

# The Oz Vincent Review

*Edition #34, January 2017*

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 which is distributed free of charge to its readers, may be contacted by email at [OVR@optusnet.com.au](mailto:OVR@optusnet.com.au)



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# Welcome

Welcome to this latest edition of The Oz Vincent Review. A full 70 years have now past since 1956 when production of Vincent-HRD motorcycles ceased, having first commenced in 1924 as simply H.R.D.. In this edition we take a look at the history of the marque from its very beginnings. The front cover has Howard R Davies, long years after retiring from the motorcycle world, in the saddle of one of his own HRD's at the Stanford Museum.

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*Martyn*

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## Letters To The Editor

Hello Martyn, I have a tin of "Linklife" chain grease sitting under my bench at this moment. As far as I can remember I have had it for 62 years, and (as far as I can see) it is still about one third full. As you say it cannot be used on "O etc." chains and I have had a few of those, generally however I try to use non "O" ring chains so this tin of lube doesn't owe me a lot. Also it is a very satisfying job to coil a chain around on the solid grease and watch it slowly sink as the grease becomes liquid. You do need a very understanding wife however if (as I do) you warm the tin on the gas stove in the kitchen! Don't forget to fix a piece of wire to the chain to extract it from the hot tin, and hang the chain over the tin to catch the drips. I recommend you do not do this in the kitchen, however!!

*Colin Manning, UK*

Hi Martyn, just been reading the "review" and the article by David in relation to the "Manx plate on HRD's race bike. I agree that he should have registered his "Comet" with the plate, in part perhaps because I bought it from him! My 1928 Sunbeam has the plate which was formerly on Vernon Busby's 1914 team winning TT bike. I enclose a pic of our Vinny "Christmas card" from a couple of years back which may amuse. I enjoy reading the review, thanks for all your efforts, they are appreciated. *Paul Tagg, UK*



Martyn, first of all I hope your surgery went well and you can enjoy life again. I have been a fan of Putoline for many years. Back in the 1970s I used Duckhams in a tin. Putoline is far superior, providing the process is done properly. I have a stable of classic bikes and none of them need or deserve to have a sealed chain. A yearly clean and dose of Putoline has, so far, negated any need to adjust chains let alone buy new ones. I do give the chains a wipe over with a cloth liberally doused in WD40 after a wet ride but otherwise nothing. *[thanks Al, I run 2 chains for my Comet – one on the bike and one in reserve, swapping them around every 1,000 miles or so each treated with Putoline soon as removed from my bike, Martyn]* - Regarding the DIY article on blueing

steel; good luck in purchasing some of those chemicals as in today's climate of terrorism several are on the black list unless you have a suitable licence. I suspect that no Pharmacist in Australia would dare to make this concoction for you! As always, a most enjoyable read and I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas. *Alyn Vincent, Australia*

Dear Martyn.

My wife Violeta and I attended the French rally last year and had a great time and who was to realize I would see Dominique Lebris who was larger than life at the rally leading the pack with Violy and I in our BMW R69 with Watsonian Sidecar. If your readers are planning to be in EU during this time do yourself a favour and attend. Unfortunately at this time we cannot as we will be busy delivering out latest Drillship here in Sth Korea. *Cheers, Stephen Carson.*



*Bonjour to All,  
This little message  
is to bring you all  
the details you  
want about our  
**41st French rally**  
organized by the  
Honorable Rachel  
and Dany  
VINCENT!  
**41st rally of the  
French Section of  
the Vincent  
Owners Club.**  
- **When?** :  
Saturday 15th and  
Sunday 16th July  
2017.*

- **Where?** Baume-les-Messieurs 46 ° 42 '28' 'N, 05 ° 38' 54 " E (Jura, 39310, 20km from Lons le Saulnier).

The base of the rally is the "Camping de la Toupe, in the heart of a beautiful region.

- **Accommodations?** Besides camping (5 € per night per person), there are quite a lot of bed and breakfasts around. Here is the list communicated by Dany and Rachel::

<http://www.baumelesmessieurs.fr/hebergements/>

- **How's it going to happen?** Very good. We can plan arrivals on Friday but the rally will start on Saturday with registration in the morning, free lunch, afternoon ballad, gala dinner Saturday night, barbecue at camping Sunday lunch, all for 60 € with souvenir object.

- **How to register?** It is essential to register with the Honorable Rachel and Dany VINCENT, organizers of this rally: [dany.vincent@wanadoo.fr](mailto:dany.vincent@wanadoo.fr) tel. 06 07 85 93 33.

Be careful, the campsite is closed in this season (-5 °C) but Rachel and Dany will take the registration for the campsite in order to organize the reception. For others (hotels, bed and breakfasts ...), it's up to you to play.

So come on!

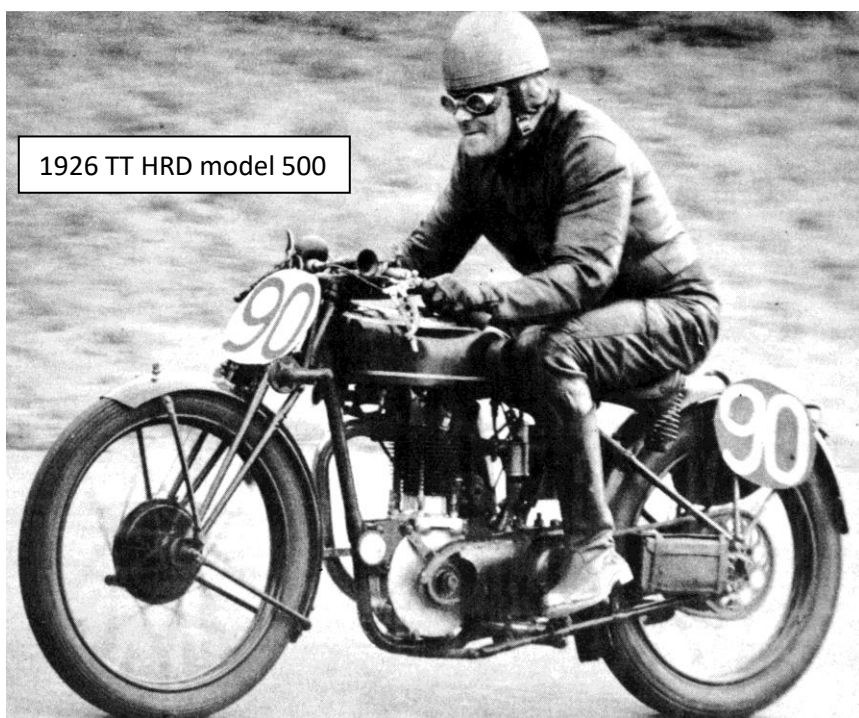
Friendly to All.

Jeans Perot

# H.R.D.

*For the record the firm ceased production a full 70 years ago, in 1956. This item, written in 1974 and published in Motorcycle Sport in January 1975, delves into its fascinating history.*

**IT IS INTERESTING** to speculate on just how Howard R. Davies actually decided to become a manufacturer. Did he jump, or was he pushed? Whichever way it was, be sure there was no lack of encouragement or promised support forthcoming in the back offices and in the railway hotel bars where so much of the wheeling and dealing on agencies and component supplies was done in those good old days. Howard Davies was a name to conjure with in the early 'twenties. Apart from his record as a rider — Senior runner-up in his very first Island ride, then the man who came back from a "good war" to achieve the impossible by winning the '21 Senior on a little 350, he spent a lot of time at Brooklands on general development testing. Dunlops used his expertise on assessing tyres and, one way and another, he was a familiar face and acceptable company in the tightly-knit jungle which was then the British motorcycle industry.



However it came about, by 1924 he had severed his five years or so connection with AJS to appear in the Island on, of all unlikely things, a couple of OECs; but with no success, as might be expected, and one toys with the idea that perhaps it was this short acquaintance with the Osborne Engineering Co. which finally convinced him that at least he couldn't do worse. But no, that couldn't be, because his own company was in being that same year and Davies was a manufacturer in his own right, with wind set fair for prosperity and fame. How could he fail? Small but adequate premises in Wolverhampton, right slap in the

middle of things; the certain knowledge that the developing range of JAP ohv singles would be as good as anything the big guns like Norton and Triumph had to offer; one of the best frame builders in the game was with him, and Davies hadn't failed to notice how Indians handled in the Island even with half an engine in their simple loop frame. He also knew that the Webb girder fork was freely available and far and away the best all-round bet for a front end — hadn't Graham Walker put his job at Norton on the line through his insistence on using it on his works bikes? The only fly in the ointment was, as usual, lack of capital, but with so many good friends and firm promises, if the bikes were right all that was needed was a good start and a bit of time to consolidate.

Well, as it turned out, everything came off except that last little bit — time to consolidate. The bikes were right, and no two ways about it. They were handsome, they went well and, by the standards of the day, the handling was out of this world. And as for the good start, when a rider-designer-manufacturer turns up in the Island with his brand new product and, first time

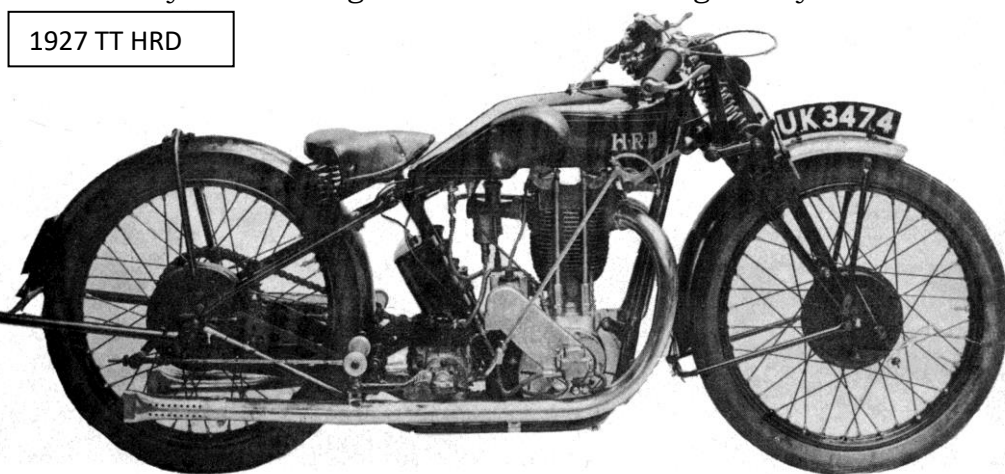
out, finishes second in the Junior and then wins the Senior, then you can only say it can't be bad. Indeed, it is difficult to see how it could have been better seeing that the Junior happened to be one of those days when Wal Handley kept going and whenever that happened everyone else was really racing for second place. But the '25 Senior was truly a tour de force for Howard Davies, even though it cannot be denied that much of the credit must go to Bert le Vack who was responsible for the "half-a-V-twin" motor which not only went like a bomb but also like a train. There are two versions of how this fabulous motor ended up in the HRD; one that this new "class" marque was JAP's chosen spearhead for pushing their new range of high performance singles; the other — far more redolent of the spirit of the age — was that le Vack, figuratively speaking, arrived in the Island with this one-off powerhouse tucked under his arm and, after talking a shrewd look at practice performance, plumped for Davies as the best bet among the JAP users. For myself, I prefer the second version, but suspect the first to be the true one.

Autumn and Olympia brought no pain but only lots of firm orders and it was a pity that, by now really on the map and with no less than eight HRDs in the '26 Senior, fifth was the best placing achieved and, in retrospect, it seems certain that even this early the firm was in trouble. Good old Sid might be prepared to hold over a bit for the last batch of mudguard blades; someone at Dunlops might even be liable to slip an invoice to the bottom of the pile; but the wages had to be paid every week and, in my own experience, rates offices and gas and electricity accounts departments are not notable for the number of TT enthusiasts to be found therein.

Fred Dixon provided a break in the clouds by winning the '27 Junior on an HRD, this surely the most idiosyncratic ride of the vintage period. With a high back-rest behind the saddle, his feet somewhere up by the front spindle, the various controls disposed hither and thither to Fred's own taste and a motley assortment of proprietary odds and sods fitted more with an eye to bonus rather than rapid progress, this heroic winning gallop can only be described as the original, prototype Easy Ride. But it couldn't help, the financial screws were pinching hard, money was getting tight all round. HRDs weren't cheap and the fact is that the kind of chap who could afford a Model 90 was more likely to go to Sunbeam for it. By 1928, HRD were bust, broke and a classic demonstration that enthusiasm, brilliance and good intentions are not enough in this wicked world.

The bits and pieces were snatched up by the OK/Humphries set-up who at this time was doing a kind of Jack Sangster trick but, unlike Sangster, not getting their hands on the right badges. They started off in pretty bad taste by announcing an OK which was recognisably one of Davies's own machines and for a short time things got a bit blurred, what with acrimony and threats of litigation — or worse.

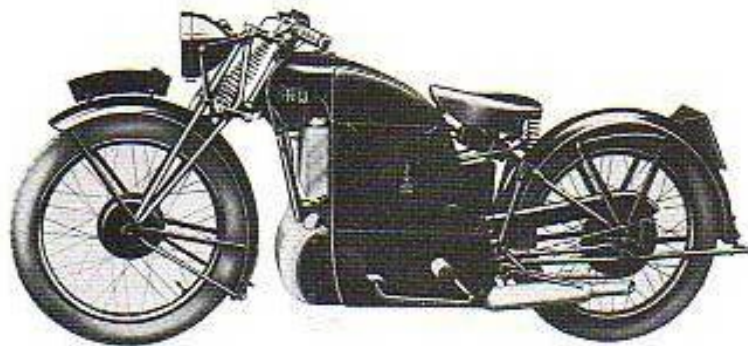
Enter Phil Vincent, fresh from university and a very rare bird in that not only was he a motorcycle fanatic with firm ideas on what a machine should be like, but also absolutely determined to do something positive about it. Acquisition of the HRD legend and setting up shop in Stevenage as Vincent-HRD was plenty for 1928 and the greatest mystery which remains is how on earth he



managed to survive for the next seven years, because it wasn't until 1935 that the machines evolved to the point where P.C.V. could stand back and say "that's one of mine".

It was, of course, a ghastly time to be in the game; survival was almost impossible for the household names, let alone for a new marque trying to put across a lot of new and unaccepted ideas. Vincent's big thing was, as you all know, long-travel rear springing, which was hard enough a furrow to plough in itself, but he also wanted to get across some very advanced thinking on frame design and to say that those first Vincent's looked different is an understatement. His creed that the steering head and the pivot-point for the rear springing had got to be maintained in positive relationship was, and remains, absolutely right and the way he set about it was exactly the same as Colin Seeley did some 40 years later. But, as I say, they did look different and although over the course of the next 28 years P.C.V. never gave an inch on his principles so far as the back end was concerned, he was very quickly forced to compromise on frame design — though didn't he eventually get his own back on that score -by dispensing with a frame altogether.

No bated breath or oohs and aahs will be caused when I remind you that in the early 'thirties you could get a Vincent-HRD with a JAP motor, or a Python (courtesy Rudge), or even a Villiers, though the last-named was water-cooled, which rather lifted it out of the contemporary rubbish category. But all the time he was moving on, step by step, on the detail work and, by the time he had done the impossible and designed and got into production his own engine, the rest of the machine had evolved to the point where he could drop that lovely, individualistic motor into the existing framework and there was the truly classic pre-war Vincent-HRD, with its dual braking, stainless steel bits where they counted and, one way and another, bags of character just jumping out at you. I can just recall the excitement, or furore as it was then invariably described, when a team of what looked like bog-standard Vincent's — and we now know for sure that that's just what they were — trundled round for seven laps in the '35 Senior and picked up five well-placed replicas, which didn't do the firm any harm at all.



1934 Vincent HRD Model W with Villiers water cooled motor

It was undoubtedly a classic motor, the old Series A Vincent-HRD, and if the production limitations of this small firm were revealed by the multiplicity of external plumbing works, then character-wise it was none the worse for that. The transverse rockers were, to me, a design feature of great attraction and one which could be even more so now that the included angle between valves has tended to come down from about 80 degrees to half of that.

As a feature, I suppose its lineage goes back to the original twin-cam JAPs of 1920 and it is a pity that, Vincent apart, the only other people who had a go at this way of providing a shortish motor, with simple direct-acting valve gear and a nice uncluttered crown to the cylinder head were Blackburne with that peculiar 250 which only Francis-Barnett used and BSA for One-Track's favourite grey porridge. I am, of course, taking it for granted that nobody wishes to be reminded of the Pixie and the Beagle. Two of these pots grafted on to a massive crankcase resulted in the Series A Rapide in 1937, a truly colossal motorcycle and one which puts the current crop of superbikes into the "give us a kiss, sailor" class. Nobody who saw Ginger Wood

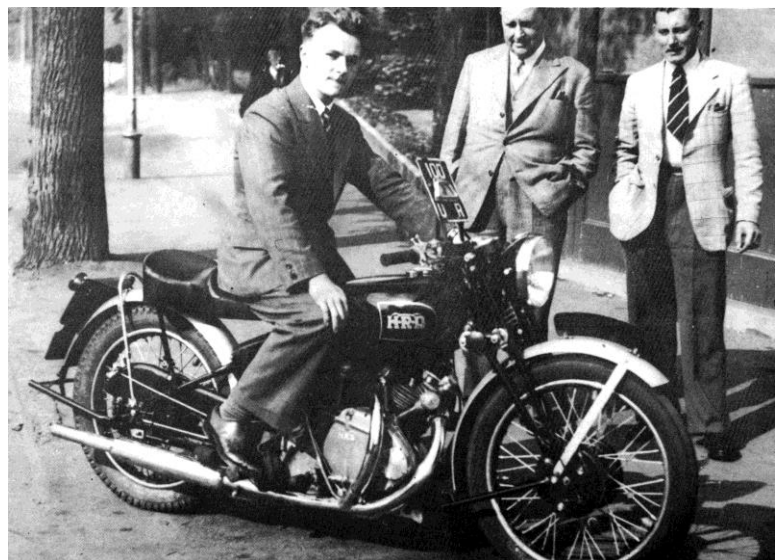
thundering and leaping round Donington on a stripped version need ever worry about happy memories come rocking chair days. All of which naturally leads us to what must be the most argued-about motorcycle of all time, the second series, be it "B", "C" or "D", Vincent Rapide.

Before getting down to that, however, the post-war five-hundreds deserve a mention because they were damned good bikes, though whether that was because they were cobbled up "half-Rapides", or in spite of it, I must admit I just don't know. Being long enough in the tooth to remember P.C.V.'s original convictions on frame design, I always felt he must have had his tongue in his cheek when he replaced the back pot by a slab of aluminium and hung one end of the swinging arm pivot on the primary chain-case. I suppose Harold Wilson would have called it pragmatism, but it worked and they went well, in the way that five-hundred singles used to, were remarkably smooth and if you remember the very young John Surtees on his Grey Flash, you will know that there wasn't a lot wrong with the handling.

But to return to the big 'un. Between 1939 and 1945 the works at Stevenage were fully occupied making bits for aeroplanes, but with Vincent himself, Phil Irvin and Jack Williams on the premises it can be imagined that motorcycles were not forgotten. Towards the end of the war a series of extremely tantalising adverts appeared in both weeklies about a new concept in motorcycles, but those ads were nowhere near 'so tantalising as the rumours that anyone with even the most tenuous connections with Stevenage were picking up. The picture was clear enough for it to be divined that what Phil Vincent thought to be the ideal bike was something about the same size and weight as a good pre-war 500, but with a lot more performance, a lot more handling and a lot more braking; and all this combined with a lot less noise, vibration, general stress and consequent maintenance.

Looking back after all those years, particularly in the light of what now goes on, how right he was and, more remarkable, how nearly he achieved all of it in one go. "The aim must surely be to accommodate a big, simple engine in the smallest practical machine with the lightest weight without, of course, any vibration discomfort to the rider." That was P.C.V.'s aim and belief, but it isn't a quote from him: those words are from Dennis Poore, the man who runs Norton-Villiers, and he uttered them just 40 years after Phil Vincent conceived the Rapide; so it's nice to know the message is getting across.

The picture of Phil Heath on his Rapide really tells the whole story. In sizing it up, bear in mind that F.P.H. is not a big feller (though beautifully proportioned, I hasten to add, Phil), but he's not tall. He wasn't even particularly wide then, so it is apparent that it is not a thundering great brute he is sitting on. And the general-purpose raincoat and the cycle clips are all part of the plot, you know. Multi-coloured riding suits, Ned Kellys and beautiful boots we may not have had, but we old' uns had the best of the deal and no mistake about it. That Rapide could be ridden to Liverpool, used as a pleasant hack through the TT fortnight and then ridden home. Finishing second in the Clubmans on it was more or less incidental to the holiday and, quite truthfully, it is the best way of illustrating Phil Vincent's concept of a motorcycle which could be all things to



the hard rider. I'm damned if I can think of anything that the current crop of big Kawasaki's, Ducati's and Hondas can do that the Rapide wasn't capable of nearly thirty years ago.

So, yet again, we must ask what went wrong. Well, in the case of this truly beautiful creation, two things stand out a mile — pure rotten luck and shortcomings in the detail design. In those depressive post-war days, say 1946-'51, everybody in industry suffered from both shortages of essential materials and also from the fact that a fair proportion of what eventually turned up was sub-standard and a firm as small as Vincent-HRD was particularly vulnerable on both counts. Component suppliers were bound to favour the big guns with what was available and the consequences of component shortages to a small firm with full order books are catastrophic. Short of orders is one thing, but at least you know where you are and you cut back; but building lots of machines against firm orders and then seeing them all lined up waiting for some stupid component is not only heart-breaking but damned expensive. In a different way, sub-standard material supplies had the same disproportionate effect. The Vincent was brand new, stem to stern, and I know for an absolute fact that customers who got hold of, say, a Matchless with a duff mainshaft, knowing it was exactly the same Burman which never gave trouble pre-war, would automatically moan about what the bloody country was coming to. A bloke who had gearbox trouble with his Series B, on the other hand, tended to go around telling all his mates that Vincent's had a lousy gearbox.

Quite apart from these bothers, the firm found that certain export markets were far more eager to get hold of Rapides than they were to pay for them and, as a final starter in the hard-luck stakes, a hell of a lot of drawing office and development time which could well have been spent on eliminating design features which were short of perfection was spent on very advanced work for the Air Ministry, which dangled a couple of very juicy carrots Phil Vincent's way but pulled the string up pretty damned quick when someone, somewhere, changed his mind.



*The superb Vincent Lifeboat motor developed for the Air Ministry at great effort and expense— but no orders*

But it's no use dodging the issue and it simply has to be said: the concept was magnificent, but the bikes weren't perfect. P.C.V. has, more than once, given me a right pasting for criticising the Rapide and he is entitled to. After all, he didn't just think and talk motorcycles, he designed and built them, thousands of them, so he's liable to be well pleased with a knocker who has just taken six months working out how to hang a different oil tank on an old banger.

But say it again I will, the bike was too wide, the clutch was a brilliant disaster, the Brampton girders were perfectly OK for 1947, but replacing them with the "Girdraulics" was (if nothing else) a commercial bloomer and — this the final sacrilege — the famous Vincent triangulated rear springing should have been dropped in favour of a straightforward swinging arm.

It is criticism of the back end which invariably gets Phil Vincent jumping up and down, but I just don't care how many times he proves that his triangulated structure resists distortion so much better than a simple swinging arm, the clear fact is that it landed him with too many problems. It stuck him with a back mudguard that bounced up and down and, from the nose of the dual seat back, nothing on the bike was static and so could be used for screwing things onto. Have you ever tried fitting panniers to a Vincent? It ain't easy, believe me, and it also knackered the seating arrangements in that either the seat had to be inordinately high or it had to bounce up



and down with the back wheel. I know it was cunningly arranged so that it only moved about half as much as the wheel did, but the first principle of mechanics is that you can't get owt for nowt — if half of the dual seat was unsprung mass, then any behind perched on it only got half of the benefit of the rear springing.

This long-standing argument is now being bedevilled by the so-called "cantilever" rear end which Yamaha are using on their most exotic works machinery, but I cannot see that this is particularly relevant. This lark started on scramblers and the objective is not the same as P.C.V.'s; it is to allow for longer and better-controlled rear wheel movement than can be accommodated by conventional, more or less upright, shocker units. You have only to see what

the others are doing to get the message — some mount the shockers halfway along the arm, an appalling arrangement this one; others lean them forwards, so that eight inches of rear spindle movement only moves the shocks about half of that. Velos did that on all their production springers, the prototype AMC of about 1945 did it too and the Commando has featured this idea from its beginning.



*And Vincent's continued to appear, with great success at Vintage meetings: here are Malcolm Attrill with passenger at Lydenn in 1972*

Nothing new under the sun, you see, and not relevant to Vincent's "cantilever", which was there to keep the rear spindle in line and not to assist in its up and down control — which was, in fact, extremely poor. So far as I am concerned, all argument on this was settled by Vincent's own Series D which, you will recall, resorted to a sub-frame for the dual seat which was consequently at a height where oxygen deprivation could be a problem and, generally speaking, clearly demonstrated how to get the worst of both worlds. In a way, it was the same story as the Girdraulics at the front end — how to go wrong by being absolutely, positively, demonstratively right.

Well, after that lot, talk about coming to bury Caesar and not to praise him. But, truthfully, it is a mark of genuine regret and not simply another "let's knock the Vinnie" exercise. Every HRD, Vincent-HRD and Vincent ever made was an interesting motorcycle and the Rapide was truly one of the all-time greats. Make any list of the twelve greatest — if you can think of a dozen — and it must be in there.

*Titch Allen, 1974*

**ROAD TESTS OF CURRENT MODELS**

TO try to present the reader with a nutshell description of the 1958 "Dominator 88," manufactured by Norton Motors, Ltd., Bracebridge Street, Birmingham, 6, would be unfair; for to summarize this 497 c.c. parallel twin by saying that it has exemplary roadholding and is fast and absolutely untiring seems to denote that the o.h.v. engine is not the gentlemanly device that it so clearly is. And to add that this "500" is a docile mount, perfectly at home in city traffic, might be construed as hinting that it is not quick—yet continuous high speed is one of the "88's" strongest points. Thus, no potted summary is possible; the facets are too many.

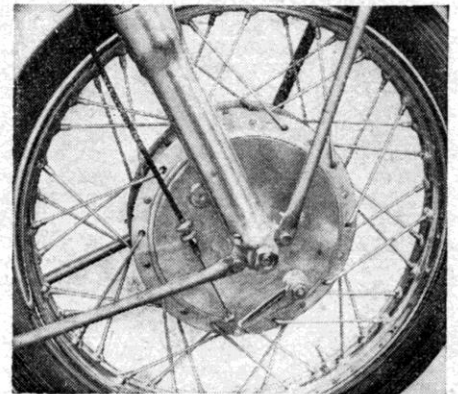
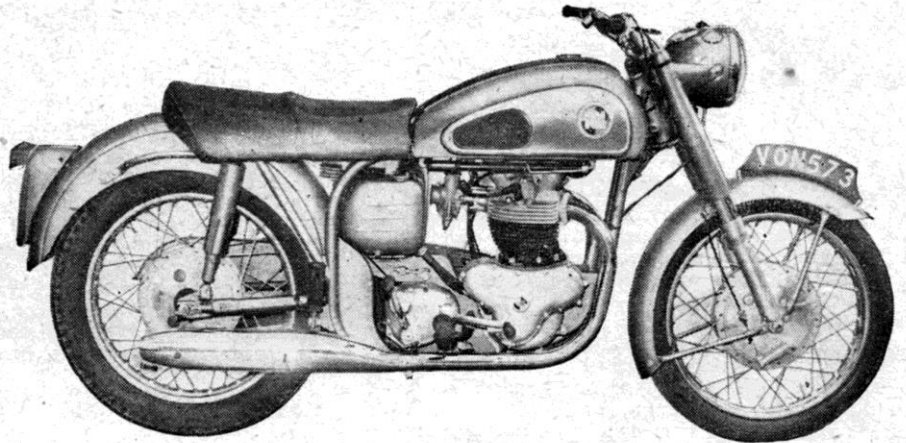
Of all these facets, the one that shone the brightest was the excellence of the handling conferred by the "Featherbed" frame and the "Roadholder" telescopic front forks. That this frame is race bred is universally known; it deserves to be as widely known that the steering is a delight and the handling a bend-slinger's dream. Time and time again, during the 2,100 test miles, fast, open-road corners were tackled with a zest that would not have arisen on a mount lacking this quality. Even chronic bumps failed to cause deflection from the intended line—a line so easily selected and adhered to.

Road irregularities could be felt, particularly at low speeds; cobbles and ridges were

The 497 c.c. Parallel-twin o.h.v.

**NORTON "DOMINATOR 88"**

A Fast and Exhilarating Mount with Exemplary Roadholding



A real thoroughbred: racing ancestry is apparent in the lines of Nortons' 500 c.c. "Featherbed"-framed twin.

(Right) The effective and extremely well finished 8-in. front brake unit.

(Below) A clip-retained inspection cover makes easy work of checking primary chain tension. The battery box lid has been removed.

**TESTER'S ROAD REPORT**

**Maximum Speeds in:—**

Gear	Ratio	Speed (m.p.h.)	r.p.m.	Time from Standing Start (secs.)
Top Gear	48 to 1	90	5650	54
Third Gear	63 to 1	80	6500	24
Second Gear	84 to 1	69	7600	15

**Speeds over measured Quarter Mile:—**

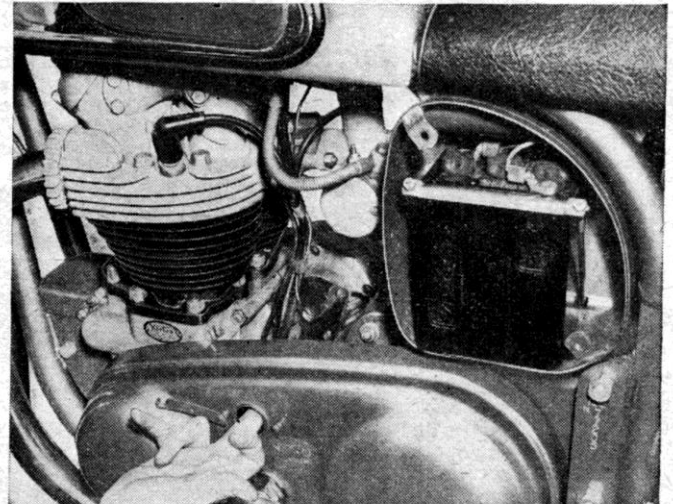
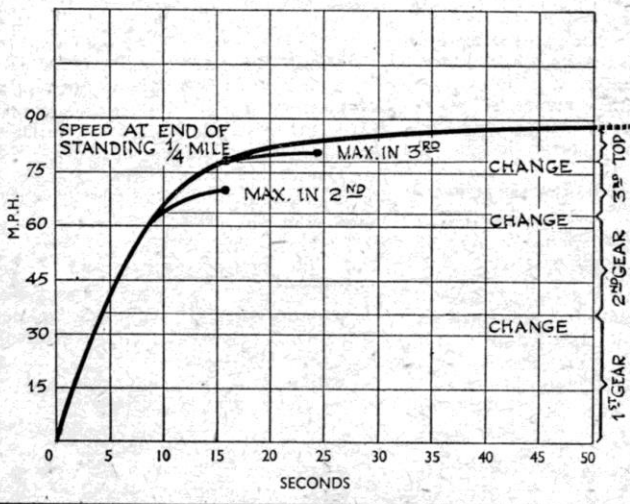
Flying Start 85\* m.p.h. Standing Start 53.6 m.p.h.  
\*STILL ACCELERATING

**Braking Figures On SMOOTH TARMAc Surface, from 30 m.p.h.:—**

Both Brakes 30 ft. Front Brake 42 ft. Rear Brake 64 ft.

**Fuel Consumption:—**

30 m.p.h. 94 m.p.g. 40 m.p.h. 87 m.p.g. 50 m.p.h. 75 m.p.g.



too small in magnitude to influence the front suspension, the latter being on the hard side even for the Norton marque. There was no evidence whatsoever, under any conditions, of pitching or weaving. Roadholding was good on wet roads and if the model were cranked over too far the tendency was for the back wheel to start to slide first.

Complementary to cornering is straight-ahead handling. Full marks were awarded here. The rather wide handlebars, somewhat too wide for the tester's comfort, were, nevertheless, an asset when deviating vigorously from the straight-ahead condition. The angle to which the bars could be adjusted was limited by the dip-switch cluster which would have benefited from the employment of an alternative pair of threaded securing holes.

Such good behaviour when travelling straight played an important part in the standing quarter-mile times set up. These constitute, in effect, sprints from rest and are parallel to, if more full-blooded than, quick get-aways from traffic baulks. In these the coil-ignition "88" played its part very well indeed. The clutch was found to be controllable, if a little sudden until this trait was mastered, and able to withstand all the full-throttle feeding-in that it was given. It was entirely free from drag, thanks to the pressure-plate adjustment now employed.

Bottom gear was frequently held to 30 m.p.h., second to 65 and top sent home at an indicated 75. These figures could all be exceeded by 10 m.p.h. if more steam were requested from the "engine-room." The speedometer was correct at 30 m.p.h. and some 6% optimistic at the upper end of the scale. The machine is very fast in both second and third and the latter forms almost a low top; it was wondered if the absolute maximum might not be even higher than 90 m.p.h. if there was one tooth more on the rear wheel sprocket.

Such acceleration, with the gears being held on to, brought no difficulty in cog swapping. At all times correct manipulation of the controls brought sweet, clash-free engagement, the next ratio always being available with 100% certainty. So easily and freely did the gears go home that the tester sometimes wondered whether the pinions had moved at all!

The untiring nature of the power unit has already been mentioned. The cruising speed was found to be anything up to full bore and the only sign of stress apparent was the failure of the condenser. Housed in the distributor cover and retained by a spring clip it is immediately replaceable. Only one inoffensive period of vibration was felt, corresponding to 38 m.p.h. in top; other-



High-speed roadholding was superb; here the model is taking an open-road bend at a gait demanding fast shutter-work from the cameraman!

wise the engine was pleasantly smooth.

So naturally did the tester find the Norton suited for high-speed work that it was driven, after running-in, pretty fast. The petrol consumption then averaged 66 m.p.g. Oil was used at the rate of 600 miles per pint, a curious conundrum as none seemed to be burnt and no oil leaked from the engine other than breather mist over the underside of the crankcase.

With such potential on tap, braking needs to be all the rider can ask for—and it was. The stopping power from speed is better than the data panel indicates though there was some juddering when the front anchor was used above 55 m.p.h.; no cause for this could be found. It was possible to lock either wheel on a dry road. Braking with the rear unit was controllable and effective.

The Lucas equipment fitted to 1958 Norton twins now takes the form of an A.C. crankshaft generator with a full-wave rectifier. It gave sufficient output to feed a 7-in. block-lens light unit which threw a good beam up the road and to each side; it permitted a safe cruising speed of 65 m.p.h. on open roads. Current surplus to requirements was a half to two amps., depending on the services in use. Even during the intensive

night use that was made of the test machine during January and February, the battery was kept fully charged. The coil took 2 amps. which was immediately balanced when the motor came off tick-over speed.

In the event of a flat battery, an emergency starting position is installed and this, by-passing the battery, was experimentally tested on many occasions; although it called for vigorous cranking when cold, it did work and was much easier with the engine hot. When the charged-battery was in circuit the most facile of starting was obtained; if cold, the air lever was closed and the Amal carburettor lightly flooded—two kicks were then sufficient; with a warm engine nothing more than switching on and depressing the kick-starter, once, was necessary.

The 1958 Norton "Dominor 88" has been very well thought out and, apart from the limited handlebar angle previously referred to, the only other detail criticism noted was that larger fuel tap knobs would be easier to grasp with gauntleted hands.

Finally, the tester records without hesitation that this latest piece of Bracebridge Street-ware is one of the most exhilarating road-burners to pass through his hands in a very long time.

**BRIEF SPECIFICATION**

**Engine:** 497 c.c. parallel-twin four-stroke; bore 66 mm. by stroke 72.6 mm.; overhead valves, push-rod operated; cast-iron cylinder; light-alloy head; c.r., 7.8:1; Amal "Monobloc" carburetter; 240 main jet; 6/3½ throttle slide; clip in second notch from top; No. 30 pilot jet.

**Transmission:** Four-speed gearbox manufactured by Associated Motor Cycles, Ltd.; positive-stop footchange; ratios, 4.8, 6.3, 8.4 and 12.7:1; primary drive by ½-in. by 305-in. chain to Norton multi-plate clutch incorporating rubber shock absorbers; final drive by 5/8-in. by ¼-in. chain.

**Frame:** Tubular all-welded structure of patented design with full loop duplex support for engine and gearbox.

**Wheels:** WM-2×19 rims carrying Avon tyres; 3.00 in. by 19 in. front; 3.50 in. by

19 in. rear; full-width light-alloy hubs, that at front incorporating 8-in.-dia. brake; outboard 7-in.-dia. brake at rear.

**Lubrication:** Dry sump type with spur gear oil pumps; oil tank of 4½ pints capacity, fitted with breather pipe to rear chain; oil bath for primary chain.

**Electrical Equipment:** Lucas A.C./D.C. RM13 alternator with 6-v. full-wave rectifier; Lucas coil ignition, firing K.L.G. FE80 three-point plugs; Lucas 13 a.h. battery; Lucas 7-in. block-lens light unit with 30/30-W. main bulb and 3-W. pilot bulb; 6/18-W. tail/stop lamp; speedometer lamp.

**Suspension:** "Roadholder" telescopic front forks of Norton design, with two-way hydraulic damping; rear springing by swinging fork, movement controlled by Girling units with hydraulic damping and

three-position setting; spindle adjustment by push-bolts.

**Tank:** Welded steel of 3½ gal. capacity.

**Dimensions:** Wheelbase, 56 in.; ground clearance, 6 in.; unladen seat height, 31 in.; dry weight, 390 lb.

**Finish:** Polychromatic grey enamel; wheel rims, exhaust system, handlebars and controls, tank panels and sundry items chromium plated; many light-alloy parts buffed and polished.

**General Equipment:** Full kit of tools; tyre pump; 125 m.p.h. Smiths speedometer; pillion footrests; dual seat; prop stand and centre stand.

**Price:** £227 10s. plus £56 6s. 2d. P.T.= £283 16s. 2d.

**Annual Tax:** £3 15s.; quarterly, £1 0s. 8d.

**Makers:** Norton Motors, Ltd., Bracebridge Street, Birmingham, 6.

# Event Calendar

2017	
March 19-30	Tassie Tour 2017 (Australia), open to pre 1970 British bikes – for more info contact <a href="mailto:tassietour2017@hotmail.com">tassietour2017@hotmail.com</a> . This fantastic 10 day tour is limited to just 100 bikes so if you are interested, act now. <b>LATEST: While now fully sold out there is a waiting list so it may not be too late if you act fast.</b>
July 2	Classic Motorcycle Event at the Tramway Museum in Derbyshire, UK . More details on their website <a href="http://www.tramway.co.uk">www.tramway.co.uk</a>
July 14	French Rally. Details to follow
July 21st to 23rd	VOC (UK) Annual Rally. Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria. Info: <a href="mailto:socialsecretary998@voc.uk.com">socialsecretary998@voc.uk.com</a>
Sept. 21-23	2017 North American Vincent Rally. Treasure Island Resort and Casino. Minnesota. Info to follow
2018	
August	Australian National VOC Rally, to be held in Queensland; start your planning now.

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## Arthur Bourne was at the centre of British motorcycling from 1923-1951.

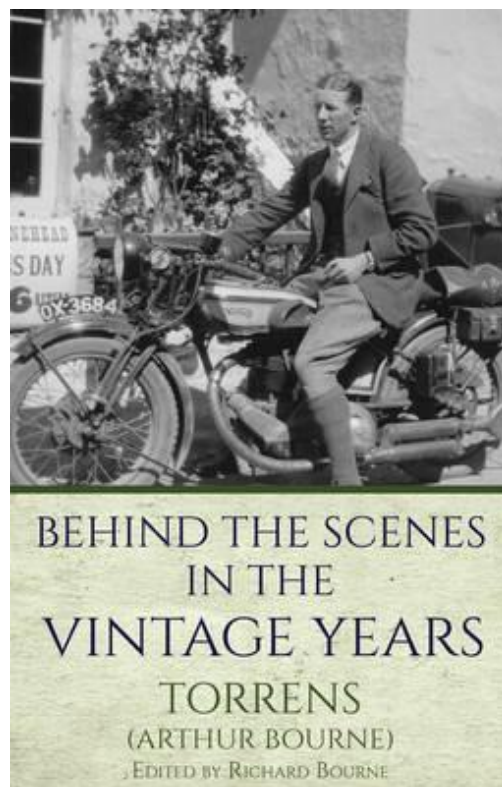
This is his fascinating story. Back in the 1920s, there were more motor cyclists than car drivers, records were being broken every month at the Brooklands race track in Surrey, roads were empty and motorbikes constantly broke down. Arthur Bourne, who used the pseudonym 'Torrens' for readers of the best-selling weekly 'The Motor Cycle', was in the thick of the game. He had the good luck to be Engineer to The Auto-Cycle Union and the-then, not yet 26, also editor of a famous motorcycling journal.

This is his story of what it was like to ride hundreds of miles round Britain on reliability trials - essential for manufacturers to claim that their bikes were worth buying - and how he provided weekly guidance for thousands of youngsters on two wheels. He writes of Brooklands, and of TT races on the Isle of Man; of his encouragement to young engineers like Edward Turner and Phil Vincent; and of how, in the Second World War, he enabled the airborne forces at Arnhem to be equipped with lightweight motorcycles (the Welbike) that could be dropped by parachute or flown in by glider.

For anyone interested in motorbikes and the people who rode them, when British manufacturing was at its apogee, this is a unique testimony. Motor cycles were fashionable. The Duke of York, later to be George VI and his wife Elizabeth, later known as Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, were among the enthusiasts. It was an exciting era, recalled by 'Torrens' near the end of his life, in a good journalist's prose.

Behind the Scenes in the Vintage Years is a unique and fascinating record of an unrepeatable era in British motorcycling and engineering history. It contains many black and white pictures which bring this area of the past to life.

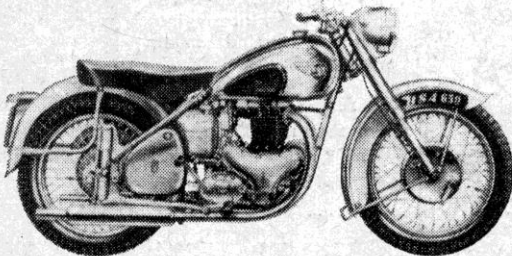
This interesting book is available on line [Click Here for More Information](#)





## *On all the best models...*

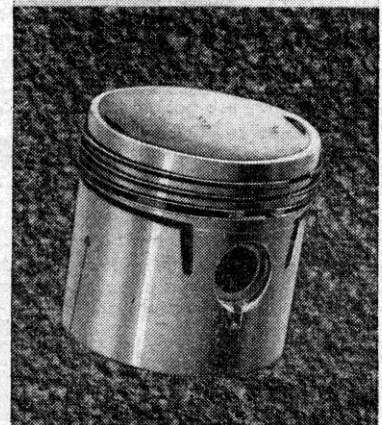
B.S.A. fit Hepolite pistons and rings to the famous Golden Flash 650 Twin. More and more internationally famous motor-cycle manufacturers now fit Hepolite for long life and brilliant performance.



*Whatever your make or model,  
write for full details of the  
Hepolite piston designed for it.  
And in the future (like B.S.A.)  
... specify "Hepolite".*



**HEPOLITE**



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ST. JOHN'S WORKS, BRADFORD

## 25 Short Years Past – Philip E Irving



Phil Irving passed away 25 years ago, on January 14 1992. He was 88 years old.

Most often associated with the Vincent-HRD marque where he worked as Chief Engineer from 1933 till 1936 and again 1942 till 1949; totalling 10 years, he also spent considerable time working for Velocette at their Hall Green factory in Birmingham where he was employed from 1930 to 1933 and again from 1936 to 1942; totalling 9 years – so it is no surprise to see him pictured with a Velo.

Also pictured is Phil's wife Edith who still lives in the Irving home "Owl's Rest" in Warrandyte, Australia and remains active in the local Vincent scene. And it's also time for Edith to celebrate a "significant" birthday, though despite rumours to the contrary, she is *not* expecting a card from the Queen.

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### WORKSHOP WISDOM

### *A look at Etymology for Motorcyclists*

**MANY** of the words used in Motorcycle Engineering are quite obvious in origin—a connecting rod could hardly be anything else—but others are much more obscure. Why gudgeon-pin, for instance?

**BUSH** The Dutch bus, and the German buchse, signify a box, container, or cylindrical vessel, and hence, something round that you put something else inside.

**CAM** from the German word kamm, which means a ridge of hills, or a tooth of a comb. Comb itself comes from the same root as kamm, but is a much older word. The German word for cam, though, is nocken. We get the expression "double knocker" from doppelnocken.

**CHROME PLATE** Chromium was discovered in 1797 and first called chrome from the coloured nature of many of its compounds—chrome yellow, for instance, along with chrome orange, red and green, and violet chrome alum. Greek—from chroma, colour. Plate is also from Greek and Latin roots meaning broad and flat; from this we get the use of plate to mean a flat piece of metal, and from the Spanish plata, a piece of precious metal. The Rio de la Plata or River Plate was the source of the world's silver from the time of Columbus onwards. Thus from the eighteenth century plate meant an article made of silver. When the process of coating copper mechanically with silver was developed in Sheffield this new type of plate was called Sheffield

plate. Later, the metal was deposited by electrolysis, was called electroplate, and completely replaced the earlier laborious methods, so that plate simply came to mean electroplate.

**COG** Now meaning a complete toothed wheel, this word originally meant just a tooth of the wheel, apparently from a Norse or Swedish word kogge. What was originally a cogged wheel became cog-wheel and simply cog, just as sprocket-wheel became sprocket.

**DESMODROMIC** Found in very few dictionaries, this word applied to valve gear which has valves opened and closed by mechanism rather than springs, derives from the Greek desmos—chain, bundle, band, ligament, and dromein, to run or race. The intention is "running within restraint", at least, as far as I can tell, for I have no idea who coined the word, or when.

**DYNAMO** From the Greek dynamis power or force, originally dynamo-electric machine, or device for turning mechanical power into electricity. The distinction that a dynamo only produces direct current is a modern convention, which in any case does not apply to bicycle dynamos. The word **magneto** has a similar history, from magneto-electric machine, whilst magnet itself is from the Magnesia district in Thessaly, half-way up the right hand side of Greece, which has also given us magnesium, and manganese.

**GASKET** This word entered engineering as the packing material on the pistons of water pumps: "There is a wide groove around the bucket, which is filled with hempen rope or gasket". It got there by a strange route: "A small cord or piece of plaited stuff by which the sails are kept close to the yards." The word is from the French, garcette, a diminutive of garce—wench (of which the masculine is garçon). I leave the connection to your imagination, but see grommet and gudgeon-pin if you need prompting.

**GROMMET** Very much of the same history as gasket—a grommet was a small ring of rope used to reinforce the hole in the sail to which the gaskets were fixed, and thus anything used to prevent chafing when wires pass through a metal panel. The history is through French again, gromet or groomette being a diminutive of groom (as in bride-groom, horse and groom), a boy or lad. How the nautical chappies managed to get the lads and lassies inside out, so to speak, is one of the mysteries of life.

**GUDGEON-PIN** Pin is common to many languages (Latin pinna from spina, a thorn) but what of gudgeon? Again, a nautical word, meaning the iron swivel supporting the rudder and quite naturally applied to the swivelling action of the piston on the connecting rod. The French word gown now means a dowel, in the same sense, but its history is, again, a bit on the naughty side. French has gouge meaning wench, prostitute, and I suspect that this might have something to do with it—especially considering the origins of the word for the iron pin on the rudder which fits inside the gudgeon—the pintle. This comes from a good old-fashioned Anglo-Saxon word pint, penis (which itself is the Latin for tail, so how the Romans managed quite escapes me).

**PILLION** From the Scottish Gaelic word pilleán, from peall, a skin or hide. Our hairy-kneed northern friends used a skin over the back of the horse for a saddle so "on the pillion" simply means on the skin. My dictionary of 1920 calls the word "archaic" —this was because horses had been replaced at that date by nasty oily two-wheeled things, and the flapper bracket had hardly been invented.

**SPROCKET** As I have said, originally sprocket-wheel. A sprocket originally was a carpenter's term for a small projection, perhaps even a little sprag or spragget. First use of sprocket wheel in connection with chain is on the capstan used to haul up the anchor chain of a ship.

**STROBOSCOPE** A fairly modern invention, and from the Greek words strobein, to whirl round, and skopein, to see—hence, a means of seeing something which is whirling round.

Not all words, of course, are as interesting as this little selection, but wherever you look you find interesting snippets—sump, for instance, is the same word as swamp, and both come from a Greek word meaning spongy or porous. One or two words sound interesting but lead nowhere—no-one knows why we call a rotating bearing a "journal", for instance; it must be something to do with journal—newspaper, or journey—day's travel, but why? There are even words which are scarcely mentioned in dictionaries—four letters words, like shim. Perhaps the origin of this word is too rude even to think about!



EARLS COURT

THE MOTOR CYCLE

OCTOBER 27TH, 1949

10

VISIT STAND  
60

and see the NEW  
THOROUGHbred  
from the VINCENT  
Stables

Grey Flash

by 'BLACK LIGHTNING'  
out of 'COMET'

Photograph  
with acknow-  
ledgment to  
Motor Cycling

THE  
VINCENT

★ THE WORLD'S FASTEST  
STANDARD MOTORCYCLE

★ THIS IS A FACT—NOT A SLOGAN

Sired by that famous winner of so many World Classics, 'BLACK LIGHTNING', and with the staying power and perfect deportment of his Dam 'COMET' this new VINCENT colt has already proved his worth in preliminary canters, and is well fancied for the coming season.

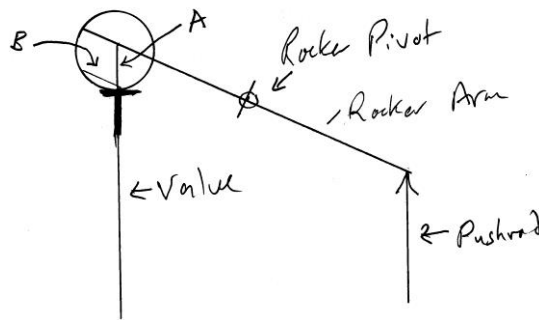
THE VINCENT H.R.D. CO. LTD., STEVENAGE, HERTS., ENGLAND. Telephone: Stevenage 670



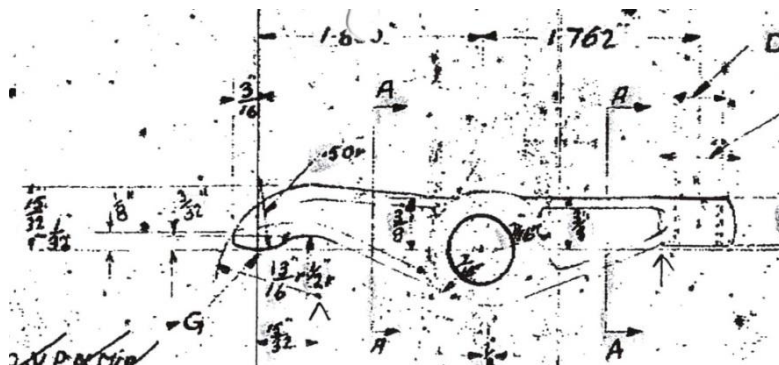
# A Response from the Shearing Shed.

In OVR #32 there was an item on **Restoring Lost Power** – and it referred to valve lift lost due to wearing of the rounded fork faces on the rocker arms. The following feedback was received from one OVR reader. *“In the article “Restoring Lost Power” I must query the assertion that wear of the rocker fork resulted in lost valve lift. Surely as the fork gradually wore, the clearance would be taken up with the tappet adjuster and lift would effectively have been restored, or the motor would have been hellishly noisy. Or have I missed something?”*

Short answer – Yes! Longer answer: The rocker arm may be thought of a simply a rocking lever with one end acted on at a fixed point by the pushrod and the other end being a ball of one inch diameter acting on the Valve Stem Collar ET35. The diagram – for simplicity NOT to scale – shows the situation with the valve closed.



With the unworn forked end of the rocker arm, which is ground to a 1 inch diameter ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " radius) circle it is clear to see that the distance of the face of ET35 from the centre line of the rocker arm (distance A) remains constant as the pushrod rises, causing the valve to open.



Now picture the situation where the once rounded face of the rocker arm forks has worn – possibly almost to a flat. With the valve fully closed and the tappet adjustment correct we will have a situation just as depicted in the diagram BUT as the pushrod starts to rise ET35 now follows the path of the worn rocker face as depicted by line B in the drawing. The distance from Line B to the shown circumference that should have been on the rocker fork is the amount of valve lift lost.

As was stated in the item in OVR #32. For every 0.001" worn from the  $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter rounded face of the forks on the rocker arms, you will lose 0.001" of valve lift when the valves are at the fully OPEN point, compared to an unworn rocker arm. And it has absolutely NOTHING to do with correct tappet adjustment – which is set when the valves are CLOSED.

Not convinced? Then take a peek at “Tuning For Speed” in the chapter ‘Improved Cylinder Filling’ which covers in detail the effects of radiused cam followers and rockers.

*Err – that’s a smile on the Black Sheep’s face, not a snarl!*



# Vincent Black Shadow Factory Spec.

So, you want to 'Upgrade' your Rapide to Shadow specification? Well this is just the thing for you - a copy of the ORIGINAL factory specification for the Black Shadow listing ALL of the factory planned improvements over the Series "B" Rapide.

## SPECIFICATION.

### Series 'B' "Rapide" Black Shadow Model.

#### Power Unit.

- 1) Connecting rods and rockers fully polished.
- 2) High compression pistons giving 7.3 to 1 compression ratio normally fitted (higher ratios to customers requirements).
- 3) Lapped side high pressure piston rings.
- 4) Inlet and exhaust ports individually polished and blended to streamlined shape.
- 5)  $1\frac{1}{8}$  bore bronze carburettor adaptors.
- 6)  $1\frac{1}{8}$  bore Amal Carburettors.
- 7) Triple valve springs.
- 8) Laboratory tested magneto.
- 9) Lightened clutch shoe carrier.
- 10) Lightened cam plate.
- 11) Intermediate ratios in gear box giving 2.07 to 1 reduction on bottom gear, i.e. 7.25 to 1 gear with 46 Teeth rear sprocket.
- 12) Cylinder barrels and heads anodized black with polished fin tips.
- 13) Black crankcase with covers finished in black stove enamel.

#### Frame and Cycle Parts.

- 1) Ribbed cast-iron brake drums on both wheels.
- 2) Ferodo MR41 brake linings.
- 3) Bowdenex front brake cable.
- 4) 5" dial speedometer reading to 150 m.p.h. or 250 k.v.h., mounted on special bracket for easy vision at speed.

THE VINCENT "H.R.D." COMPANY LIMITED,  
STEVENAGE, HERTFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND,

27th January, 1948.

*The machine is further described in the Motor Cycle  
(English publication) issue of Feb 19, 1948 and an ad in the  
Feb 26 issue of same pub.*

Thanks to David Dunfey for this bit of original Vincent history. Seems that cost constraints at the time meant subtle changes, such as the move away from anodizing of the barrels and polishing of the fin tips.

# “Overland to Australia” 1: London to Tripoli

By E.W. (Ding) Bell

If you really want to see the world, then there's nothing to stop you—provided you have no ties, a motorcycle and a good pal, plus £300 between you. If you have ties, and happen to be an armchair traveller, then come away with old Ding and young Val, and listen to the story of their wanderings through 25 countries and over 26,000 miles on the dual seat of a Dominator.



*Ding, Val, the Norton and the baggage—seasoned travellers all by this time—snapped outside the “Chicago Tribune” offices on the road back.*

The tale begins in March, **1954**, when I was idly glancing through the personal column of a weekly journal. An advert caught my eye which read "Overland, to Australia. Passengers Wanted. Start August." So out with pen and paper. I wrote: "Very interested in your proposed trip, though not very interested in sitting in a car all that way. Could I lag behind on my motorcycle?" The advertisement drew 28 replies, including one from a Miss Valerie Wells, of Teddington, Middlesex. The advertisers were two Aussies one male, one female - and an Englishman. To cut the

detail short, it was arranged that six of us should leave England for Australia on three motorbikes: the two Aussies on a 1954 Norton ES2; the Englishman, Joe on his 1947 A.J.S. with another male Aussie on the back; and Val and I on my 1952 Dominator.

We lived in different parts of England, so the detailed arrangements of the trip were rather scrappy and made mostly by Post. All six of us met on two different occasions in London, and that was about all we knew of each other. There was Warren Raine and Verona (Ronnie) Obst, the two Australian originators of the plan, who were close friends; then there was Monty Joseph (Joe) and his pillion rider, Stow Kentish (another Aussie); lastly Val and I. Val was 21 and shorthand-typist to an editor in Fleet Street. I was 36, an ardent motorcyclist, member of the Kettering and D. M.C.C.; keen follower of motorcycling sport, and a bus driver by trade.

Friday, August 13, was set as our day for departure. Unfortunately Stow Kentish had to drop out at the last minute because his brother (also in England) had been taken ill. This left us' with five, and Joe with no pillion rider. The two Aussies, Warren and Ronnie, had left England a month previously to tour Europe and were to meet us in Vienna. So Joe and his "Ajay" and Val and I and the Dommy left London for Dover and the Channel Ferry. It, was a beautiful morning as Joe and I rode along to pick up Val. The" bikes looked like Christmas trees, With camping gear, cooking utensils, spares, clothing and other kit. My machine handled quite well considering the weight, as I'd ridden it around England fully loaded for a fortnight to get used to it. Joe' had just

bunged everything on the morning we left and his antics left me wondering if we'd ever make it to Dover, never mind Australia. But we reached Val's with no mishap except having to re-arrange Joe's load twice, which made us late.

Val stood waiting, looking very trim and petite in her new motor-cycling outfit and I thought " I'm glad she's small," because we were already overloaded. There was a quick but welcome cup of tea, an introduction to Vals' people and an aside from her mum.: ." You'll, look after Val, won't you?" (I 'hoped the impression she got of me helped to allay any misgivings about her young daughter going off "Down Under " with a strange Man on a motorcycle.) Then we were off!

We reached Dover in time :for the 4.30 ferry. As I' watched, the: white cliffs receding it reminded me of when I'd last seen them disappearing in 1939. What a difference in the two adventures though! On board, we once again' repacked Joe's load, 'using yards' of string and rope. A young' German watched us and we struck up a friendship. Aboard he had his NSU and chair; in which he'd been touring England. As he knew the way out of Ostend to Brussels said he'd ride with us that far. It was also suggested that Val should ride in his sidecar. This seemed a good idea because Val's "seat" was unaccustomed to a pillion; in' fact; it was Vails first ride on a motorbike!

**The Lady Vanishes:** Forty miles from Ostend; We all pulled off. the motorway for a smoke. There it was suggested we should stop in Ghent for a cup of tea then push on through Brussels and camp on the other side. It was a rather a cool night for the time of the year but it was good to be sailing along listening to the exhaust burbling and feeling the breeze on my face and I dreamed happily of the experiences ahead of us. But I was soon brought back to reality - Karl; our German friend, with Val in the chair, had disappeared!



*The only puncture of the entire voyage—and this is Ding mending it, just outside Kalat-i-Ghizai, Afghanistan.*

He'd been leading, with Joe behind, and then me. So Joe and' I turned off the motorway and searched Ghent for them. No luck —so back to the road junction where Joe said he last saw them. And `there we stayed put, because we thought that surely Karl and Val would return to our last point of contact. Thirty-six very miserable hours Joe and I spent by that turn. We contacted the police and embassies and everyone else who mattered, till finally we realized we were getting nowhere. So eventually we rode into Brussels, to the British Embassy, two very unhappy fellows. We told of our lost Valerie and the official was most understanding and helpful. He asked all the questions Joe and I had been asking each other, discussed all the possibilities. Finally, we decided that Val was a sensible girl (correct); that she had £150 on her in traveller's cheques and that she would undoubtedly make for the youth hostel in Vienna, where we were to meet, up with Warren and Ronnie. So a letter to Val's mum; just in case, and Joe and I were off to Vienna as quickly as the Norton and "Ajay" would take us.

"It took us three days, as a matter of fact. It should not have taken -so long, but we were new to the camping routine and we were cursed with Joe's unwieldy load. Then both of us dropped the bikes very suddenly one day; when we hit a patch of greasy road, and we were just picking

ourselves up when another motor-cyclist came off before we could warn him. In fact, it happened to five others whilst we were there, and even the cars did a waltz. But there was no serious damage to us or the machines, and, with all the suspense of not knowing what had happened to Val bottled up inside me, I found that it served as a safety-valve and that I could laugh at the whole episode.

We covered about 300 miles a day and made straight for the youth hostel on reaching Vienna. It was a great relief to find Val's name in the book, as well -as Warren's 'and Ronnie's. We all gabbled at once when we met. Although Val hadn't been so worried as I over her being lost, she'd left a message at the Belgian-German frontier to be relayed to us when we went 'through—but we didn't go over that particular border. Karl had been very kind and eventually had put her on a train for Vienna. So, completely tired out, Joe and I had a well-earned sleep and left the rest till morning.

Now that we were all together again, various details had to be worked out—and Joe's pannier-carrying arrangement had to be altered into something better than a cats-cradle, because after Austria the roads were an unknown quantity. As we rolled out of Vienna, the weather was beautiful and sunny; the road was good and the scenery marvellous. We rode along in line, about two or three hundred yards apart, and life seemed good. The motor purred beautifully at about 40 m.p.h. With my hands and feet on the controls easing, and feeling as a good cavalry man should, I looked forward to the bends and swoops, the ups and downs and the long straights of the unknown roads that lay before us. As a pillion rider, Val was and is perfection, and between us there grew a perfect understanding both on and off the bike. We'd talk of the scenery, our lives before the trip, our likes and dislikes, our beliefs as we went along, getting to know each other very well. At night we would stop about an hour before dark, always near a stream, cook a meal, write diaries, do any maintenance, talk, then sleep. We had two two-man tents, one for the two girls, Val and Ronnie, the other for Joe and Warren. I preferred the open anyway. In the mornings we'd rise about six, cook eggs and tea, pack up and be away by 7.30.

At the Yugoslav border we were passed through and rode on towards the " autoput" and Belgrade. It seemed a shame that such a beautiful road should be wasted; for from Zagreb to Belgrade we saw very little power-driven traffic. Later it was not hard to realize why. It is the only good road in Yugoslavia so no Yugoslav in his right mind is going to buy a vehicle, even if he can afford it, to have it rattled and shaken to pieces on all the other tracks. We made good time along the "autoput" but in a way we were pleased to get off it; it was so straight, flat and monotonous. And it was very hot. Our Barbour suits had been packed away, and we rode in shirt-sleeves.

On reaching Belgrade, Val and I decided to lighten our load by sending home the clothing that we could do without. Joe once again had to get his pannier frames fixed and also there was an ominous knock in his engine. We left Belgrade without him and made arrangements to meet later in Istanbul. Not a very happy arrangement I'm afraid, but that was just my opinion.

After Belgrade the roads became shocking beyond description—just a mass of loose stones,-- ruts, pot-holes and corrugations—and as we slithered and bumped along at 15 to 20 m.p.h. I wondered how long we should be able to stay upright, I also wondered at the mentality of the map-maker who had marked this as a main route. And the dust was everywhere; it wasn't long before my well-lubricated rear chain was bright and dry. A nasty bump, and then a crack brought us to a sudden halt. The rear mudguard stay, on which, most of the weight rested, had broken; there was nothing for it but a welder. But where? We were lucky, and after 10 miles of very slow and careful riding we found one—a very good one, too, who did an efficient job and charged me one of my spare sparking plugs! This was the first of many, many welding jobs I had to have done to the rear end, thanks to the bad roads, and over-loading.

But even the roads could not make us dislike Yugoslavia. On the contrary, the people were so friendly and cheerful, happy and generous that they made us feel at home. From the fields and streets they waved to us. A group would gather round whenever we stopped or camped, and pretty soon some-one would be helping put the tents up, or fetching water, and invariably someone gave us loads of fruit and tomatoes.

At the Greek frontier we hoped for better tracks. The Greeks certainly were doing something about their roads and once again we enjoyed the thrill of a sealed surface. It wasn't all sealed surface though—and 'when we saw in the distance bulldozers, earth movers and a huge cloud of dust we knew what was in store for us, because whilst repairs are going on the Greeks make no provision for a detour. We had to get through the roadworks somehow, sometimes through sand, sometimes in a ditch, always on a loose surface with me footing like an octopus whilst Val sat serenely on the back. The Greeks were just as hospitable and -friendly as the Yugoslavs. So often on our journey we wished we could stay longer with friends we made, or in places we liked, but at the back of our minds was the fact that our slim resources had to get us to Australia.

The hospitality and friendliness increased in Turkey. The roads on the whole were better, too, and we motored along at a steady 45 m.p.h., taking in the scenery, stopping to take pictures, making friends and enjoying ourselves' immensely. The two " teams " were now independent units—we changed our own money, bought and cooked our own meals, and so on—but the four of us always camped together and, whilst riding, kept within reasonable distance of each other. Val and I got along wonderfully well. She seemed to pick up the different currencies very quickly; and as we crossed each border she would get the Customs man to tell us what the main necessities of life were in his particular language.

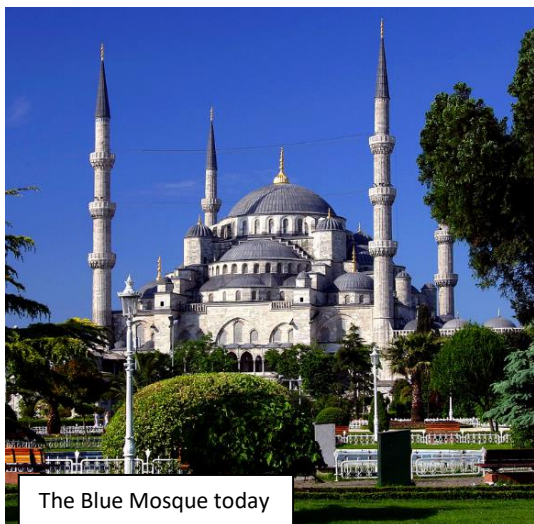


*The " Blue Mosque," Istanbul—as Ding's camera caught it.*

We found Turkey more modern than we had expected. Every-where were advertising hoardings for Western goods. The petrol was very good, too, especially, after the very poor Yugoslav stuff, which smelt horrible and performed even worse. But for' safety's, sake, I used plenty of Redex, of which I was carrying 6 quarts.

Istanbul is truly a picturesque city, and Val loved it—its smells and its noise, its minarets and mosques, and the colourful people who thronged its streets. We stayed there three days, and each day went to the appointed place to meet Joe, but he didn't turn up. The whole time, we "garaged" our machines in the very respectable hotel's foyer, at the request of the owner! It meant riding up three steps, and the crowd that gathered to see us ride out would have flattered a film star or a princess.

We left Istanbul via the ferry for our 10-minute ride to Turkey in Asia. It was a beautiful sunset as we crossed and there was just time for a quick ride to find a camping spot before dark. As we ascended the hills on our way to Ankara, next day, the scenery became more beautiful and -mountainous, but the roads deteriorated again. The lorry-drivers were rather wild, and didn't always give us much room; they smothered us in dust and it was a work of art to pass one.

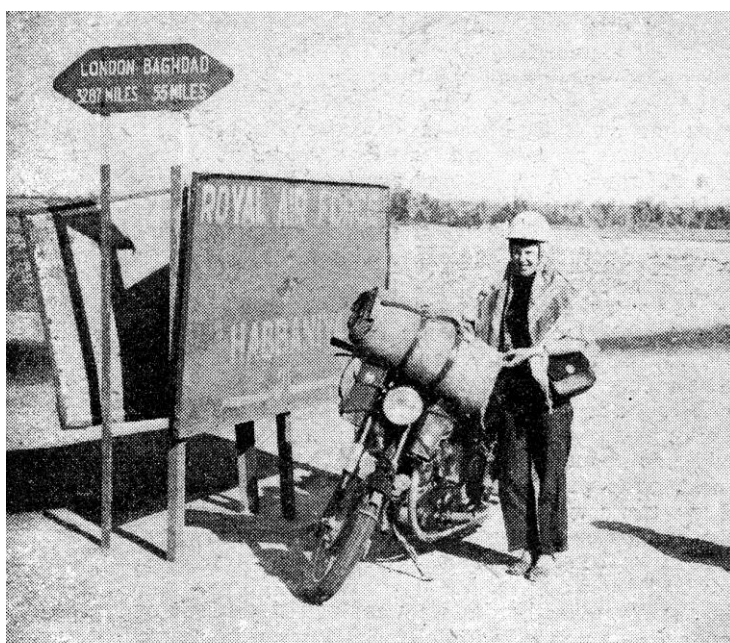


Every time we stopped, either to buy food, change a traveller's cheque or get petrol, it was a case of "Come in and have some tea." Such good tea, too, brought in on a tray which was suspended from three brass chains and held at arm's length by a small boy. And we'd talk to our host about our travels. Language difficulties were overcome by big, friendly smiles, their limited knowledge of English and our much more limited knowledge of French or German. On the way from Ankara we met a most hospitable Turk who was so kind to us that it hurt to see the pained look on his face when we said we really must push on—but not before he'd given us two grand meals—and taken us to the top of the mountain in his Jeep, which nearly scared us to death. (The thing had no hand-brake, and he kept stalling it, at which he would run back towards a precipitous edge.)

**How We Stopped the Traffic:** On reaching Aleppo, in Syria, we caused quite a stir. It was unusual, there, to see two such baby elephants of motorcycles and their peculiar riders, especially the women in slacks and crash helmets, and soon we were surrounded by such an enormous crowd that it blocked the street. The trams and traffic had to stop, the cops couldn't move the people. Val and Ronnie had gone off to change money and Warren and I nearly died of suffocation. I asked one of our prisoners if he'd get us some water and as he made his way back to us through the throng, Val and Ronnie followed him in. We drank the water and mounted, a few blips on the throttle, and the crowd parted and let us out. We made our way to the Post Office and picked up mail from home; then to a garage where I did an oil change. A quick tour of the city, and then towards the outskirts and the road to Horns. A few miles outside Aleppo and we camped, not a great way from a building where I had been billeted in 1941 as part of the British Army which quelled the Vichy French.

This was familiar countryside to me now; the domed, mud-hutted villages, the Arabs in their flowing *galabiers* and head-dresses, the bare waterless desert from which the herds of sheep and goats somehow seemed to get something to eat, the heat shimmering up from the road and the lack of trees and shade. We left Aleppo behind us and rode on towards Tripoli, in the Lebanon, but first there were the Customs to go through. What a wonderful greeting the Lebanese gave us! All the officers spoke excellent English, and invited us to stay whilst they cooked us steak and chips, tomatoes and bread; meantime we drank small quantities of *arak*, which is very potent, and they showed us how to play a game like back-gammon. The meal was excellent and we bade them farewell after having stayed with them five hours. We hoped the rest of our stay in the Lebanon would be as pleasant as the beginning.

**Club Without Women:** While we were waiting outside the Post Office in Tripoli with the machine, the usual crowd gathered, and a pleasant young man asked whether we would care to be his guests. He took us to



*It's a long way to Piccadilly . . . Val (with Arabian anti-glare outfit) poses the model beside a self-explanatory signpost.*

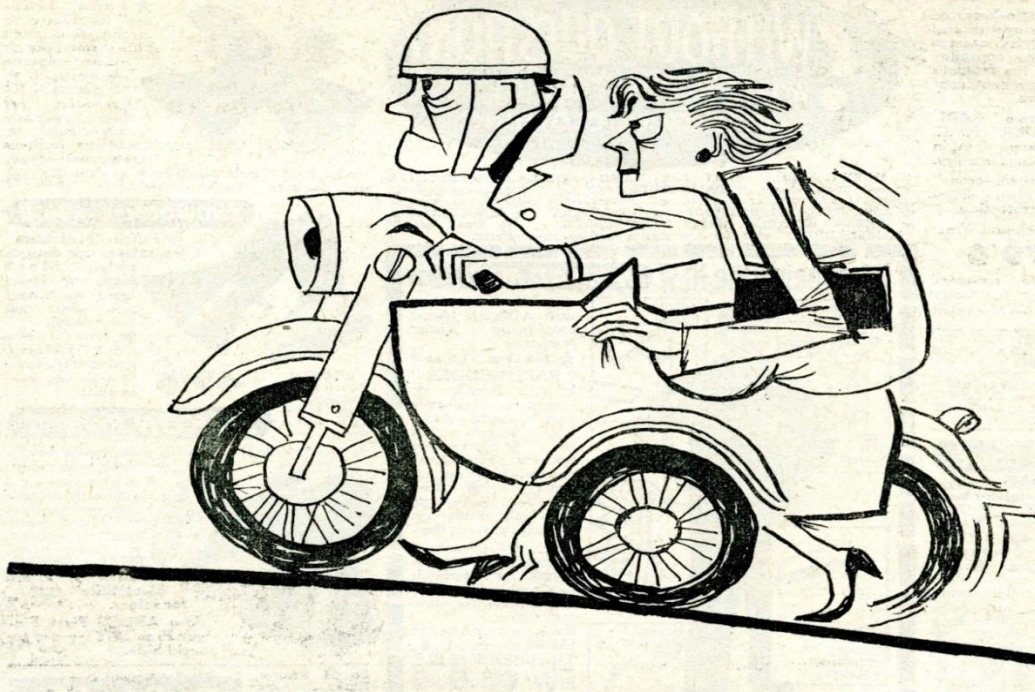
a large, well-furnished house which served as the headquarters of the sporting club to which he belonged, and said: " Make yourselves at home whilst I rake up my friends." So we had a much-needed bath and clean-up, and by the time he returned with about twenty of his friends we were quite presentable. They were a fine bunch of fellows, all between 20 and 30 and very handsome. Each one spoke excellent English and was well educated. We wondered at the absence of female members and asked why. They told us they were up against the old ideas of their parents and religion (Muslim), which would not permit women to join, although they hoped that eventually they might do so. They put on a very big spread for us and the luscious fruit was really good. Afterwards, we all had a go at smoking a hubble-bubble (hookah) pipe, but I preferred cigarettes.

Next day, using the club' as our H.Q., we stripped the bikes of gear and rode up to the Cedars of Lebanon—a sight worth seeing indeed. The last few hundred feet we accomplished in a ski-lift, which put us down right among the snow. How cool and refreshing it was after the heat of the plains; we were sorry to have to descend again. Back in Tripoli, we packed the bikes and, after saying a sincere thank-you to our very kind friends, took the coast road down to Beirut.

We found a nice spot to camp, 100 yards from the sea's edge, but it wasn't long before we realized that the mosquitoes liked us more than we did them. We submerged under the water to get a brief respite and when we came out smothered ourselves insect repellent. It was not much good though. I rolled myself in my sheet like a mummy and slept fitfully, as it was so hot. Val and Ronnie slept reasonably well in the tent, but Warren walked around all night, and we were on the road to Beirut at daybreak.

*(Next time: Journey through India)*

## Horsepower or wifepower?



What's the old bike like on hills? Not as good as it should be if the valve springs are past their prime. That's certain, for nothing wastes power like tired valve springs. Luckily, a new set is quite cheap.

And they soon pay for themselves in petrol saved.

Especially if they're Terry's which last so long, are so efficient too.

refit with **TERRY'S** aero valve springs



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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 an email to the editor of OVR with the text of your advertisement. 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.

**FOR SALE:** Series C Vincent fiberglass 5 gallon tank to suit sidecar outfit chemically treated for modern fuels, in good order \$500, Located in Melbourne, Australia.  
Phone Phil on +61 3 94996428



**FOR SALE:** My Velocette is a lovely bike but I have not fallen in love with it. Therefore a divorce is required. It is in Clubman trim and is well known in Velocette circles. The tyres are good, it starts and runs but has a little piston slap. No smoke from exhaust and oil consumption is minimal. New front brake shoes are still bedding in. Speedo and Tacho were serviced by DQ and work perfectly. Manual BTH magneto has good spark and generator works fine. Seat is a new Leighton unit and very comfortable. Located in Sydney, Australia.  
I will offer this bike via OVR and the Velocette club for Aust\$18,000 but in the New Year I will list in Just Bikes for offers over Aust\$18,000. If still unsold I will put it into Shannons Auction. Contact Al by email for more info [alynvincent@mac.com](mailto:alynvincent@mac.com)



# Service Providers

The Service Providers listed have been used with a degree of satisfaction by OVR readers in the past. Just because they are listed does not imply an endorsement of them by OVR. Service providers are not charged a fee for this service nor can service providers themselves request that their information be included, though they may request that an entry referring to them be removed.

## *Spares:*

**V3 Products**, Australia: (aka Neal Videan) has an extensive range of top quality Vincent Spares including multiplate clutches for twins, 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](mailto:nvidean@optusnet.com.au)

**Coventry Spares Ltd**, USA: Fantastic service and deep product knowledge plus extensive range of excellent 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 for Comets plus an extensive range of excellent Vincent Spares. Ships Worldwide. Email for more information [steve@conway-motors.co.uk](mailto: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>.

**Terry Prince Classic Motorbikes**, Australia: 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

**Fastline Spokes**, based in Broadford, Victoria, can supply Australian made spokes for just about any bike. Owner Bruce Lotherington manufactures spokes to order with a turn around time of less than 1 week. For more info see [www.fastlinespokes.com.au](http://www.fastlinespokes.com.au) or phone (+61) 0411 844 169

**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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.acmestainless.co.uk)

**Classic Fasteners**, 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](http://www.precisionshims.com.au)

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

**Keables, Australia:** The original nut n bolt specialists who are able to supply just about anything with threads and bits to match such as taps n dies. Recently have relocated to 11 Braid St, West Footscray, Vic. Ph 03 9321 6400. Web site [www.keables.com.au](http://www.keables.com.au)

## *Restoration Services:*

**Steve Barnett, Australia.** Master coachbuilder and fuel tank creator who does incredible workmanship; located in Harcourt, Victoria. Ph +61 3 5474 2864, email [steviemoto@hotmail.com](mailto:steviemoto@hotmail.com)

**Ken Phelps, Australia** – Qualified aircraft engineer and builder and daily rider of Norvins for over 30 years, who has the skill and experience to carry out overhauls, rebuilds, general repairs and maintenance to Vincent HRD motorcycles. Full machine shop facilities enabling complete engine and chassis rebuilds, Painting, wiring, polishing, aluminium welding and wheel building. Ken Phelps Phone: (61+) 0351760809 E-mail: [ogrillp400@hotmail.com](mailto:ogrillp400@hotmail.com) . Located in Traralgon, Victoria, Australia

**Outer Cycles, Australia:** Jim Browhly is a master craftsman who manufactures bespoke motorcycle exhaust systems for classic bikes, no job is beyond his capability, so if you do need a new system that will be made to your precise requirements, give Jim a call, telephone 03 9761 9217.

**Grant White – Motor Trimmer, Australia:** Specialising in Vintage and Classic Cars and Motorcycles. Located in Viewbank, Victoria. ph 03 9458 3479 or email [grantwhite11@bigpond.com](mailto:grantwhite11@bigpond.com)

**Ace Classics Australia** is a Torquay Vic. based Restoration business specialising only in British Classic and Vintage Motorcycles. Complementing this service, they provide in-house Vapour Blasting, Electrical Repairs and Upgrades, Magneto and Dynamo Restoration plus Servicing and Repairs to all pre-1975 British Motorcycles. They are also the Australian Distributor and Stockist for Alton Generators and Electric Starters. Phone on 0418350350; or email [alan@aceclassics.com.au](mailto:alan@aceclassics.com.au) . Their Web page is [www.aceclassics.com.au](http://www.aceclassics.com.au)

## *General Services :*

**Cylinder Heads, Australia:** Cylinder Heads are highly skilled engine experts with 30 years of experience operating from their new Ringwood workshop. Alex has extensive experience in complete reconditioning of motorcycle heads, including Vincents plus installation of hardened valve seats, valve guides and valve stem seals. A precision engineer, Alex offers an extensive range of engine reconditioning and repair services; he also offers precision welding of all metals. For more information see <http://www.cylinderheadsvictoria.com.au> or phone Alex on (03) 8838 8515

**Peter Scott Motorcycles, Australia:** Top quality magneto and dynamo services, from simple repairs to complete restorations plus an extensive range of associated spares. Provides hi-output coil rewinds with a 5 year warranty. For more info contact Peter on (02) 9624 1262 or email [qualmag@optusnet.com.au](mailto:qualmag@optusnet.com.au)

**Ringwood Speedometer Service, Australia:** Experts in the repair and restoration of all motorcycle, automotive and marine instruments. Smiths cronometric specialists. Telephone (03) 9874 2260

**Rays Custom Spray Painting, Australia:** Ray Drever is skilled in painting bike tanks and frames. Also a craftsman in flame work and airbrushing. Located near Geelong; contact Ray on 03 5251 2458 or 0402 988 284.

**Dyson M/C Engineering, Australia:** Wheel building, Crank rebuilds, Bead blasting, Rebores & Engine Rebuilds and more. Located at 12 Chris Crt., Hillside, Victoria. Phone 0400 817 017

**Piu Welding, Australia:** Frank Piu is a master welding engineer who works with Aluminium as well as steel. No job to small. Has been recommended by multiple OVR readers. Phone 03 9878 2337

**MotorCycle Fairings, Australia:** This crew are are total professionals when it comes to painting. Expert service, quick turnaround and fair prices. <http://www.melbournemotorcyclefairings.com.au/>  
Ph 03 9939 3344

# Barn Finds



Your guide to selling any old shit by calling it a Barn Find

## **Dodgy Wankers Manual**



Includes map of over 600,000 undiscovered UK barns