Six, the room just exploded! Some were standing on their chairs. It was nuts! They'd been getting beaten up by the Z1 for so many years, and this was retribution. Honda needed something exciting, and this did the trick, at least emotionally.



The CBX, in its initial guise as a stripped-down sporting machine lasted just two years, 1979 and '80. The '80-spec machine differed quite a bit from the original, with less power (98 ps, due to new German regs), an 85-mph speedometer (US DOT silliness), black Comstar wheels, an air-assist fork, a 20-percent-

higher capacity oil cooler, adjustable-damping shocks mated to a swingarm with better bushings, glossy side covers, a tail section compartment, and some other detail changes.

For '81 and '82, the CBX morphed into a serious sport-tourer, with more mid-range, a slick Pro-Link single-shock rear suspension system, hard bags, a big fairing, and a whole different demeanour. Like its predecessor, it sold slowly. Still, it's pretty hard to argue that the CBX didn't achieve what Honda needed at the time. It, along with the CB750F, CX500, and CB1000F prototype projects, yanked Honda out of its tech-less lethargy, proving to itself and the world that it still had the ability and foresight to build exciting motorcycles. Honda still had it.

One could also argue that the CB900F, CB1100F, and the liquid-cooled, V-4 Sabres, Magnas, and Interceptors that followed benefitted from the momentum generated by the CBX. But the Six was not built for pragmatists. It was built for romantics, for people with soft spots in their hearts for mechanical maximum expressions, for people whose specific reasons for motorcycling match the CBX's specific reasons for being built.

Gould Wins Pie Eating Motorcycle Race

San Francisco Call, 27 December 1910

The races at Agricultural park yesterday by the Stockton motorcycle club drew an enthusiastic crowd, automobile owners and motorcycle enthusiasts being out in force.

The most amusing race was the pie eating contest, the participants being O. Gould, A. R. Kuhn and W. Russell. Gould won and Kuhn was second. Their starters were given a third of a pie, and upon a signal

handed the same to the riders, who had to eat the pastry before they could start. The first finished got the best start. After going, once around the track each contestant had to stop and eat the second third of his pie, finishing his pie at the conclusion of his second mile. The pie that they didn't swallow was smeared over their faces and motorcycles.

Possibility nowadays, in the USA, they would have to eat two pies every lap.



Book Reviews – December 2020

Motorcycles, Mates and Memories

The name of Bill Snelling may be familiar to many as the author of a number of excellent books on various motorcycling topics over the past few years and now he has compiled his own autobiography. Alternatively, you may be aware of Bill - thanks to the excellent photographic exhibitions during the Isle of Man TT and Manx races - or have bought photographs from his extensive photographic collection on the FoTTofinders Bikesport Photos website.

What you may not know is that he has an extensive motorcycle history as part of the motorcycle trade, a competitor on and off-road, a motorcycle courier, as well as a journalist for the motorcycle press, to mention just some of his life spent on and associated with motorcycles. Thanks to renowned automotive publishers Veloce, you can learn at least some of his fascinating life in a real social history of motorcycling over the last seventy years in his own words, entitled *Motorcycle, Mates and Memories*.

Over 200 period images illustrate the text in this softbound volume as he guides you through a life spent riding and competing on some often very unsuitable motorcycles on and off-road, which will evoke many similar memories from readers who have been riding and competing over the last seven decades.

Bill takes you through a childhood grounding from a father's love of Vincents, to a working life with Velocettes, moving through working on the original 'Motorcycle Sport' magazine, writing for the now defunct 'Motorcycle Weekly', whilst dispatching, before moving permanently to his beloved Isle of Man from south London. Here, he has established himself as a walking encyclopaedia of the TT and associated IOM races and local historian.

As you work your way through his life you find that despite his 'short portly' figure (his words not mine) that he has an extensive racing pedigree mainly on Velocettes and also a Ducati in the Manx TT, as well as a very successful off-road history especially in the classic MCC events where he has won the prestigious 'Triple' award several times.

Along the way, he has made numerous friends the world over and whole chapter is given over to giving a brief profile of some of them with some humorous anecdotes. In the main body of the text, readers will also find many well-known names and companies that Bill has been associated with during his various exploits, both in the UK and abroad, which will no doubt

trigger a lot of memories, as well as his life as a member of a motorcycle club or two.

In fact, when you come to end of the book you realise that he is the epitome of a life-long motorcycle enthusiast who has had a go at most things on two wheels and gradually adapted his enthusiasm as age and health problems have caught up with him, but never losing the thrill and camaraderie of two wheels!

It is an excellent read from start to finish, written in a humble and self-depreciating style and easily dipped in and out of. It should be at the top of everybody's reading list! Excellent value at £16.99.

ISBN: - 978-1-787115-81-1

Available from all good bookshops or direct from the publishers Veloce Publishing Ltd. www.veloce.co.uk

THE WALL AUTOWHEEL John Garrett

The Wall Autowheel was patented by Arthur W. Wall of Birmingham in 1908 and made by Auto-Wheels Ltd in London, UK in years 1909-1914. A 20-inch tyre is fitted to a one horsepower single-cylinder, air-cooled petrol engine 118 cc. atmospheric inlet valve and side exhaust valve. The engine was mounted in a sub frame that attached to an everyday pedal cycle at three points, that engine driving to its own integral wheel, thus effectively creating a three-wheeler. It was controlled by a single lever and cable fitted to the handlebars.



Auto-Wheel debuted at Stanley Show in 1909;

"The chief novelty, of course, was the introduction of the Wall Auto-Wheel that is made in Birmingham and aims at enabling any who desire to transform an ordinary bicycle into a power-driven machine by taking a supplementary wheel and attaching it by fork to the side of the machine at the back. The price is designed to be exceedingly moderate, so that the invention may be within the range of practically all purposes, for the whole accessory, including motor and ignition, will be supplied for the price of ordinary bicycle a few years ago. The power unit is absolutely independent of the cycle, being attached to it by means of two clamps, one to the off-side back fork and the other to the off-side chain stay. The motor is a small, two-stroke engine fed by a floatless carburettor, the fly-wheel is contained in the hub of the wheel, and the gearing is on the epi-cyclic system."



Autowheel claimed to have sold 1,750 units in 1913 and 10,000 in 1914. 1913 early units had tubular engine mounts front and rear, induction direct over the inlet valve and no silencer box. 1914 models have platform mounts front and rear, induction into the side of the cylinder block and an exhaust box in the front engine mount.

The Smith Motor Wheel and Briggs & Stratton Motor Wheel were developments of the Wall Autowheel.

***Here's hoping things
will get better
next year.***

