The Oz Vincent Review

Edition #17, June 2015

The Oz Vincent Review is a totally independent, non-profit, *e*-Zine about the classic British motorcycling scene with a focus all things Vincent. OVR, distributed free of charge to its readers, may be contacted by email at OzVinReview@Gmail.com

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Welcome

Welcome to this latest edition of The Oz Vincent Review with a solid focus on all things Vincent; Next issue will cover other marques as well.

Change is afoot in the Vincent world with three recent announcements. Greg Brillis (Queensland, Australia) has graduated from being a full time aircraft engineer and part time Vincent craftsman to now providing full time Vincent restoration and fettling services – more info to follow; Next Vinparts, operated by Russell & Debbie Kemp has ceased trading however they are currently in negotiations with a view to the business continuing under new management; I'm sure all readers hope that comes to fruition. Finally Peter Barker who has operated an almost "business of love" supplying stainless steel fasteners and specialist Vincent fittings for more years than I care to remember has also ceased trading. Though not all is lost, Vincent parts and services continue to be available and details of suppliers are provided, as usual, in the Service Providers section of OVR.

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Melbourne, Australia.
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The Front Cover

This month's front cover is of Queensland reader Bruce Anderson with his immaculate C Series Comet. Here is a lesson for us all from Bruce.

"A couple of weeks ago I went for a run to the Lowmead pub for lunch to catch up with a group heading north from Bundaberg. It's about a 150 km round trip and includes 20 Km of dirt on a blistering hot day. The bike went really well on the way down but on the run home I felt it wasn't 'happy' with a slight loss of power and surging. I pulled over and checked for obvious problems, couldn't find any so continued home at a leisurely pace.

First I thought – I wonder if the fuel I bought at the country service station had water in it? I dropped the carby bowl off into a clear container and sure enough there was about a desert spoon of water in the container. Ah – that's it – I wondered why I hadn't done this on the side of the road, it's so obvious. Drained some fuel out of each side of the tank to check for further evidence of water – all clear – time for a test run, nope still the same.

So back home, time to pull the carby off for a clean and fit new gaskets, now it will be right – nope same problem.

Right so it' not fuel, what else could it be? Time to check the ignition, maybe the auto advance is playing up. Where to start, I'll just pull the plug out to check it's ok and look inside at the top of the piston – yea – what's this?, I don't think the plug was seated tightly. So clean up the plug, refit – off for a test ride – this has to be it!! Nope still the same.

OK back to ignition timing, checked the points and found them very wide so I set them to 0.012" and reset the timing using a little electronic box that gives an audible signal when the points open (I built it as a kit recommended on the Vincent web site). All good, reassemble everything and prepare for the final test ride.

What's this?? As I cleaned the work area I found a small disc about 1/8" diameter and about 1/16" thick. I pondered on this for a bit and finally worked out that it was the hard facing off the magneto points, seems the tungsten which is welded to the points post had come away. I checked against other points assemblies I had, and sure enough this is what it was and explained why the points were so wide. So fit new points and set, pull everything off again and reset ignition, all good reassemble and off for a test ride. The bike went beautifully, I was just reflecting on the benefits of persistence, when after the motor was warm, I gave it the berries and soon after it came to a halt. On the side of the road I checked the timing and found it has slipped, so I did a roadside retiming job good enough to limp home (to save any further embarrassment with my wife as I had already announced on a few occasions that I had found the problem.)

So, go through it all again, pay special attention to the cleanliness of the taper on the magneto/ATD and button up the locknut on the shaft a little tighter (I has been concerned about the fibre gear teeth strength) after a gentle tap on the ATD nut with a copper face hammer.

Off for a test ride – and finally all good, runs beautifully.

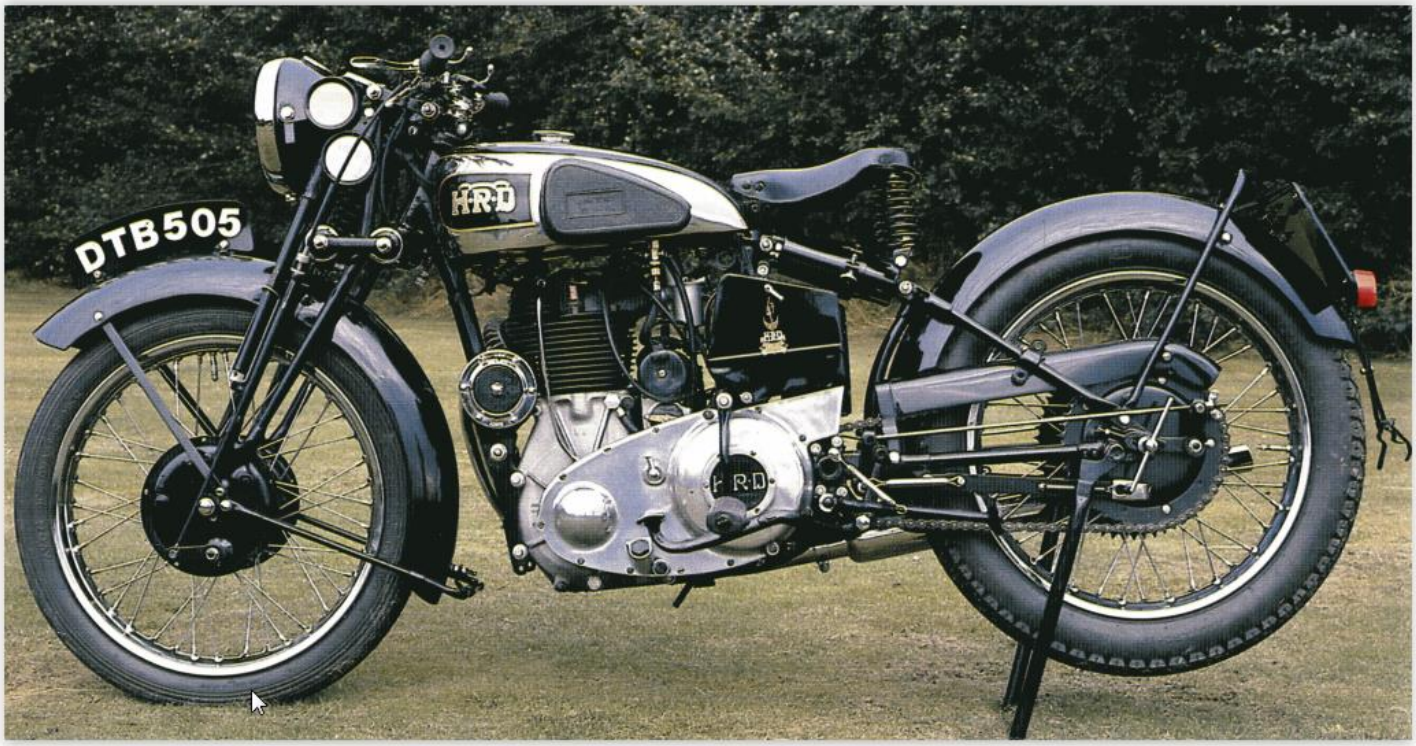
Observations:

1. Don't get ahead of yourself when you think you've solved a problem.
2. As they say – most carburation problem can be found in the magneto

Regards, Bruce"

METEOR RIGHT

Warning – This item, first published in Classic Motorcycling Legends in 1989, is unsuitable for plumbers of a nervous disposition.

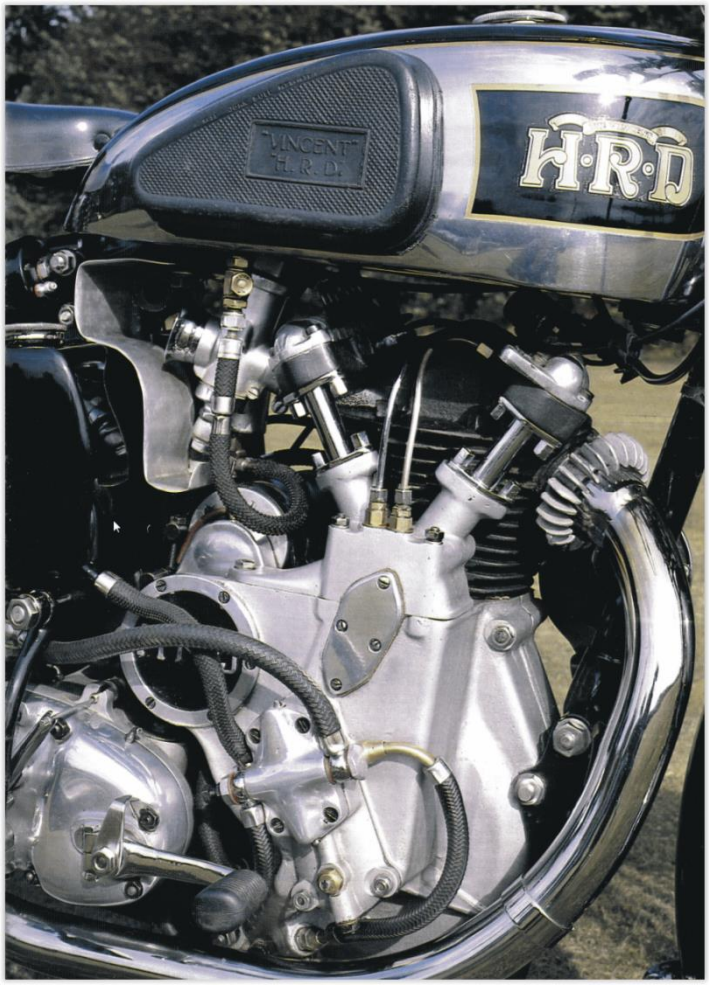


MANY motorcycle enthusiasts bitterly regret missing the opportunity to buy an unusual bike. When the machine in question is a Series A Vincent-HRD Meteor, you need a very good reason to ignore it — like having got one already. Tom Ridgewell had no such excuse when he was first

offered this one. He had just acquired a sidecar to go with his 1926 AJS V-twin, and being totally involved with restoring the chair, he passed up the Vincent. He was delighted though when, a year later, he was offered the same bike again.

Tom also owns a Series C Rapide. Vincents have had a special appeal for him ever since the day in 1955 when he encountered one of the Stevenage twins while aboard his Mk.3 Douglas. He vividly recalls the experience. "Torsion-bar rear suspension and Radiadraulic front forks gave the 350 Duggie a beautiful ride, but the performance was non-existent. While I was in the Army up in Malvern, I used to come home to Kent on the Duggie at weekends. There wasn't the traffic about in those days. If you were pushing sixty-five or seventy you were moving and there wasn't much that came by you.

"Anyway, going back one Sunday I was on the Oxford by-pass. It was about seven o'clock — a lovely summer evening, sun shining, nothing on the road. Of course, I thought I was Geoff Duke, stretched out on the tank. The Duggie was wide open, probably doing about seventy-five and nothing had passed me since Ealing. Then, all of a sudden, I heard this 'thump, thump, thump.' I turned my head and this brand-new Series D came past, two-up with all the touring gear, panniers on the back, doing well over the ton. "It was at that moment I decided that I would own a Vincent one day."



Tom grew up in the Orpington area of Kent, and like many motorcyclists of his generation, began riding on a humble 1937 BSA C10. A National Service posting to Cyprus with REME brought plenty more opportunities for motorcycling on service Matchlesses, Nortons and BSAs. By the time he left the Army in 1957, Tom had his own 1954 G9 Matchless.

During a career in the motor trade Tom specialised in body repairs, and developed an interest in classic cars. Eventually, marriage and a family put an end to fun on two wheels. "But once a motorcyclist, always a motor-cyclist. I bought the odd Triumph from time to time," he says.

His interest in motorcycles was firmly re-established when, in 1978, he bought and restored a BSA B31. This was followed by that first Vincent, a Series C Rapide. As a result of owning the twin, he got to know Chas Guy of Vincent specialists Conway Motors. He first became interested in Series A singles when he saw a 1935 Comet Special at the shop.

At the 1986 1000 Bikes at Brands Hatch, Chas said that he had a Meteor for sale. Tom agreed to go and have a look at it with a view to purchase. Soon afterwards however, he bought the vintage sidecar for his Ajay and in the course of restoring that, the Meteor was forgotten.

A year later at the 1000 Bikes, while talking to Chas about his Vincent sprint bike, Tom was surprised to learn that the Meteor was still for sale. An American enthusiast had agreed to buy the bike, so Chas had dismantled it and begun the restoration. Tom's good fortune was that the American visited the shop and plumped for a 1935 model in preference to the '38.
The Meteor remained dismantled until Tom collected it the weekend after the Brands meeting.
It took the whole morning and part of the afternoon to find all the pieces in and around the workshop. Then Tom had to re-assemble the bike at home to find out what was missing. The

Vincent had been complete when he had first seen pictures of it, but had since lost its pillion seat together with the bracket and pivot mechanism.

First Impressions

An incorrect saddle and a Goldie silencer were amongst the non-standard fittings. A rubber saddle would have been original equipment on a Meteor. A replacement ordered turned out to be the small trials version, so Tom is still looking for the correct size.

There was no exhaust down-pipe, but not only was the pipe listed in Armours catalogue, it was also still available. The bike's Brampton forks were in a mess — bent, and with some links missing — although Chas had fitted stainless-steel spindles and new bushes.

The frame was already stove-enamelled, but the rest of the cycle parts required blasting and re-painting. Tom bead-blasted the alloy components himself in his home-made cabinet.

Both valve guides were broken and there was only one valve. Fortunately Tom was able to obtain second-hand bits from ex-Vincent engineer Ted Davis to rebuild the valvegear. In contrast to the top-end, the bottom-end of the engine was in good condition, the piston being only 20 thou oversize, and the bore fine.

The gearbox too was in a good state of preservation, and the clutch merely required a strip-down and clean. Tom fitted new clutch springs, but retained the original cork inserts.
The Series A Rapide was dubbed "the plumber's nightmare" because of its mass of external oil pipes, and in this respect, its smaller brother more than holds its own.

"There's very little information about on Series As. I've got photostats of old handbooks and manuals, and on virtually every page they talk about lubrication problems," says Tom. The oil feeds to the rockers are adjustable, as is the feed to the cylinder barrel and the supply from the tank to the pump. The unions have Amal jet-type adjusting screws and the rate of flow is helpfully specified in the manual as so many "drops per minute." "When I first fired it up there was oil everywhere. I think today's fibre washers are much harder than they used to be, so they don't seat properly."

Tom has since fitted the unions with a combination of fibre, copper, and copper-rubber composite washers. On the VMCC's West Kent run, he had to take a can of white spirit with him to wipe down the bike at stops. The situation is much improved now that the oil system has bedded-in.

The oil-tank's non-return valve is ineffective, just like on all Series As. It allows oil to run into the sump if the machine is left standing for any length of time. At the moment Tom uses Castro! GTX but intends to change to a monograde 50 at the first oil-change.
Of the two Vincent single cylinder models, the Comet is the sports machine, and the Meteor the tourer.

Standard fitting on a pre-war Meteor is a 1 1/16" carburettor, the Comet's 1 1/8". Compression ratios were 6.8 and 7.3:1 respectively. The only other differences were cosmetic. Meteors having an all-black petrol tank, the Comet one with polished side-panels. Tom rebuilt the engine with higher-compression piston and larger carburettor, thus achieving the full Comet specification.
The petrol tank of Tom's bike was rather battered, and a lot of body-filler was removed from numerous dents. As the base was in perfect condition he didn't want to cut it so he used pry-bars to remove as many of the dents as he could reach through the filler hole. The tank was to be finished in the Comet style with polished sides.

"The adverts said that standard fitting on a Meteor was an all-black painted steel tank. The Comet had a stainless-steel tank, painted black or maroon, with polished panels. But as far as I can make out there was no such thing as a steel tank, they were all stainless-steel. On the Meteor, they just painted over the lot." Stainless-steel is more difficult to polish than mild steel, being considerably harder, so Tom had to use abrasive discs before switching to polishing mops. A friendly local silversmith finished the job to perfection.
When it came to painting the tank, Tom's expertise in body repairs and restoration really came into its own. "I used an American customising technique to do the lining on the tank. You dust your gold paint on to the tank first. Then you over-mask with eighth-inch masking tape and spray on your main colour. Next, remove the tape and over-lacquer the lot. Now all the coach-lining is protected."

Tom used basecoat black cellulose applied very thinly, with just enough coats to give the tank its colour. This was finished off with five coats of clear lacquer. He explained, "One of the reasons for not applying too much paint on top is to avoid getting a change in level between the main colour and the coach line. With traditional coach-lining, after a few years of polishing, you wear the line away because it just lies on top."

Fighting Finish

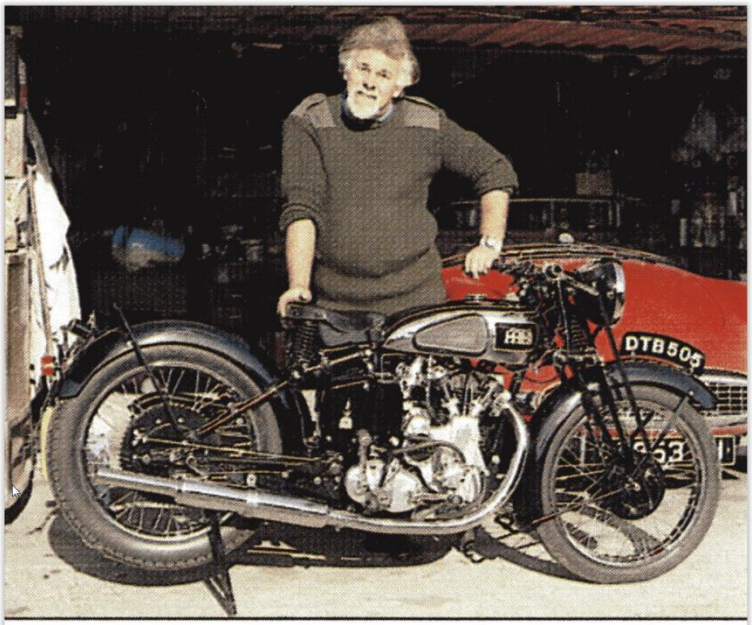
The wheels were re-spoked with chrome Radelli rims, from a batch with the name stamped in the well, rather than on the outside. The carburettor is a semi-downdraught Amal with remote float chamber. The body is badly worn, and the throttle slide can be heard rattling on tickover. Boring and sleeving is planned for the future.

The handlebars look like traditional "Vincent flats" but in fact have a slight rise in them. Tom removed numerous pits and dents, re-painted the 'bars black, kitting them out with new brake and clutch levers. The de-compression lever was missing, so Tom made a replica by using a clutch lever which he modified and built up with weld. Once filed in the correct shape it was sent for chroming to Smiths of Clerkenwell, London. Tom has the highest praise for the quality of their triple-plating.

The original silvering in the headlamp shell had survived intact, the rubber seal having miraculously kept out the rain for 50 years. All Tom had to do was polish the reflector. Several dents were removed from the headlamp rim which was re-plated. The original speedometer was too badly battered to be of use, but luckily Tom already possessed a suitable as-new example. This was fitted with the original bezel re-chromed and Tom built his own speedo drive.

The bike uses a Miller Dynomag. Its original dynamo would have been of the three-brush type, but at some time this had been modified to the more efficient two-brush system, with a Lucas voltage regulator. The dynamo's worn-out brushes were replaced, and a new regulator fitted. Tom made up a battery box. With a small Japanese battery inside there is just enough room for the regulator.

When the bike was first completed, it refused to run properly. Starting was no problem, but as the throttle was opened, the motor cut out. Thinking it was a valve-timing problem, Tom spent many evenings dismantling the valvegear in search of a solution. As the timing gear cover of the high-camshaft single splits horizontally, it can make life difficult if you're having problems setting the timing. Eventually, after much frustration, he fired up the bike late one night. With the cover off the magneto, he was surprised to see two sparks. The slot in the points plate which engages with the key-way on the mag shaft was badly worn. As the revs were increased, the points assembly was rocking back and forth to produce two sparks. Problem solved.



▲Tom Ridgewell with his very own heavenly flyer.

Being both lighter and smaller, the pre-war Series A singles are reputedly faster than their Series C cousins. Tom confidently expects his to top 90mph. The bike handles well, but high gearing means that it does not like pulling top gear below 45mph.

Tom paid £1700 for his Meteor and than spent a further £600-700 on parts and chrome-plating. That, plus many hours labour, has resulted in a machine valued at around £7000.

The outstanding quality of the bike was acknowledged when it took "Best Late Post-Vintage" at the VMCC West Kent International Rally in 1988 — its first rally. ■

Event Calendar

An overview of some upcoming rides and events that may be of interest.

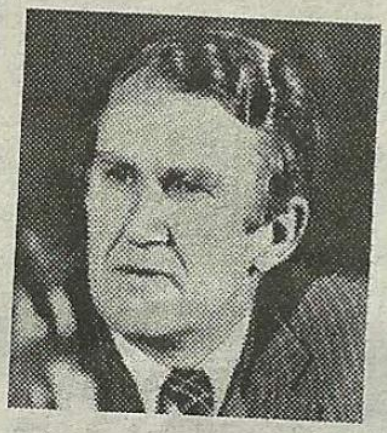
If you are planning any rides or are aware of events that readers may be interested in, you may invite others to participate via the "OVR Event Calendar" column in OVR. Just drop the editor a line at OzVinReview@Gmail.com .

June 28 – 29 2015	Pine Rivers Motorcycle Swap Meet QLD Samford Soccer Grounds, Mount Samson Road, Samford Valley QLD Host | Historical Motor Cycle Club QLD Contact | Barry 07 3266 1548 or Don 07 3882 4717 or Gary 07 3882 3282
September 6 – 21, 2015	VOC International Rally, Italy; *for VOC members only.*
October 4-9, 2015	Australian National Vintage Motorcycle Rally, Ararat, Victoria.
October 14-17, **2016**	VOC Australian National Rally at Parkes, NSW. Put this in your ride diary now.
	Plenty of room for more entries, why not promote what's happening in your area? Just drop a line to the OVR editor with the details.

Now here is an interesting contribution (at least to those Australians reading this) from OVR reader and contributor Geoffrey Bourne-Tayor. Thanks Chum.

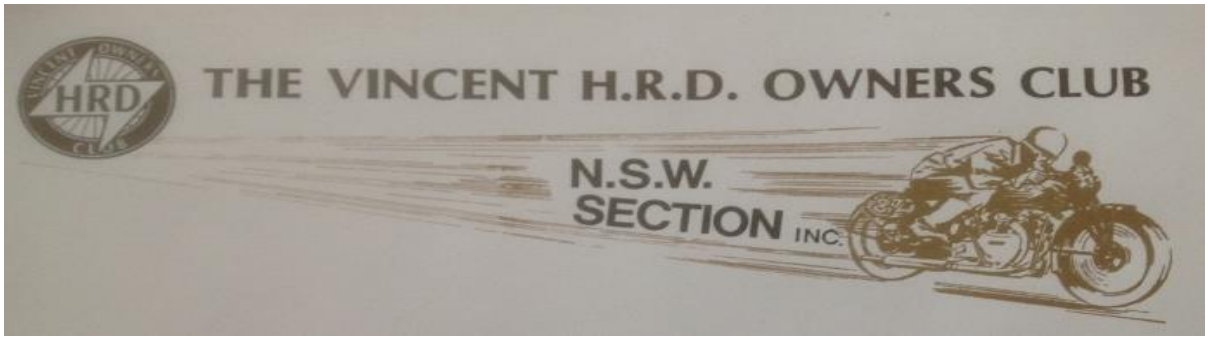
Lives remembered

Malcom Fraser



Geoffrey Bourne-Taylor writes: I was the Special Branch close protection officer to Malcolm Fraser (obituary, March 21) on a visit to London, staying at the Savoy. After a number of days of silent indifference, I mentioned it to one of his Australian detectives, who excused Fraser's apparently moody silences as intense shyness. "What are your interests?" he asked, and I mentioned that I owned a Vincent HRD motorcycle. The next morning Fraser burst out of the Savoy: "Geoff," he enthused, "I didn't know you rode a Vinnie. I'm a biker. I gave Phil Irving an MBE you know" (Irving was one of the motorcycle's designers). From that moment he would not stop chattering. He had an incredibly sweet tooth and would call to our driver to stop so that I could buy (on expenses!) a quarter of his fancy. "There's no point in having a bag of sweeties," he would say, "unless you eat the lot!"

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST – Australian National Rally 2016



The NSW Section of the Vincent Owners Club will be hosting the upcoming 2016 Australian National Rally to be held at PARKES, NSW on the weekend of Fri 14th, Sat 15th, Sun 16th OCTOBER 2016. (Departing Monday 17th).

VENUE: Parkview Motor Inn, 34 Forbes Rd (Newell Highway), Parkes, 2870, NSW, Australia

Their website: http://www.parkviewmotorinn.net.au/
Email: enquiries@parkviewmotorinn.net.au
Phone: 02 6862 2888 Fax: 02 6862 5306

The Parkview Motor Inn Winner of Trip Advisor's Certificate of Excellence 2014 has 39 ground floor rooms and is a 3½ star AAA rated motel located in Parkes NSW, on the Newell Highway A39. On route between Melbourne and Brisbane. **Their Facilities include:** Swimming Pool, Licensed Bar and Restaurant (open Mon – Sat), Free WIFI, Foxtel (Premiere Movie Channel) Guest Laundry, BBQ facility and parking at your door.

Parkview Motor Inn Rates, per night, are approximately:
A$90 (Queen bed)
A$95 (Twin bed - Queen and single)
A$120 (Queen and 2 singles up to 4 people in the room)
Large Family room $150 - only 1 available (Queen and 4 singles up to 6 people).

Parkes is located 124 km from Orange, 379 km from Sydney, 708 km from Melbourne, and 970 km from Brisbane.

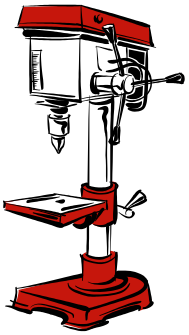
The rally will follow the usual format of arrival on the Friday afternoon, a long ride on the Saturday encompassing the vineyards of the Orange region with a lunch stop. Dinner will be at the motor inn on the Saturday evening. The Sunday concourse and judging will be held at the CSIRO Parkes Observatory known as "The Dish", bring your camera. Sunday night will be the Presentation of Trophies and the evening meal, possibly to be held at the local Services Club depending on numbers. Departure will be on Mon 17th by 10am.

This is NOT a rally committment, but a request for an expression of interest. Rally fees and meal costing etc will follow at a later date. At the moment, the Rally Secretary needs to know if you are interested in attending and joining in for another great Australian National Vincent Rally.

So if you plan on taking part, and why not? Please send an email, NOW, listing your name and address plus your phone number and the names of those in your party to the Rally Secretary, as the venue is filling fast.

Joanne Wenden; email j.wenden@bigpond.com

Workshop Wisdom



Installing Amal Carburettors

Amal carburettors can be damaged by careless installation to the engine. Use the following instructions to avoid distorting your carburettors.

The flange to which the carburettor is attached must be perfectly flat and clean. Remove all traces of old gaskets and gasket cement before installation. If possible remove manifolds with uneven surfaces and restore flatness using wet and dry paper over a flat surface, or fine grinding paste on a piece of glass. Heat reducing spacers should be similarly treated to ensure flatness. Bolting the carburettor to a distorted flange or uneven spacer increases the risk of carburettor body or flange distortion.

Always remove and replace the carburettor fully assembled with the float chamber and mixing chamber lid, throttle cable and slide components installed. This ensures maximum rigidity of the assembly while it is being installed.

Tighten the mounting nuts carefully and evenly. Nuts and spring washers should be tightened until the spring washer is just flattened. Over-tightening the nuts will over-compress the flange gaskets at the flange extremities and may warp the flange, and in extreme cases the carburettor body causing the throttle valve to stick.

Mark 1 carburettors are not designed to bolt tightly to the intake flange and may distort if overtightened. It is only necessary to compress the O ring seal to ensure air tightness. When correctly tightened the carburettor flange and engine manifold should be no more than just touching. Nyloc nuts should always be used to mount Amal Mark 1 carburettors.

Where the thicker O rings are used, on early Monoblocs and some Mark 1 carburettors, the nuts should be tightened until the clearance between the carburettor flange and the manifold surface is no less than 0.025 inches at all points.

THE VINCENT RAPIDE

MARTY DICKERSON SMASHES U.S. 61 cu. in. CLASS "C" RECORD

at

141·72 M.P.H.

(Confirmed by A.M.A.)

Mr. Dickerson rode his 1948 Rapide, Engine No. F10AB/1/301, fitted with kick starter and used orthodox racing riding position and a compression ratio of only 7.83 to 1 with 85 octane pump gasoline, in order to meet the standard specification for A.M.A. Class "C" regulations. We extend our heartiest congratulations to this enthusiastic American private owner who once again has proved the astounding reserve of power, stability and stamina built into even our Touring Models.

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A7

Finally - The Truth About Vincents

Originally penned by By H.Sivyer, 1986

Whilst I'm not prepared to lend the Editor my Vincent twin – it takes way to long adapt to its inadequacies – here is the nearest you're likely to get without parting with a heap of money. So put your feet up and live vicariously for a short while…

The first real tank slapper I had (this was when I hadn't owned it long) I thought I might be riding it wrong, after all the Norton Dominator I was used to didn't do that sort of thing, but the second time it was a real frightener – I shot between two cars on the wrong side of the road and narrowly missed mowing down a fish shop queue. I knew then I was in for a trying relationship.

In a vain attempt to overcome this debilitating behaviour, I adjusted the slack out of the many bushes that are found in the forks, but found after much experimentation, that the only way to tame the beast was to tighten the steering damper 'till the bars can't be turned – which goes down a treat at roadworthy testing time.

Before I discovered the steering damper trick, I had a good mate (very soon to be an ex-mate) who reckoned he could master any bike within ten minutes, so I let him have a ride (second opinion and all that) and despite being warned he set off for a blast, past the derestriction signs, determined to do 115mph. When he returned looking bug-eyed, tight-lipped and with a definite tremor in his pallid knuckles, his only comment was "get rid, it's a bloody death trap." Sound advice which I did not take. If I had, you wouldn't be reading this now, would you? Then again, if it was that lethal you wouldn't be reading it either….

As I was new to Vincents, I blamed myself for the erratic starting. Although I knew the ridiculous drill – I'd owned big singles before – finding the correct stroke on the rear cylinder, etc., it wasn't until the beast completely stopped starting (if you see what I mean), that I investigated, finding a dodgy spark, sloppy valve guides and 11:1 pistons conspiring to prevent the horrible thing from firing.

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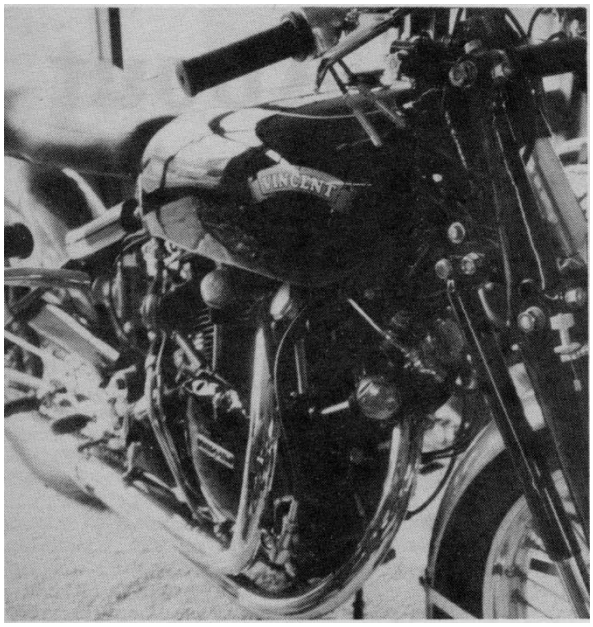
21 years with a
998cc
Series C
Vincent
V
Twin

Now, I'm not a bloke who gives into adversity easily – I've lived with the same woman for 23 years as proof – but I was becoming dangerously fascinated with a nearby mineshaft that was waiting to be filled… So after a conscience stricken night spent ingesting what are now considered harmful chemicals and chanting the word "kill-it" as a mantra, I was in such a euphoric mood the next (err I think it was the next, anyway) day that I mended the magneto well enough to give 50/50 starting – that's 50 Hail Mary's followed by 50 pneumonia inducing swings on the appropriate pedal. To repay me for this kindness on the next ride as we were returning from Scarborough, the gearbox jammed in third, resulting in a burnt out clutch on the Saxton Hill hairpin; although on this

occasion the bugger did get us home without resorting to the train.



After burrowing into the mysteries of the, er, unusual transmission and knocking the sliding (when it's not seized) gear off its shaft with a steel tube and a large hammer, easing the bush with a scraper and reassembling, I refilled with EP90 gear oil and have never had the problem reoccur. Which makes the gearbox about the only trouble free item…

Not long after this mischief I fitted 8:1 pistons in an attempt to gain easier starting. It didn't work! I discovered much much later that Vincents needed a 150% healthy magneto, but I did succeed in considerably reducing performance – it would just about pull a ton. Mind you, it had never done the much trumpeted 125mph, even with an expensively rebuilt engine which includes racing cams, 1 ¼" carbs, new mag and straight through exhausts. This lack of top speed was just one of the many disappointments that proved to be all too common. The bikes that were supplied to the press in 1947 must have been very special or else the writers were very dishonest (they would probably be working for the Sun these days). Take the supposed 100,000miles between strip downs – mines managed 25 – 35 grand (can't be more specific cause the odometer keeps breaking) despite changing the oil every 1000miles and the engine is completely shagged out, and I mean absolutely knackered – major engineering work is usually required when rebuilding on of these vee twins, which is very expensive. I'm talking £1000/1200 for a full blown engine/transmission rebuild – just think how many LC's (Japanese's crutch rockets aka Suzuki LC 2 stroke racers) you can buy for that (I know us classic bikers aren't supposed to even acknowledge that things like LC's exist, but I think they're the best things since inside bogs!)…

Stepping from an LC onto a Vincent, the most noticeable difference is the brakes: The LC has 'em, the Vincent doesn't! Even though I haven't run into the back of a bus recently, I still find it difficult to believe that the brakes I'm stuck with are the same brakes "That stop you on a threepenny piece" (or even a Fifty Pound note, which is much much bigger). Standard modifications (how's that for a contradiction?) include racing linings and stiffing gussets in strategic locations. This makes them half way decent stoppers – until the linings wear then the cam can go over centre, which jams the shoes onto the drums; this is extremely amusing – but only sitting here writing about it. No, beside a finely hones sense of panic, what you need to pull up fast on this bike is a set of fancy asbestosis producing linings, which last for a paltry 8,000 miles if you are lucky. For some reason I haven't sussed out yet, the left side ones wear out faster than the right. Which is very strange considering these are double sided SLS

brakes worked by a balance beam, which should give equal braking on all shoes…

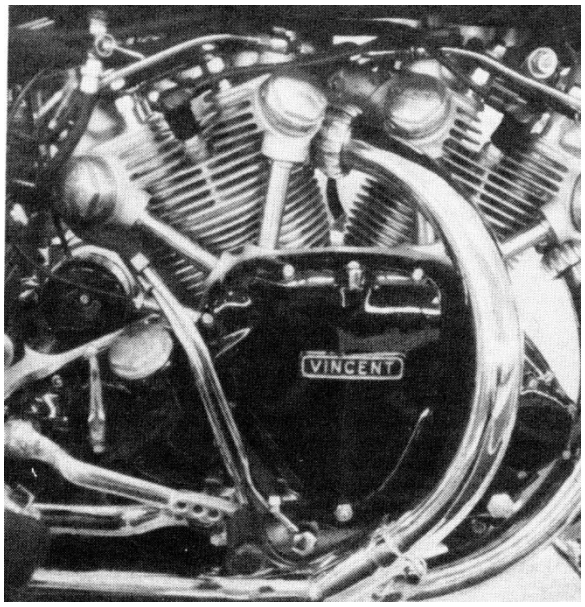
But not half as strange as the psychology of active Vin ownership; I think I can safely say that this motorcycle is definitely not suited to people who are prone to paranoia (that'll exclude 99% of us). However if you are a short arsed partisan with a hump given to muttering "the bells" you'll love the horrendous cacophony made by the engine – and that's just turning it over. When it's actually running imagine Godzilla dropping Rolls Royce's down Everest for the valve gear, a 99 piece Calypso steel band for the piston slap and a trio of Jumbo Jets for induction suction and you will have some idea why all Vincent owners look worried…

After the wife became pregnant (for which I blame the London Rubber Company, makers of yet another fine British product), I fitted a set of girduraulic forks and a side car – what fun! Not! I wonder how many of you lot reading this have ever driven/wrestled a sidecar outfit? Sweet Jesus, I had more near misses on this contraption than I've had dole giros since the lovable Margaret Thatcher closed our local pit. And to think, insurance companies used to give a sizeable discount for attaching a third wheel!

At the first Red Light
my passenger leapt out
and ran
into the nearest Church

Obviously none of those desk bound assessors had ever been let loose on one…

I once took me old dad out (it **was** an emergency) in this weird device and at the first red traffic light he leapt out and ran into the nearest church, which was a bit odd as he always maintained he was a devout atheist. There is one thing to be said for an outfit though – there is somewhere to carry all the extra tackle and spares you need. I remember going to Scotland once and every time we stopped for petrol, which was about 80 miles, I had to replace several spokes in both wheels – as I said, lotsa fun…



Rear tyre life with the sidecar fitted was an Avon ripping 2,000 miles, fronts did about 8,000 and sidecar tyres (Mini in this instance) the same. Solo tyre wear isn't quite as bad: rear Roadrunners do 6,000 miles and front 15,000 miles…

One of the many pitfalls facing riders of old British bangers is limited choice of rubber wear. So I'd like to thank Avon for continuing production of this obsolete size (4.10H19), but I suppose if it wasn't profitable they'd stop making them tomorrow; which could easily backfire on Avon by forcing me to fit 18 inch rims, thus enabling the use of Metzlers or something. Hey, what a

brilliant idea; where's the nearest wheel builder???

When reading the original road tests (always good for a laugh for someone of my age and disposition) you could be forgiven for thinking Vincents were frugal on fuel, as the testers always got them to average 65mpg. Of course they don't mention how economical they are with the twist grip – or with the truth: no prizes for guessing what I think…

If the performance is used at all (that's up to an unshattering 90mph), the fuel consumption drops to an appalling 40mpg, which isn't a lot better than a 350LC (and the LC does at least accelerate).

I only wish the designers (sic) had paid as much attention to cylinder filling as they did to the poxy chain oiler. This theoretically brilliant idea either lets the chain run dry or smothers the rear tyre with warm engine oil – which is smashing if you like crashing.

The chain oiler
lets the chain run dry
or smothers the rear wheel
with warm oil

I use an oil-can every 200 miles which stretches (a man can't live by bread alone, he needs clichés too!) chain life to around 10,000miles. Which isn't bad considering the crude shock absorber - yet another troublesome area. I've locked mine up solid so all the silly little springs won't break again, leaving me stranded miles from home…

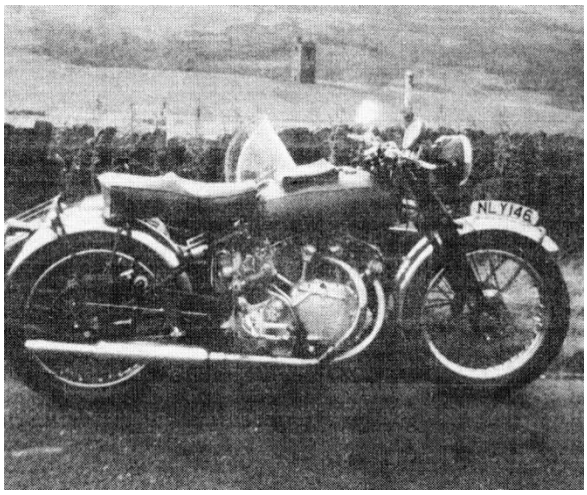
I've no doubt I've already go up many VOC noses (these fun lovers {joke} are terribly sensible chaps tho take their Vincents very very seriously), so now I'll do the same to TOC hooters. If bulb failure (none) was an indication of vibration, Triumph riders would expect the bike to be as smooth as monkey mucus. The reality is more like this: up to 60mph, acceptable shaker; 60-75mph occasional double vision and one numb finger; 75-90 mph, difficulty keeping feet on footrests and at least three numb fingers (both hands); 90+, very short bursts only possible. If 90mph plus is attempted regularly expect premature baldness, dead fingers, dead toes and dead genitals; which is fine if you're a eunuch or live in a monastery – which I'm not and I don't…

As mentioned earlier, for reasonable starting you need, amongst other things a really fat spark. Which means a super virile magneto (just like a Barbara Cartland hero). Unfortunately, these seem to turn to flaccid organs with monotonous and wallet numbing regularity. I've done 16000 miles since the magneto was last fettled, which is a record for me. Believe me, a Vincent with a failed magneto is just as immobile as a LC with a stuffed CDI box (and a dammed sight harder to push), but you can't buy a second hand magneto for a tenner at the local bike knacker yard…

When the lad got big enough to bite kneecaps instead of ankles, we unhitched the sidecar and tipped it into the Calder & Hebble Navigation Canal (it's under bridge 59 if you're interested) and did yet another engine rebuild. The damage caused by lugging a sidecar around was even worse than usual. The bike was off the road for 12 months, during which time I used the bus, train, shanks's poney, a bicycle and a Norton

Commando. The Commando was the least reliable…

After the last reconstruction (I hope it's the last but I'm not optimistic), I'd done 15,000 miles with no major problems and was actually enjoying riding the brute, when gradual loss of compression and power forced me to lift the heads finding, as I suspected, burnt valve seats. This seems to be a newish but quite common fault. The latest candidate blamed for valve burning is modern oils. Before this, everything from shitty valve steel to over tightening head nuts was accused – none of which is of much interest to silly buggers like me who just want to ride motorbikes…



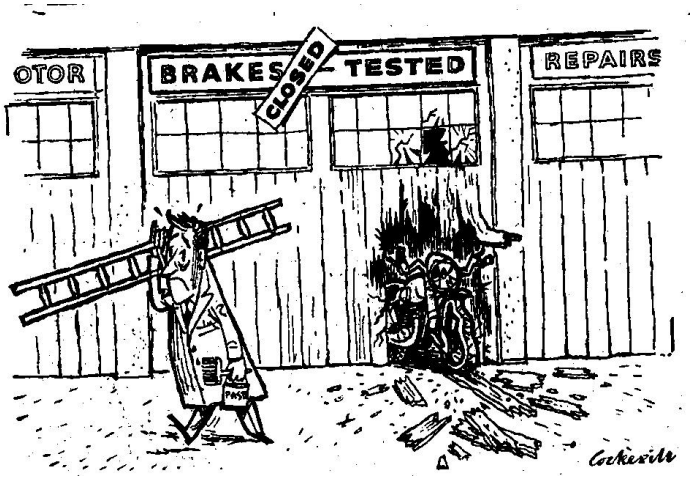
If all of this sounds like a putdown of the Vincent myth – you're right. They're not bad bikes, but they're not particularly good'uns either. I wish I'd a fiver for every time some dickhead gets out of his Volvo and starts blabbing about how they don't makes bikes like that anymore. I always agree, quite right fruitgum, bikes are a dam sight better these days. Anyone who pays four grand (I paid £180 for my twin in 1966 and I was robbed) for a Vincent and expects to get an incredible riding machine is going to be very disappointed…

On the other hand I haven't told you about the time I caught a tearaway on a 750GSXR Sharpnel Special (y'know, the one that the scrapmen have taken a shine to). You should've seen the look on his face…'course he had another 3 gears and 15000 revs to play with… or the times I caught and passed a BMW R100, whose rider later told me that he shut his eyes every corner we went round – presumably he meant he was praying for us on the Vin not to crash – dunno though, these Germans can be quite spiteful…

After the last reconstruction
I managed 15,000 miles
without any
major problems…

And don't think because of this diatribe I'm selling (giving away would probably be more appropriate) 'cos I'm not! Not as long as I can fire it up, anyway; although me knees are beginning to creak a bit now… and the lad's nearly old enough to ride/crash/play with it …

So all you greedy bastards with grubby mitts full of filthy fivers who thought it was bargain time. Tough Titties!



Harmony:

Part 1 – **Introduction & Valve Timing**

In order to have harmony within our engines all aspects of the motor must be in correct tune, else discord will result. The valves in the head must open and close at the correct time, the ignition system must provide an adequate spark to ignite the air fuel mixture at the correct time and the fuel system must provide the correct volume of air/fuel mixture of the correct air/fuel ration at the correct time. Get any one of these key 'instruments' wrong and you will have discord! A discordant bike is one that's difficult to start or may be down on power or even be unreliable – the perfect recipe to dampen the enthusiasm of even the most ardent owner. Over the next few editions it is planned to cover some aspects of keeping your standard Vincent motor in tune – maintaining Harmony.

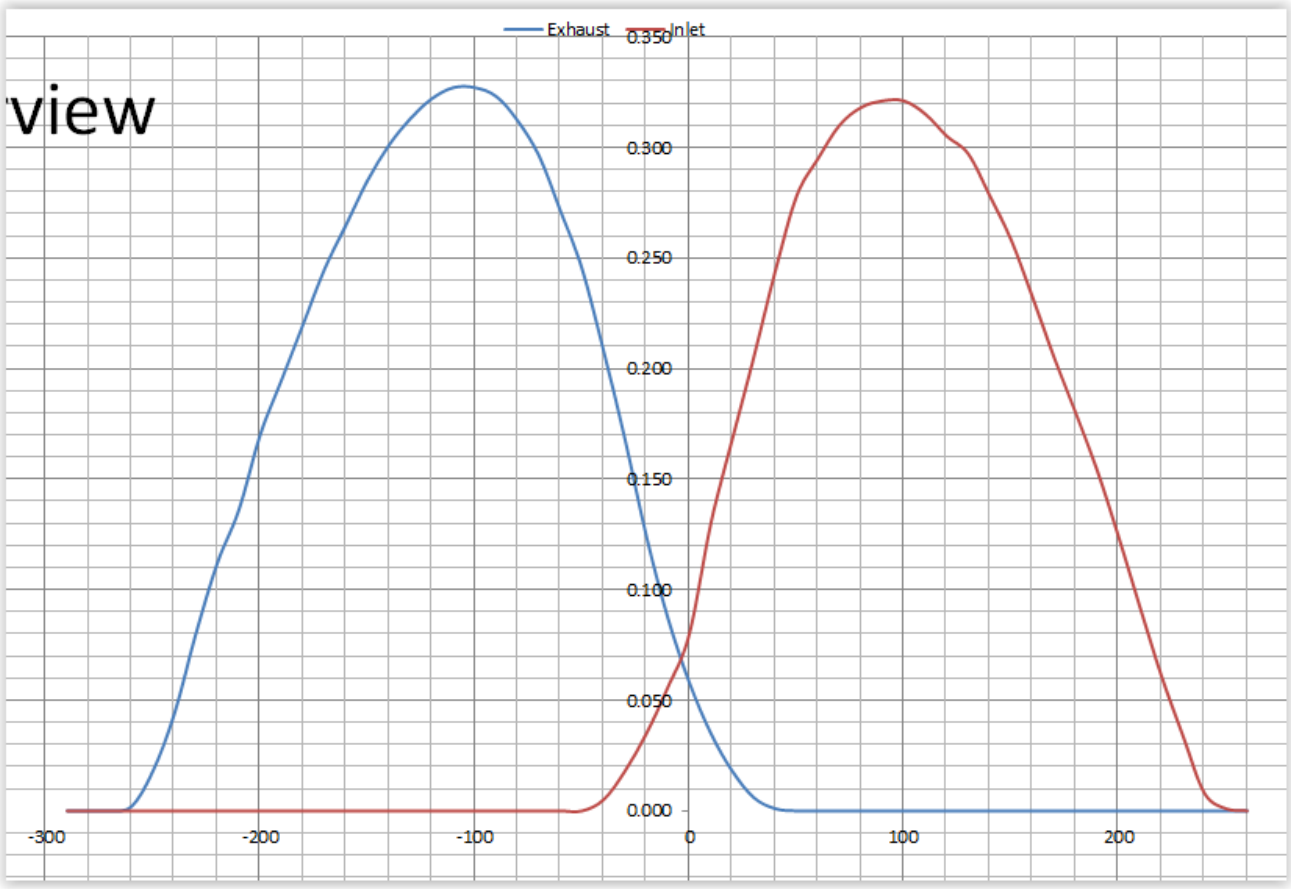
With a Vincent the most difficult thing to set up is the valve timing by dint of the effort needed to actually make measurements and any adjustments; you need to gain access to all of the engine valves and this initially at least will require removal of the Upper Frame Member but once you have set the valve timing correctly, provided you do not subsequently disturb the camshaft or timing chest gears, you will not have to do it again. Frankly – it needs to be the very first thing you must check and or adjust on any motor you are not familiar with. If you fail to have the correct valve timing it does not matter what else you do, your bike will never achieve harmony.

First a bit of revision; The Riders Handbook provides the following information that was applicable at the time of its writing in 1948. Ignition timing 38/40^{o} BTDC at full advance[1]; Spark Plug Champion N8 gaped to 0.018/0.020"; Magneto points set to 0.012". All based on the standards of 1948, especially 74 octane fuel and a compression ration of 6.8 to 1. The riders handbook also advises that as the compression ratio is increased (beyond 6.8) the ignition timing at full advance must be decreased.

The Riders Handbook, and subsequent sources, provides the following information for both standard Vincent MkI (also applicable to MkIII) camshafts. Inlet Opens 40-42^{o}, Inlet closes 60-64^{o}, Exhaust opens 72-70^{o} and Exhaust closes 28-33^{o}, all at 0.005" opening.

Illustrated below is the profile of a recent manufacture camshaft said to be a standard MkI profile; it operates at 0.005" opening as follows; Inlet opens @ 40^{o}, Inlet closes @ 62.5^{o}, exhaust opens @ 77^{o} and exhaust closes @ 31^{o}. So this cam is just about spot on in regards to inlet valve closing, which Phil Irving advises is the most important part of setting up a camshaft (he also makes the observation that exhaust opening is the least important aspect of valve timing); on that basis I focus on inlet valve closing point and allow the rest of the cam to fall wherever it happens to be – after all, as the cam within itself is made from a single bit of metal, the relationship of inlet and exhaust is not adjustable.

[1] with 2015 vintage fuel, ignition timing of 34^{o} BTDC is more appropriate



MkI Camshaft lift profile

Of significance is that, from detailed examination of the cam profile graph, there is equal lift of inlet and exhaust valves at 4º BTDC. This leads to the conclusion that if you have a standard Vincent MkI or a MkIII camshaft and adjust your valve timing to give equal valve lift at 4º BTDC you should be well within the recommended settings. While I have NOT had the opportunity to measure a standard Vincent MkII camshaft there are numerous reports on the VOC Forum that this setting of equal lift at 4º BTDC is applicable to the standard Vincent MkII camshafts as well.

To measure the valve lift you are going to need 2 dial indicator gauges per cylinder, a timing disk and a means of accurately finding Top Dead Centre. A PDF file of a timing disk that you can print out and use has been sent to all subscribers along with this edition of the OVR; one way of finding TDC is described in OVR #15[2] by contributor Michael McCartney and suitable dial indicators covering the range of 0.001" to 1" can be found in many places, including Ebay.

The 'normal' way of measuring the valve lift is to position the dial indicator gauges so that they measure the actual movement of the valves at the top of the valves stems as shown in the photo however this method does present a problem. As you attempt to rotate the crankshaft you are fighting

[2] If you are missing OVR #15 contact the editor by email ozvinreview@gmail.com and request a copy of it, no charge!

the forces of the valve springs; this makes the accurate observation of changes in lift at even 5° increments of crank rotation difficult, let alone the 2° increment recommended by Phil Irving in "Tuning for Speed"

After some consideration I have devised a technique (which I am sure had been already discovered by others) that makes both the measurement of the cam profile data and the setting of the valve timing so much easier because you are no longer fighting against the pressure of the valve springs. The only drawback is that it requires the removal of the head(s) and the barrel(s). This really is no big deal especially as there is a need to remove the UFM anyway. It also provides an easy way of finding TDC (Top Dead Centre). The subsequent photos were taken during a rebuild before the piston was fitted, though having the piston(s) in place should not cause any issues. It is also important to remember that the valve rockers ET25 are 1:1 in that the upward movement (distance) imparted by the pushrod delivers an equal downward movement to the valve itself. So my method measures the movement of the cam followers ET29. The picture shows how I mounted the dial indicators with the tip of each indicator shaft resting directly in the respective pushrod cups of the cam followers.

Given that what we are now trying to measure is equal lift, with no real interest in what that lift is, it is also possible to take the measurement with only the removal of the fuel tank and the covers over the valve adjusters; then measure the movement at the top of the valve adjustor screws. If you choose this method be sure to first tighten up the 'tappets' removing any backlash from the valve train BUT you will have the valve spring 'back pressure' to deal with.

While not shown, I mounted the timing disk on the drive side, captive behind the ESA washer and nut. To find TDC all that was requires was to grasp the small end of the conrod (or the piston itself, if in place) and pull firmly upwards in line with the Head Bolts ET55. This should give TDC to within 1 degree but if you want to be totally accurate you could use Michael McCartney's method before you remove the head, provided you fit the timing disk to the drive side of the motor.

Earlier I pointed out that, with a standard camshaft, equal lift of the valves at 4° BTDC was the objective so with both the half time pinion key E81 and the half time pinion ET49 itself removed[3] all you need do is rotate the crankshaft to the position 4° BTDC and leave it there. Now you can rotate the camshaft by moving the large idler ET65 till you have equal lift of both the inlet and exhaust.

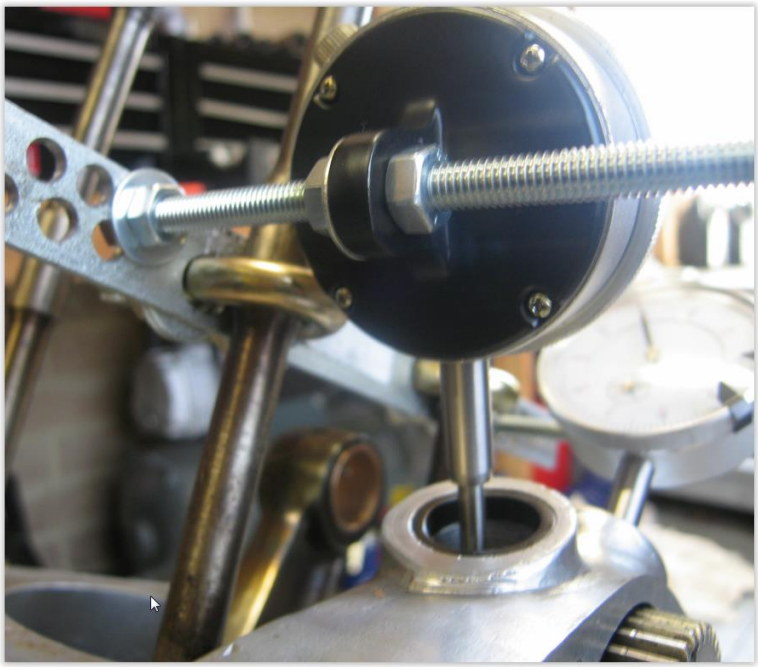
[3] and, of course, the head(s) and barrel(s) removed as well!

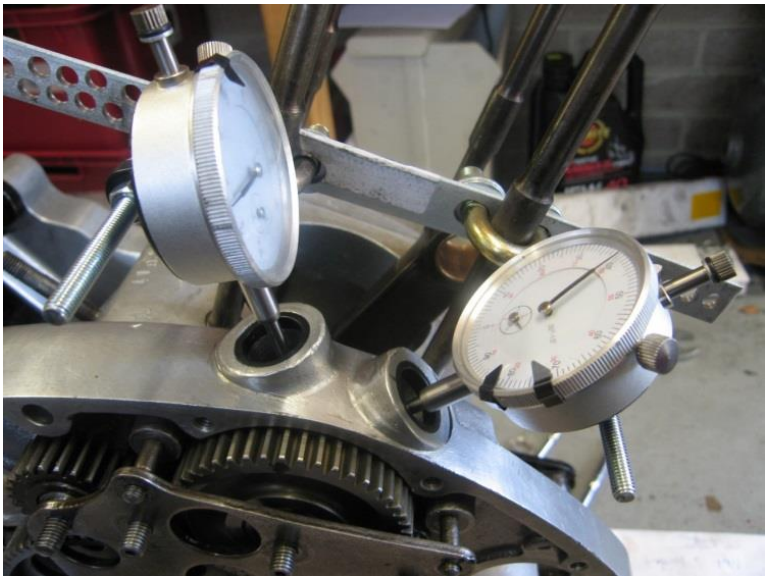
Taking care not to move/rotate the crankshaft OR the large idler you can now position the half time pinion onto the mainshaft so that the keyway in the mainshaft is in alignment with the keyway in the pinion. There are a number of alternate slots in the pinion which allow for vernier positioning. You may need to remove and refit the half time pinion a few times before you find the slot for E81 that gives the best result and once that position is found insert the pinion key, remembering afterwards to double check the positions of both the crank and the valve lifts. The result of this will be a motor with its valve timing set more accurately than most, providing you with a sound foundation for bringing the rest of the motor into harmony.

Also shown is a view of the dial gauge bracket I made from scrap material in my workshop using simple hand tools.

If you have a single all of the above is simple but if you have a twin then you may well find it impossible to get both camshafts providing equal lift at 4° BTDC. In this case you have to set up the camshaft on cylinder 1 (the rear one) as described and if the camshaft for cylinder 2 then turns out to be out by more than 2° to 3° relative to cam 1 then you will need to correct cylinder 2 camshaft by having that camshaft/camshaft pinion relative position changed to remove the difference – this is a time consuming task as it involves separating the cylinder 2camshaft pinion from the cylinder 2 camshaft, then refitting the two back together in an endeavour to remove the timing difference to the cylinder one assembly. In practice as long as both pair valves in a twin are set to equal lift at some point in the range of 4 BTDC to 1 BTDC all should be well. It may take some effort but the effort will be rewarded many times over by laying the foundations for a sweet running engine.

Before you proceed to remove all of the measuring devices from the motor you should take the opportunity to actually measure and record your camshaft(s). It is a simple, though time consuming task but once done will provide you with an accurate picture of your camshaft(s) and an easy way in the future of checking your valve timing. All you need to is record the lift provided at each 2° of crankshaft rotation – and with no valve springs working against you it should not be too hard. A helper can speed up the process for what you need do is rotate the crank by 2° then record the crank position and the lift provided to each valve; next rotate a further 2° and repeat till all is done. With the data in hand the easiest way to plot the information is to use your PC and the graph capabilities of a tool like Excel. This is how the cam profile shown in this article was created.





Finally, The valve timing information in this article applies to standard Vincent MkI, MkII and MkIII camshafts only. If you have a camshaft(s) from a different source, such as Terry Prince or Megacycle, you must use the valve timing specified by the camshaft supplier.

In the next instalment I plan on taking a look at ignition timing, the role of the ATD (Automatic Timing Device) and some alternative ignition 'solutions'.

Harmony: is an OVR contribution from the Black Sheep

Buy, Swap n' Sell

If you have anything that you want to buy, swap or sell you can now do so, free of cost, in this section of OVR. All you need do is send a email to the editor of OVR with the text of your advertisment. OVR will NOT be providing any editorial or corrections – what you send is what will be published. Of course OVR cannot accept any responsibility for anything to do with the items advertised – that's a buyer/seller matter. Items will be listed in 2 consecutive editions of OVR.

Ken Butler, in Victoria, Australia has the following bike for sale:

A 2008 Suzuki SV650ABS, 20,000K great condition, full service history including the first owners paper work & the log book I started 4.5years ago when purchased. A quick, light great bike. Handlebar fairing, heated grips, extended front guard (keeps crap away from oil cooler) tank bag, Ventura rack & bag & paddock stand. Any test. REDUCED to A$5,800K ONO.LAM approved.

Contact Ken on 03-5678 2245 or 0409004017, else email to kenneth_butler@bigpond.com.

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Spares:

V3 Products, Australia: (aka Neal Videan) has an extensive range of top quality Vincent Spares including multiplate clutches, oil leak eliminator kits, socket head tappet adjusters, paper element oil filters and lots lots more. Ships worldwide. Email for a price list to nvidean@optusnet.com.au

Coventry Spares Ltd, USA: Fantastic service and deep product knowledge plus extensive range of excelent Vincent Spares and tools. Ships Worldwide. See website for more information http://www.thevincentparts.com

Conway Motors Ltd, UK: Anti-Sumping Valves, Comet Multi-Plate clutch conversions plus an extensive range of excelent Vincent Spares. Ships Worldwide. Email for more information steve@conway-motors.co.uk

VOC Spares Company Ltd, UK: Full range of Vincent Spares. Ships Worldwide. Visit their web site for more information http://www.vincentspares.co.uk.

Union Jack Motorcycles, Australia: Full range of Triumph, Amal and control cable parts, plus an extensive range of Vincent parts. Ships worldwide. More info at the website www.unionjack.com.au

Pablo's Motorcycle Tyres, Australia: Road, Classic, Road Racing, Classic Racing, Enduro, Motocross, Speedway, Trials and Slicks....and if they haven't got it - they'll get it! For more info see their web site www.pablos.com.au

Paul Goff, UK: A massive range of electrical spares and replacements including 6 and 12V quartz Halogen bulbs, LED lamps, solid state voltage regulators and lots lots more. Ships Worldwide. PayPal accepted. See Paul's website for more information www.norbsa02.freeuk.com

Nuts n Bolts:

Acme Stainless Steel, UK: All stainless steel fasteners are machined to original samples supplied by customers and clubs over the years to enable us to keep your machine looking authentic and rust free! Ships Worldwide. More info at their web site www.acmestainless.co.uk

Classic Fastners, Australia: Classic Fasteners is a family owned business, established in 1988. Their aim is to supply obsolete and hard to obtain fasteners for your restoration project be it a professional or private venture. The print catalogue, available for download, lists the current complete range. Ships Worldwide. http://www.classicfasteners.com.au/

Precision Shims Australia: All types of shims made to your requirements, ships worldwide. More info at their web site www.precisionshims.com.au

V3 (see entry under Spares above) also stocks a large range of Vincent specific nuts n bolts.

Services :

Woody's Hydroblast, Australia**:** Woodys Engine Services / Hydroblast is a Melbourne, Australia based business dedicated to helping car and bike restorers repair and detail their componentry to the highest standards. The wet abrasive blasting used to finish jet turbines now provided by him is able to clean the most intricate components without degradation to the original surface. For more information visit their web site www.woodyshydroblast.com or call (03) 9597 0387

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Terry Prince Classic Motorbikes, Australia: Classic Motor Bikes, specialises in restoration, manufacture of new parts, and the development and manufacture of high performance components for Vincent motor cycles. For more information visit the web site **Click Here** or telephone +61 2 4568 2208

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