



The Oz Vincent Review

Edition #52, July 2018

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 OVR@optusnet.com.au



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Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of The Oz Vincent Review. This month's front cover features

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Melbourne, Australia.
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Letters To The Editor

Hi Martyn, You may be interested in this? In March 2018, ultimatemotorcycling.com, listed the 10 most valuable motorcycles. You will note that they are all Vincents and Broughs! Amounts are in US\$.

1. 1951 Vincent Black Lightning – \$929,000
2. The ex-Hubert Chantrey, 1932 Brough Superior 800cc Model BS4 Project – \$458,197
3. 1929 Brough Superior 968cc SS100 – \$434,866
4. Rare 'one-of-one' Black Shadow variant in Chinese Red – 1951 Vincent White Shadow – \$421,351
5. 1939 Vincent-HRD 998cc Series-A Rapide – \$380,888
6. 1939 Vincent-HRD 998cc Rapide Series-A Project – \$373,157
7. 1927 Brough Superior 981cc SS100 Alpine Grand Sport Project – \$357,695
8. The ex-George Brough, London-Edinburgh Trial – 1939 Brough Superior 990cc SS100 – \$349,964
9. The ex-Murray Motorcycle Museum, 1934 Brough Superior 996cc SS100 – \$334,502
10. 1926 Brough Superior 981cc SS100 Alpine Grand Sport Project – \$326,771

Regards, Thomo, USA

Black Lightning: the most expensive motorbike sold at auction – and how it feels to be the winning bidder

The most valuable motorcycle ever sold at auction, a 1951 Vincent 998cc Black Lightning, changed hands for US\$929,000 at the Bonhams Las Vegas sale in January 2018. Only 30 Black Lightning models were built at Vincent's Stevenage factory, making this one of the rarest bikes in the world, but this lot was particularly special – it broke the Australian speed record in the hands of Jack Ehret in 1953.

After reaching 141.5mph on an empty stretch of road in New South Wales that year, Ehret continued to compete with the bike around Australia. Indeed, their final race together - man and machine - was in 1993. Since then, the bike has spent time in storage and in international ownership before being re-commissioned and sold earlier this year.



Jack Ehret in 1952

In a rare interview, Poppy McKenzie Smith speaks to its new owner Peter Bender, who having bought the record-breaking bike in January has returned it to Australia where it made its name.

Why motorbikes, Peter?

I started riding bikes at a young age on our farm, and then took up trials on a 1976 Bultaco Sherpa T. My first old British bike was a 1956 Matchless G3LS – a one-owner bike that was originally owned by an old man who lived nearby. I bought it in the late 70s, and it was in pretty poor condition. That was my first go at restoring bikes and I still have it today – it has since been re-restored as my first efforts weren't quite as good as they are now...

From then on, I really loved old British bikes in particular and accumulated a few fairly average ones over the next 20 or 30 years. Some I kept, but some I sold, such as old BSA C10s and C11s which wouldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding. It wasn't until the last decade or so when our business of salmon farming here in Australia became profitable that I could afford to buy more exotic machinery such as the Black Lightning.



It's not the most beautiful thing on two wheels, nor is it the best-kept, but this motorcycle remains one of the world's most famous CREDIT: WILLIAM MEES

Where did you hear about the Black Lightning?

I had been aware of the bike for some time when it was under its second most recent ownership. I'd read about it in a couple of magazines, and a Black Lightning was always top of my list of bucket-list bikes. For the past ten years, it was nothing but a pipe-dream and was totally out of my reach financially. In the meantime, I purchased a Series A Vincent Rapide from the Black Lightning's then-owner, and asked him to let me know if ever considered selling it.

And did he?

He assured me that he would, but apparently it slipped his mind and the guy who had the bike before me got in first. I phoned him about it, and he was very upset that he had forgotten our conversation. It would have cost me much less to have bought the bike from him five years ago, but then I wouldn't have the world record for the most valuable bike at auction! I try to see the positive wherever I can, and it is certainly the only world record that I'll ever get.

How did you feel when it went up for auction?

I didn't attend [the sale] as my wife had initially told me that I couldn't buy it. We are building a new house soon, and we had put money away for that project. On the morning of the auction, I tried my luck and asked once more if I could bid – she finally agreed on a figure that would be my limit. When the bike came up at the auction, my agreed limit came and went.

I was phone bidding, and I told Andy from Bonhams on the telephone that I had to stop or my wife wouldn't be happy. At home, my wife then put her hand up which I took to mean 'put in one more bid' which I promptly did. This went on for a couple more bids until eventually the hammer came down, and I won the bike.



How did it feel to win?

At that point I was in shock, I couldn't believe that I'd bought it, nor work out why my wife had changed her mind. Her sister summed it up later – she said that she is very stubborn and doesn't like losing, so I guess that is how I ended up placing the winning bid! It would have been wonderful to have been there in person, but had I gone off on my own, I wouldn't have dared to keep bidding. There is probably a lesson in there somewhere, but I haven't quite worked it out yet.

What made you so desperate for this bike?

It is a bike that I had had my eye on for some time. Vincent – along with Brough Superior – are the most coveted motorcycles in the world, and the Black Lightning is the pinnacle of the Vincent marque. It is one of only nine matching numbers examples left in the world, and I believe the most original. To top it off, it held the Australian land speed record, so this is a seriously special machine.

What does its future look like?

I haven't quite worked that out. It will certainly get used though; I am a big believer that these great machines shouldn't get locked away never to be seen again.

They were made to be used, and they should be. I will take it to rallies and fire it up and take it for runs. I don't think I will strip down to my bathing suit and take it to the salt flats of Bonneville but you never know. It is not exactly a user-friendly bike, so I won't be taking it down to the corner shop to buy a loaf of bread, that's for sure.

I was disappointed when it went out of the country – I feel that it belongs here and it was great to bring it back. I am very fortunate that I was in a position to do that.

This item, by Poppy McKenzie Smith, is reproduced with the generous permission of Peter Bender.



The bike's new owner suggests that it will continue to be ridden on occasion CREDIT: WILLIAM MEES

[Click Here to see a short Video about the Auction of this outstanding motorcycle](#)

Thanks to the generosity of Lou from Australia, OVR is able to bring to you in a serialised form, a reproduction of the Vincent H.R.D. Instruction Book for the Series A, originally published almost 80 years past.

more to follow in subsequent OVR editions.

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Continued from the last edition of OVR:

THE OIL PUMP.

This section is only concerned with the construction and operation of the oil pump. For lubrication faults, symptoms of same and their corrections see lubrication section and chart attached to same.

The lubrication system is operated by a double gear pump, the wide pair of gears nearer the engine being the scavenge pump and the other the pressure or delivery pump.

One of the most frequent causes of smoky running on first starting up is the draining of the oil from the oil tank through the pump into the sump. This is nearly always due to the ball valve situated inside the outlet banjo at the rear side of the pump, not making a good seating.

The remedy is to remove the banjo bolt, the light spring contained within it, and the $\frac{1}{4}$ " ball which lies at the bottom of the hole. Verify that the spring is not damaged, and that it is of the correct length which is between $\frac{3}{4}$ " and $\frac{7}{8}$ ". When re-assembling, gently tap the ball on to its seating with a flat ended punch, or another suitable piece of metal which cannot damage the ball, for preference a flat piece of brass.

Pressure System. The delivery system is divided into two distinct sections, as follows.

- (a) Oil is fed via drilled passages in the pump to the mainshaft through a brass quill, and thence to the big end. This oil on passing through the big end lubricates the cylinder and main bearings by splash and is then picked up in the sump.
- (b) The other part of the oil supply passes through a jet in the top of the pump, up an oil-way in the timing cover to the camshaft bush and thence to the rocker gear, draining back to the sump over push-rod and timing gear.

Supplementary to section (a) is the rear cylinder feed, correct adjustment for which is given in paragraph 2 (lubrication).

Scavenge System. All oil pumped into the engine eventually drains back to the sump at the rear end of the crankcase. From this point it is picked up by the scavenge pipe and carried by suction to the return pump. If there are any air leaks the suction will not be sufficient to lift the oil fast enough.

Oil pumps are divided into various series as improvements have been carried out in their design.

- (1) The original series fitted to early 1935 models bears no prefix letter before the pump number.
- (2) The second series carries the prefix letter "B."
- (3) The third series carries the prefix letters "BD."

"BD" Type Oil Pump.

Pressure Relief Valve. All series pumps are fitted with a ball and spring under the banjo bolt which attaches the feed pipe from the tank to the pump. This ball covers a hole drilled through from the delivery side of the pump and the spring is arranged to allow the ball to lift whenever the oil pressure becomes too great, thus allowing surplus oil to escape back to the delivery side

of the pump. It will be evident that this ball and spring must always be carefully replaced after removal for any reason, otherwise the pump cannot deliver oil at any pressure at all. Likewise, the spring must not be tampered with in any way.

Non-Return Valve. Series "B" and "BD" pumps have fitted under the rear cylinder feed banjo bolt a similar ball and spring in order to prevent oil from leaking past the pump into the engine. This spring is very light as the pump cannot deliver oil until it lifts off its seat. The tension of the non-return valve spring can be checked by removing the pressure relief valve and inserting a piece of wire through the small central hole. Likewise, by removing the non-return valve, the tension of the relief valve spring can be checked. The non-return valve must always be appreciably weaker than the pressure relief valve, otherwise it is impossible for the pump to deliver oil to the engine. (Note: Early series "B" pumps may have an ordinary plug fitted in place of rear cylinder feed banjo.)

Should either valve be suspected of leaking, make sure they are seating correctly and the oilways are clear. The seating can often be improved by placing the ball in position and tapping it gently on to its seat.

Oil Delivery Quill. It is very important to remove this and clean it at regular intervals on all types of pump. A blocked quill will mean a seized big end and probably piston also. On the original series pumps the quill was screwed into the back of the pump from the inside, and was fitted with a restricting jet screwed into the quill. To clear, remove pump, unscrew quill and clear jet. This should be done every time the engine is overhauled, or once every 2,500 miles.

"B" series pumps have the quill passed right through the pump and retained by a nut on the inside, so that again the pump must be removed to clear. Originally these quills had a $\frac{1}{8}$ " hole drilled radially to serve as a jet, but a later pattern which is interchangeable has a central jet and six small radial holes which act as a filter. This latter pattern is fitted to "BD" pumps, but in this case screws in from the outside and can be removed without disturbing the pump, and it has a small screw in the centre of its hexagon which can be removed to verify that oil is flowing through the radial filter holes (oil should issue when the engine is running). Removal of this screw also enables the jet to be cleared with fine wire. This operation is so simple that we recommend it to be carried out as a precaution every 1,000 miles, whilst the quill may be removed and cleaned every 2,500 miles.

Series "B" pumps, if returned to the Works, can be modified for a reasonable charge to take the "BD" pattern quickly detachable quill.

When fitting "BD" pattern quills care must be taken not to screw them up tight as radial holes leave the brass rather weak and liable to fracture under stress.

Provided everything is correctly assembled, oil is reaching the pump freely and all other points mentioned in the fault finding charts have been checked and found correct, there remain only the possibility of a sheared pump key or gear or too great a clearance on the sides of the gears.

The gears on the driven side of the pump are lightly keyed to the shaft so that the key may shear in preference to the gears should any foreign matter enter the pump. The gears on the idler shafts are free. Should a key shear and no spare be available, a spare can be made from a piece of ten gauge spoke or wire, the remains of the old key being tapped out of the shaft before re-fitting. The gears when lying in their machined recesses should lie only just under the surface of the pump body, up to 0.002" being *maximum* permissible clearance. Should wear have increased this clearance it can be reduced by lightly rubbing the pump face on a sheet of emery cloth laid on a dead flat surface so that it is taken down evenly all over. Likewise, the clearance can be increased should the gears be too tight and rubbing, by easing the gears down on emery.

Running clearance is provided by the paper washer, which should preferably be a genuine spare, but if not available, should be made from very thin paper.

USEFUL INFORMATION.

Valve Timing.		Inlet Opens	Closes	Exhaust Opens	Closes
Meteor	40°	52°	65°	33°
Comet	44°	56°	68°	38°
Comet Special and T.T. Replica		48°	60°	71°	42°

Note.—The above timings are approximate, and will vary slightly with different engines. Endeavour to obtain the best mean setting.

Ignition Timing.

Meteor or Comet, 42° = 17/32".

Comet Special, between 38° and 40°. Varies with different engines and conditions.

Compression Ratios.

Meteor, 6.8 to 1. Comet, 7.3 to 1. Comet Special, 8 to 1.

Bore and Stroke.

All models:—84 mm. Bore, 90 mm. Stroke.

Approximate Jet Sizes (Standard Fuel).

Meteor, 160-170. Comet, 170-180. Comet Special Road Silencer, 330-350.

Comet Special Brooklands, Silencer, 390-420.

Comet Special Open Pipe, 460-500.

Recommended Sparking Plugs.

Meteor, K.L.G. 831. Comet, K.L.G. 831.

Comet Special, Touring, K.L.G. 831.

Comet Special, Fast Touring or Short Racing, K.L.G. 646.

Comet Special, Long Distance Racing, K.L.G. 689 or 731.

Recommended Fuels.

Meteor or Comet, High Grade Ethyl Petrol.

Comet Special, Petrol 50% mixed with Benzol 50%. Ethyl may be used for touring.

Recommended Oils (See page 13).

Recommended Grease for Gearboxes.

All Models. Shell Retinax Grease, Mobilgrease No. 2, Castrolase Medium, Esso Grease, Belmolene C.

Recommended Grease for Cycle Parts.

All models. Tecaletit, Shell Retinax Grease (Shell R.B. Grease for Wheel Hubs), Mobilgrease, Castrolase Heavy, Esso Grease, Belmoline C.

Very Important.

The above recommendations are arrived at by our testing department after many years experimental work and must not be lightly disregarded. We can except no responsibility for the performance or reliability of machines where our recommendations are not followed out.

Recommended Tyre Pressures.

All models. 26" x 3.25" rear tyre, 20 lbs. solo, 22 lbs. pillion.
26" x 3.25" front tyre, 18 lbs. solo or pillion.

FRAME SECTION.

The springing system is very unlikely to require any attention beyond an occasional application of the grease gun to the pivot bearing and spring boxes. Should the steering become erratic attend to the following points:—

1. Check fork links for play.
2. Check head race for play. See steering damper does not bind.
3. Check alignment of the wheels.
4. Check hub bearings for play.
5. Check tyre pressures.
6. Check pivot bearing for play.

The correct method of carrying out the various operations above are given under the appropriate headings.

To check the head race place a block under the crankcase so that the front wheel is clear of the ground. Stand astride the front wheel, and grasping both fork blades, try to move them backwards and forwards, at the same time watching the bearing for play. This bearing should be tight enough to have no play at all, but must be quite free. To adjust, slacken off the clamp bolt through the top head clip and screw up the steering column nut, then relock.

To check alignment of wheels, attach a piece of string to a rear wheel spoke and pass it round the rear of the tyre. Then pull it taut towards the front of the machine and move it towards the front wheel until it just touches the leading edge of the rear tyre. Keep the front wheel parallel to the string, i.e., pointing straight ahead.

If the same tyres are fitted front and rear, the string should touch the front and rear edges of the front tyre at the same instant as it touches the

front edge of the rear tyre, but if the front tyre is smaller, allowance must be made for the difference in tyre width. With 3.25 rear and 3.00 front tyres there should be an equal gap of $\frac{1}{8}$ " at both edges of the front tyre as the leading edge of the rear tyre is touched. Always check by testing both sides, and the rear wheel must of course be set accordingly to bring the wheels correctly in track.

To check pivot bearing, support the rear wheel clear of the ground by a block under the gearbox and check the bearing for play by moving the rear fork sideways. Should there be any play, which is unlikely, it can be taken up by slackening the outer lock nut, tightening the inner nut until there is no play, and then relocking the outer nut.

FRONT FORKS.

To check the fork links for play, turn the front fork from lock to lock observing whether there is excessive side float on the links. There should be no visible play, only just sufficient to enable the knurled side washers to be turned.

To adjust, slacken off all lock nuts, noting that the drive side ones have a left hand thread. Then screw up the spindles clockwise by the squared end until correct adjustment is obtained. A good method is to screw the spindles up till they are tight and then slacken off about a quarter turn. Lock up all nuts and re-check whether the washers are free. The damper spring must also be slackened off before adjusting the lower links.

Be very careful to lubricate the fork spindles frequently, especially when new. If a spindle seizes, it should be freed as soon as possible as there is always a risk that a seized spindle may break off through excessive strain. Moreover, if the forks are stiff to operate they have a serious affect on the steering. If any of the spindle lock nuts work loose, check up whether that spindle is working freely as this is usually an indication that it is tending to seize.

BRAKE HUBS.

To remove rear wheel, pull back the retaining clips on the brake anchor stays and slip the latter off sideways. Loosen tommybar spindle and rotate the brake plates slightly so that the cam operating arms slide along the brake rods for about 1". The motion blocks can now be slipped out sideways, without affecting the brake adjuster. Now remove the tommybar spindle and push the wheel right forward, at the same time lifting it so that the chain becomes slack. The chain can be lifted off the sprocket without releasing the spring link, and the wheel removed from the frame. It is advisable to keep the various parts mentioned above oily so that they always operate freely.

To replace the rear wheel reverse the procedure described above.

To remove the front wheel, undo the nut on the spindle and knock out the spindle. After the wheel has dropped, unhook the cables from their slots. Reverse this procedure to refit the wheel. Where a speedometer is fitted the drive must be detached.

To adjust rear brakes, place machine on the rear stand and screw up one adjuster till the brake just rubs when the wheel is spun. Slacken this ad-

Event Calendar

2018	
August 27-31	Australian National VOC Rally, to be held at the Maroochy River Resort in Queensland. Contact kevinfowler2@bigpond.com for more info
Sept 18 - 24	VOC Austria Rally. Said to be the best ever – too good to miss. Contact Michi for more info schartner.m@sbg.at
2019	
March 22 -24	VOC NZ 2019 Annual Rally @ Otago. Email beatim@xnet.co.nz for more info
June 3 - 19	VOC International Rally; Belgium and Austria. More info to follow also see MPH
2020	
tba	International Jampot Rally in Nelson, New Zealand for AJS & Matchless bikes. Contact nipper@nipper.net.au

Maintenance Miscellanea:

If All Else Fails! While having a coffee with my 90yo friend Terence William Fulton-Kennedy (Wil) one morning a while back I mentioned engine corrosion. Wil said his wife had an old English car that needed a valve grind but he could not shift the aluminium head. He asked another old bushie mechanic friend of his what to do. He said to go to the chemist and get a bottle of the strongest iodine he could buy and drip it around all the head studs for about a week. After a week Wil said the head finally came away. Now knowing the guy next door is a industrial chemist I asked him if this is possible. He sent me this link to look at. WOW. Iodine and aluminium react together. It's called an exothermic reaction. [Click Here to be amazed](#) What you would call an “if all else fails solution”!

Super Sparks There is a recent player in the design and supply of electronic ignition for Vincent and other classic bikes; TriSpark Ignition (www.trispark.com.au), designed and manufactured in Adelaide, South Australia, they make superb, reliable and compact ignition systems suitable for single, twin, triple and four cylinder motorcycles. Their unit for V twins can be supplied for any “V” angle required: 50 degrees for a Vincent, 90 degrees for Ducati and MotoGuzi; you specify what your motor needs and they can deliver.

OVR reader and Vincent enthusiast Mike Walker has recently installed a TriSpark system on his Rapide. All of the electronics are contained inside the compact Magneto Replacement unit with the ONLY external connections being one lead to the ignition coil and the other lead bikes battery – you read right – just two leads. It's a super neat installation as can be seen in the photo. Mike tells OVR that it was very easy to install and set up and after a number of runs reports easy starting and great on road performance. Visit the TriSpark web site for more information.



COMETIC Gasket Upgrade The ever resourceful Paul Holdsworth of the VOC's Chicago section and purveyor of the superb Cometic Gasket Kits has recently upgraded the offering to now include a Cometic replacement for the ET186 gaskets that fit under the oil line banjo's on the engine heads – 2 for Singles and 4 for twins. The ET186 replacements may also be ordered from Paul separately. Had them on my motor for the last 1,400 miles and not a sign of leakage



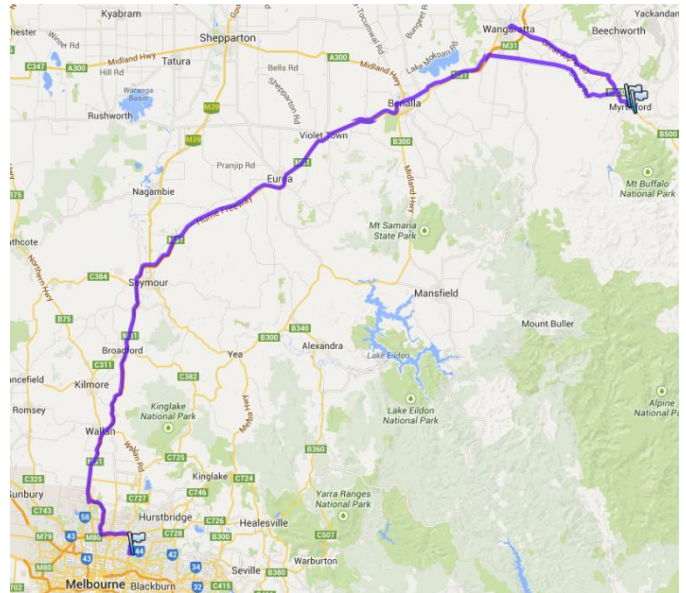
Myrtleford Ramble

I was invited to join the Iron Indian Riders of Australia on a 3 day rally, based at [Myrtleford](#) Victoria, to explore the foothills of the Great Dividing Range. Day one was the run from Melbourne to Myrtleford, day two a ride to Tallangatta, day three a run to Yackandandah and day four, return to Melbourne. In all 800 miles. The whole time the weather gods were smiling down on us – we had perfect Autumn weather – crisp cold but clear mornings that quickly warmed to wonderful sunny days finishing with brilliant star filled sky at night – and over the 4 days, nary a sign of rain.

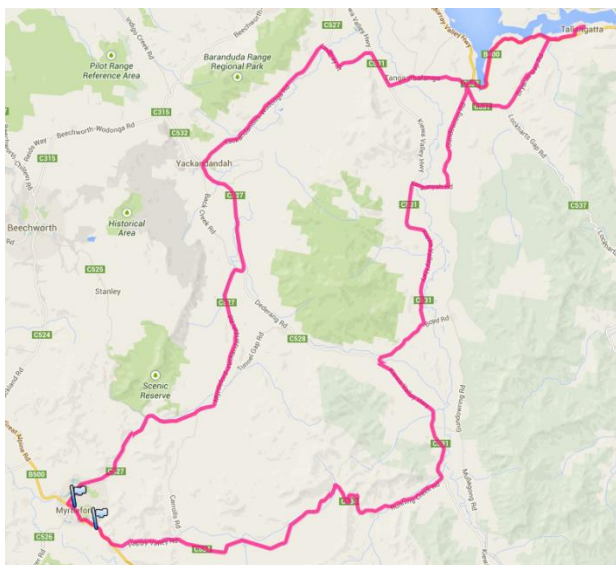
Friday: 230 miles

I rose early on Friday with the plan of taking the easy (read boring) way to Myrtleford. I headed out of Melbourne on the Hume Freeway, meeting up with Peter Kime from the IIRA at Kalkallo then we headed off, arriving in Benalla around 11 am for an early lunch at Hyde's Bakery, known for its great coffee and food. Then it was back on the freeway, through Glenrowan and then turning off onto the Snow Road, passing through Oxley, Milawa (known for its superb wines) then the town of Whorouly. Upon reaching the Great Alpine Road it's a right turn and just a few more miles on I arrived in Myrtleford. On arrival I discovered I was sans mobile phone – possible disaster for a number of reasons. A quick explanation and wave to Peter then back on the bike and a swift round trip to Wangaratta where I picked up a cheap 'pay as you go' mobile phone. Phew! I eventually got back to Myrtleford around 5 pm where I checked into the accommodation at the Railway Hotel.

Before I go on – a quickie about Garry Hogg, the ride leader for the weekend, who comes from Corryong. On his arrival at the Railway on his resplendent Triumph, as he came to a stop he must have decided to use the non existent automatic side stand, for at zero speed, in front of a crowd of admiring onlookers he proceed to “park” his pride n joy on its side – not its side stand. Result – broken indicator lens – badly bruised ego. Ouch! He may have been the ride leader, but no one else choose to follow his lead in this instance! But I digress – back to the story.



Just in time, was I, for a resounding dinner at the Railway where I was made very welcome by the IIRA President and the rest of the crew.



The Railway Hotel is 2 blocks away from the main drag so it nice and quiet. While somewhat old is not at all run down and it has clean modern motel style accommodation for up to 25 people plus secure off street parking for bikes and cars. And the tariff of just A\$70 per person, twin share, for dinner, bed and breakfast is outstanding – as are the meals themselves.

Saturday: 130 miles

On Saturday morning, after a *modest* breakfast at the hotel – fruit juice, cereal then toast, followed by the next course – eggs, baked beans, bacon, and even more toast – then all washed down with bottomless tea and coffee we eventually struggled

into our riding gear and headed off passing through Kancoona, Running Creek, and Kergunyah and on into Tallangatta for lunch at the Tallangatta Bakery, some 60 miles away.

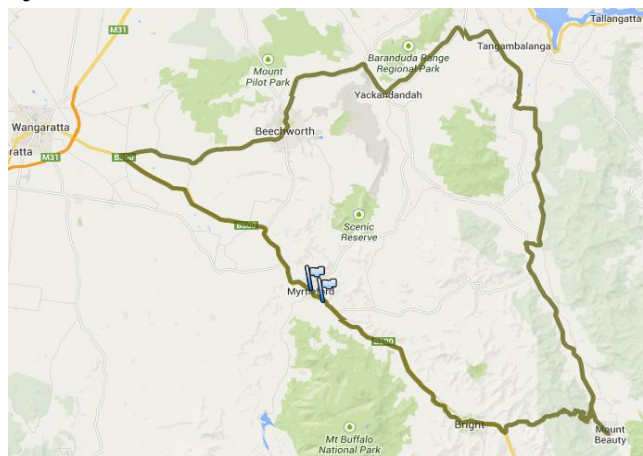
After lunch we visited James Lamberts workshop , know as [Breed Flathead Motors](#), in Tallangatta – what a setup, a professional workshop par excellence, where a good hour or so quickly passed. Thanks James for the refreshments. Then it was back to Myrtleford via Tangambalanga, Keiwa and Staghorn Flat and around 6:30 pm a 3 course dinner at the Railway Hotel; during the meal Noel Thornby an IIRA member from Inverloch (this club seems to have members all over Australia) made the observation “Life does not get much better than this!” and he was correct. After a few glasses of wine, just to ward off the cold you understand, we all retired for a good nights sleep.

Here are photos taken at Breed Flathead Motors:



Sunday: 245 miles

Sunday morning breakfast was more of the same but Hash Browns were added to the main course. After breakfast it was again into the riding gear then, following the ride leader – Garry Hogg, we headed out through Bright then a run over the spectacular Tawonga Gap road to Mount Beauty township where we paused for morning coffee. Strangely here we found that take away coffee was more expensive than in house consumption. Eddie Tabon'e bike with its resplendent fuel tank attracted the eye of a few of the locals.



Refreshed we headed off through Running Creek, Gundowing, Kergunyah, Baranduda then into Yackanda for lunch at the Yackanda Hotel who were expecting us. Another smashing feed! After lunch we headed back to Myrtleford via Beechworth, Tarrawingee and Everton arriving around 4 pm in time for a shower and rest before dinner, yet another belt busting 3 course affair, was served in the hotel dining room at 6:30 pm.

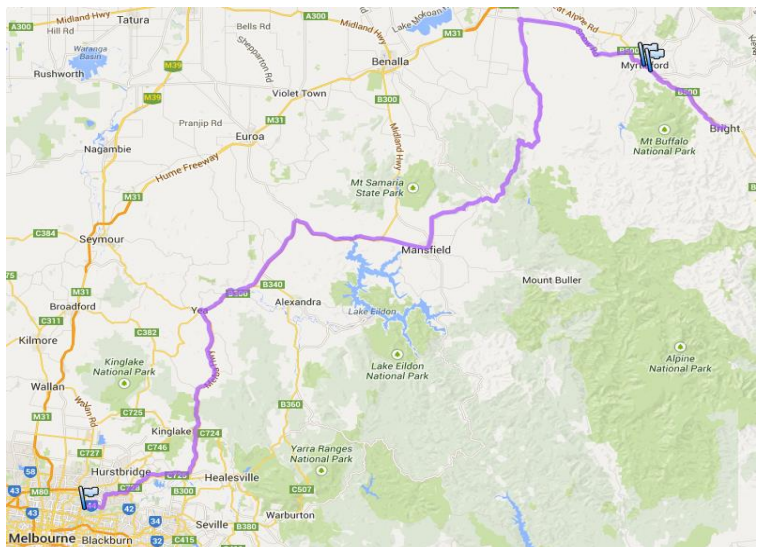
Monday: 240 miles

We woke to be greeted by dense fog but by the time we had demolished yet another scale busting breakfast it had burnt off revealing yet another bonza day. We settled up our accommodation bills – did I tell you how reasonable it was? It was! Then off to Bright for an early coffee before heading back home to Melbourne.

From Bright, in the company of Noel Tierney, it was back through Myrtleford, then Milawa eventually turning right into Whitfield (where there is also great coffee – but this time we did not stop) and on through Tolmie and into Mansfield for lunch at ‘The Produce Store’ which must be one of the best rural eateries in Victoria. The road from Whitfield to Mansfield is a bike riders heaven, though care needs to be taken not to get over confident as some of the corners have changing radii. Bit over half way between Whitfield and Mansfield is a turn off to Powers Lookout – its only 200 yards of the main road and is worth a look if you have the time.



The view from Powers Lookout



After lunch it was a leasiurly run through Yea, saying goodbye to Noel just before Yarra Glen, then on to Yarra Glen and Eltham before arriving back home weary but contented.

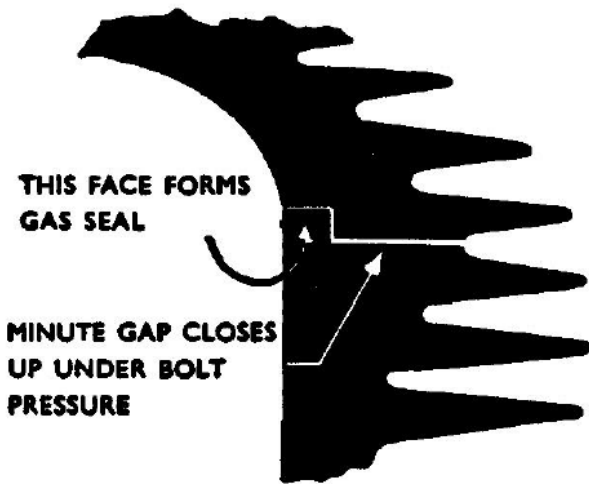
Vincent Cylinder Head Joints

Let's take a close look at the cylinder head joint – because if you cannot keep the combustion pressure in you won't get much power out!

Drawing on the thoughts of PEI it is important to be aware that with a Vincent this is a “double-ground” construction in which simultaneous contact is made between two areas, but at different pressures. The design takes the form of a recess in the head which fits over a spigot on the barrel, spigot and recess being substantially equal depths.

The two components are ground together with fine grinding paste between the spigot faces and coarse grinding paste between the broad outer faces. The result is to leave a minute gap between the broad faces when the spigot faces are in light contact; then when the head bolts are tightened heavy pressure is applied to the spigot faces to form a gas-tight seal while distortion is prevented by the broad faces coming into contact.

During the grinding process the coarse paste should be continually renewed, but as the spigot faces approach perfection the fine paste can be gradually reduced in quantity by wiping the barrel spigot clean and adding a drop or 2 of light oil, after which attention the process is



continued until the spigot and its recess acquire a bright smooth finish over their entire area. The broad faces will have a matt surface which should be continuous, though one or two small patches of indifferent contact should not be detrimental.

In the final assembly jointing compound is both unnecessary and undesirable. Being gas-tight this type of joint allows for a good flow of heat from the underside of the exhaust valve seat to the barrel and so assists in keeping this region of the cylinder head cool.

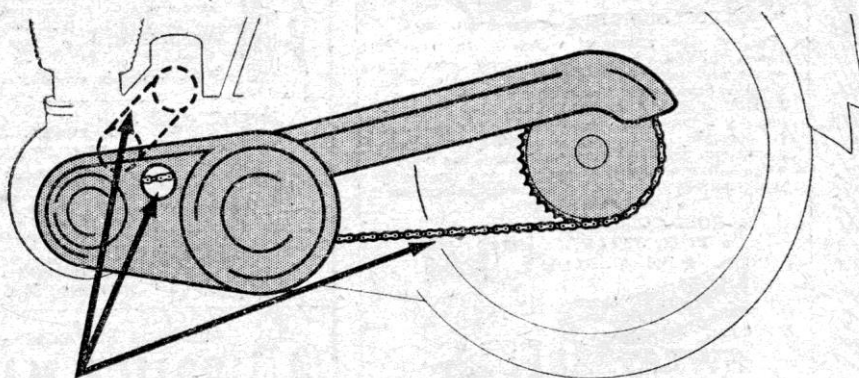
Head nut tension should be in the order of 30 to 35 ft pounds. With head nut tension in excess of 40 ft lb there is a real risk of ripping the head bolts out of the cases as the motor comes up to operating temperature with horrendously expensive consequences!

As the motor warms up the length of the aluminium barrel increases at twice the rate of the steel head bolts/studs thus increasing the head nut tension – so do NOT be tempted to add “just a bit more” to those nuts.

Finally a reflection on the stresses of combustion, using regular fuel, again with thanks to PEI: the table makes the crankcase stresses imposed by increasing CR’s pretty clear.

Compression Ratio	Compression Pressure, psi	Combustion Pressure, psi
6.45:1 (Rapides & Metors)	182	680
7.3:1 (Shadows & Comets)	212	800
9:1	280	1050
10:1	320	1200

MOTORCYCLE CHAIN MAINTENANCE – 2



Check Chain Adjustment

Adjustment must be correct. Test periodically for up and down movement. Make several tests at different positions of rotation, and do not over-tighten. If yours is a spring frame machine, check rear chain at normal frame position with rider seated.

Correct amount of chain movement : rear $\frac{3}{4}$ in., primary $\frac{3}{8}$ in., magneto $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

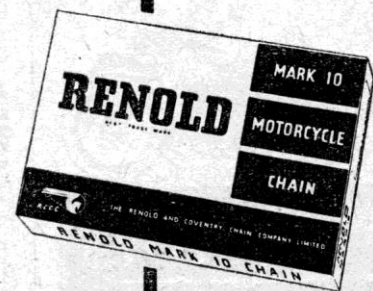
Write for copy of "Chains and the Motorcyclist" Ref. 331-6



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A 998cc VINCENT SPECIAL

110mph roadster extensively modified to owner's requirements



Specification

ENGINE

Type	50° V-twin four-stroke
Bore	84mm
Stroke	90mm
Cubic capacity	998cc
Valves	Overhead (push-rod)
Compression ratio	7.3:1
Carburettors	Amal 1½-in bore "289"
Ignition	Lucas magneto with automatic control
Generator	Lucas E3L 6-v 60-w dynamo with AVC and boosted output
Makers' claimed output	55bhp/5500rpm
Lubrication	Dry sump with double-output rotating-plunger pumps
Starting	Kickstarter

TRANSMISSION

In-unit gearbox with footchange	
Ratios (48t. rear sprocket)	3.7, 4.4, 5.9, 9.4
Speed at 1000 rpm in top gear	21mph
Speed equivalent to revs at maximum power rating:	
Second gear	73mph
Third gear	100mph
Top gear	118 mph
Primary drive	Triple-row chain in oil bath

Final drive	Single-row exposed chain (both chains by Renold)
Clutch	Norton multi-plate in "dry" compartment
Shock-absorber	Spring-and-cam type on engine shaft

CYCLE PARTS

Frame	Box-type backbone with powerunit as structural member; bolted on sub-frame.
Front suspension	Cirdraulic forks modified enclosed coil springs; two-way Armstrong hydraulic damper with limit stops.
Rear suspension	Swinging-fork with hydraulically-damped Armstrong units; 85-lb springs. Wheelbase 53in.
Tyres	Dunlop ribbed 3.25 x 19-in front, studded 3.50X19-in rear, both held by security bolts and balanced.
Brakes	Duo front, single rear, all 7-in dia. racing parts. Total lining area, 30 sq in
Fuel tank	3½ gallon; two taps
Oil tank	Hollow upper frame member, 6 pints
Lamps	Marchal: 45/36-w. adjustable head, 48-w spot, 48-w fog. Lucas: twin

Horns	6-w side. 18/6-w, stop/tail, one 3-w speedometer
Battery	Twin Lucas Windtone Lucas 12ah
Speedometer	Smiths modified 130 mph with trip
Seating	AMC q.d. two-level twinseat
Stands	Centre, prop, front ink
Toolkit	Too large to list; includes full tyre and chain repair equipment
Toolbox	Open compartment beneath seat
Finish	Black cycle parts, power unit in natural alloy, glass fibre enclosure in silver with black trimmings; usual parts chromium or cadmium plated

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Modified Avon Streamliner; q.d. panniers rear carrier; Triumph tank-top luggage grid; tyre pump; special engine breather; pillion footrests; oil-temperature gauge; mirror

PRICES

Machine	Listed in 1951 at £336 11s (inc £71 11s PT)
Tax	£3 15s pa (EI 7s for four months)
Makers	Known in February, 1951 as Vincent-HRD Co Ltd, Stevenage, Herts, now Harpers Engines Ltd of same address

'Motor Cycling' Test Data

Conditions. Weather: Dry, cold (Barometer 29.85Hg Thermometer 36°F). Wind: N, 8-10 mph Surface (braking and acceleration): Dry asphalt. Rider: 11½ stone, 5 ft 10½ in, wearing two-piece suit, safety helmet, normally seated behind screen throughout. Fuel: "Super" grade (101 Research Method Octane Rating).

Venue: Motor Industry Research Association Station, Lindley.

Speed at end of standing 1000 yd:	
East	102mph
West	94mph
Best certified MIRA, maximum (rider upright behind screen)	109mph
Braking from 30mph (all brakes):	9½ yd

Fuel consumption:	
At constant	50mph 60mpg
	70mph 46mpg
500-mile overall figure	53mpg

Speedometer	
30mph indicated = 30.5mph true	
40mph indicated = 40.3mph true	

50mph, indicated = 50.1mph true
60mph indicated = 60.4mph true
70mph indicated = 70.5mph true
80mph indicated = 80.4mph true
90mph indicated = 91.9 mph true
100mph indicated = 101.8mph true
110mph indicated = 110.8mph true

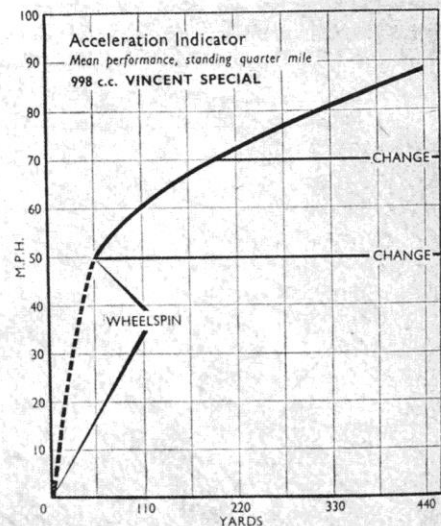
Mileage Recorder

Electrical Equipment

Top gear speed at which generator output balances:	Over-reading ½%
Minimum obligatory lights	28mph
Headlamp main beam	36mph
Headlamp and either spot	Not capable

Weights and Capacities

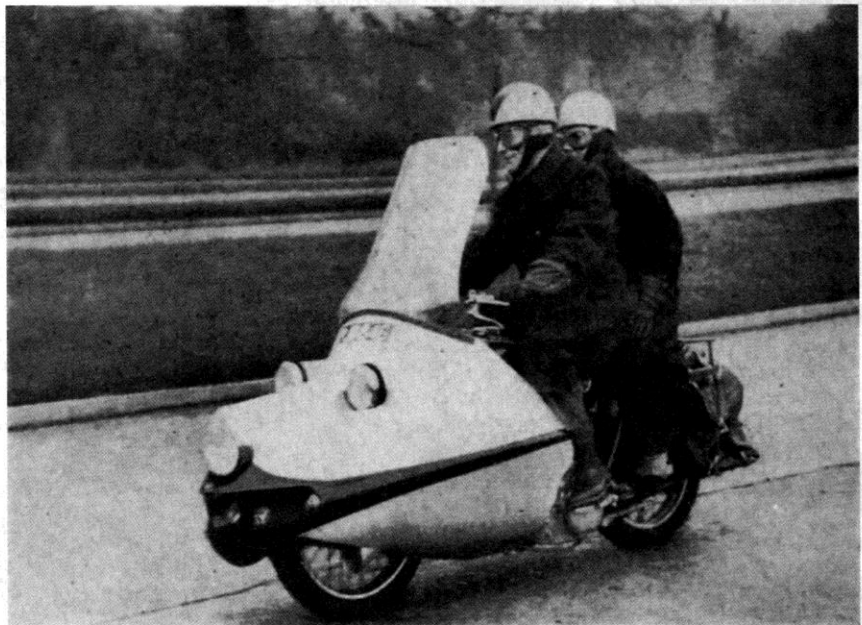
Certified kerbside weight (with oil and 1 gal fuel)	540lb
Weight distribution, rider normally seated:	
Front wheel	43%
Rear wheel	57%
Tank capacity (metered):	
Total	3½ gal
Reserve	1¼ or 6½ pints



We close the year with a Road Test that is different. It deals with a privately-owned machine of a make which (regrettably, many feel) is no longer in production. The subject is the 10-year-old "Shadowized" Vincent "Rapide" owned by staffman Bruce Main-Smith and modified by him to his personal requirements. Its history includes a spell of solo and sidecar racing. — Ed.

NOW at a mileage of 132,000, Bruce Main-Smith's 1951 1,000cc ohv V-twin Vincent "Rapide" has been converted by the owner to meet his own priorities. These demanded the ability to cruise indefinitely on motorways at 90 to 100mph; outstandingly good acceleration and braking to deal with weekend traffic on the A29 and A3/A283 London-South Coast routes; first-class roadholding; protection from the weather; luggage-carrying facilities and especially good lights. Further, the machine had to be as suitable for the owner's wife on the pillion as it was for the driver.

Accordingly, the following non-standard



Tailored for two, the Main-Smith Vincent has the power and the handling properties of an ideal pillion machine.

mount being both quick and extremely safe.

Roadholding was equal to that of any mount in current production. Indeed, it was "Grand Touring" in the car sense of the term. The ride was exceptionally comfortable for this level of handling, the Girdraulic front forks making a major contribution.

Behaviour was free from pitching or any associated faults. There was no change of trim, no matter how hard the excellent brakes were applied. Application of the nominal 55 "brake horses" produced only a trace of lifting at the front; jack-knifing at the rear pivot, not unknown on standard Vincents, was completely absent.

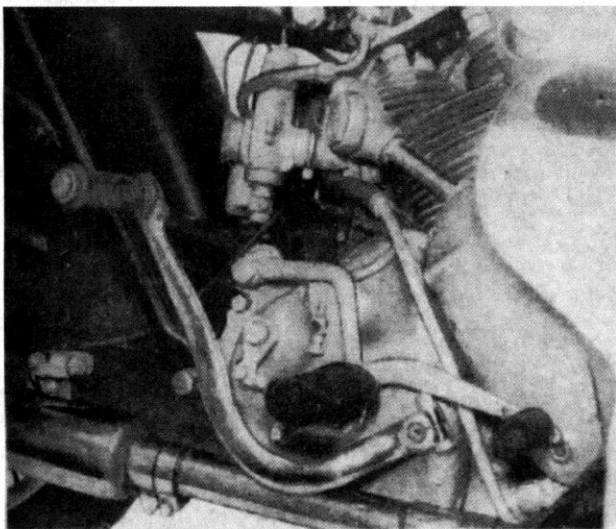
The front forks clicked on being moved from lock to lock, indicating wear at the eccentrics. The metal-bush-pivoted rear fork was rigid laterally. The use of closed lug ends in this component, however, made rear wheel removal complicated and messy.

Steering generally was a revelation for a mount weighing 540lb, conceived in 1945 and home modified. A pillion passenger was no handicap—if anything, an asset. The front forks have Series 'D' trail limits, an Armstrong hydraulic unit and one Norton clutch spring supplementing each inner main spring.

The tailored riding position proved perfect for a man of much the same size and build as the owner. The tank could be both narrower, to reduce splay at the knees, and larger, to hold more than 3 gal. The fixed footrests were just right; both their associated pedals, modified to suit, were well-placed. The pillion rests have been lengthened and cranked for the comfort of a 5-ft 1-in passenger.

With the flexibility and output of a "Shadow"-type engine, the machine had an abundance of smooth power. The crankshaft, Hartley balanced, mounts Irving-designed caged big-ends.

A continuous motorway cruise in the upper nineties revealed no vibration. But there was a



(Left) The modified kickstarter crank can be used without fouling either the footrest (also modified) or pillion rest. The carburettor top has been enlarged to take softer springs.

equipment has been fitted, some of it of the owner's design and construction: "Shadowized" engine with "Picador" two-start oil-pump worm, doubling the rate of circulation; "Lightning" brakes; "conventional" swinging-fork rear suspension; an "Avon Streamliner" full-frontal fairing; qd panniers and luggage carrier and an AMC twinseat.

The immediate impression on seeing "Pig"—as the Main-Smiths call it—is of cumbersomeness. This was not dissipated when one wheeled the machine around. Steering lock was restricted, even below the limited Vincent standard, and the frontal overhang was a nuisance.

Against this, the enclosure was completely successful in keeping the rider clean and dry—even his hands and feet—and in relieving him of fatiguing wind pressure. (The Vincent "leaning on the wind" position has been eliminated by moving the footrests forward and fitting Ariel handlebars.) At speed, goggles were necessary. The passenger received some air buffeting,

though less than on a "naked" model. Really fast cruising in rain was practical. Water could not pass the front-fork gaiter. Internal leg panels tidy up the enclosure, allow the stiffening boxes to be used to carry full puncture and chain repair outfits, and direct air more onto the cylinders. Either shield could be taken off in 30 sec.

Diminished cooling by radiation made the engine run hotter than standard at low air speeds—without, apparently, any ill effects. A pleasant warmth was imparted in the wintry test period; in summer, the owner's riding kit consists of sports jacket and flannels, with light outerwear for rain.

Once under power, the steering was faultless. There was no heaviness at low speeds. Although the standard steering damper had been removed, the Vincent was 100% wobble-free, even when thrust hard over bumpy roads. It never nodded its head or wagged its tail.

There was undiminished ground clearance. The enclosure could not be touched down.

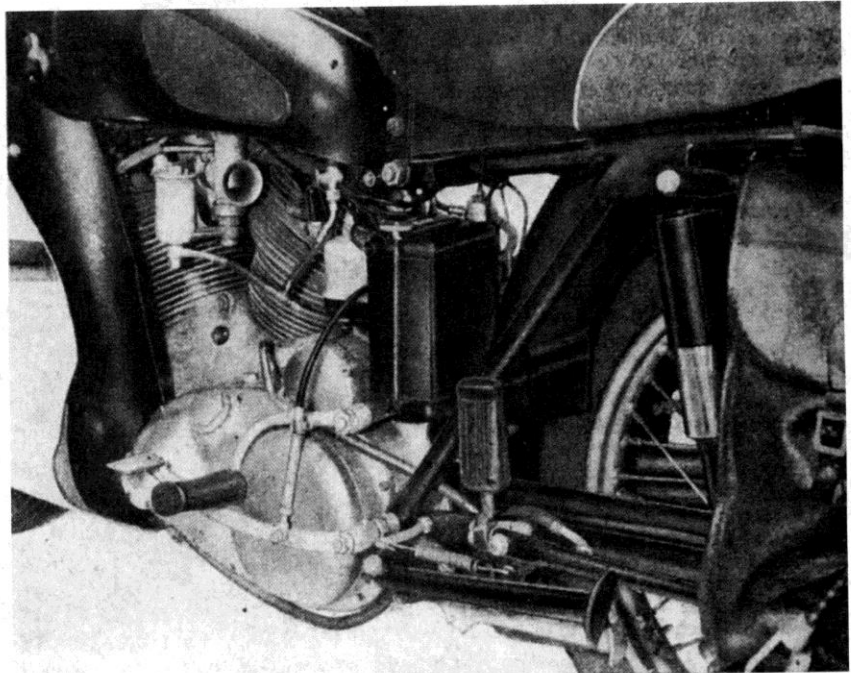
In the wet, sheer weight aided adhesion, the

protracted period, in the forties in second and fifties in third, which produced tremor rather than vibratio - an effect probably accentuated by the general smoothness. Top gear could be held down to 35mph, below which speed the extra backlash suggested a change down.

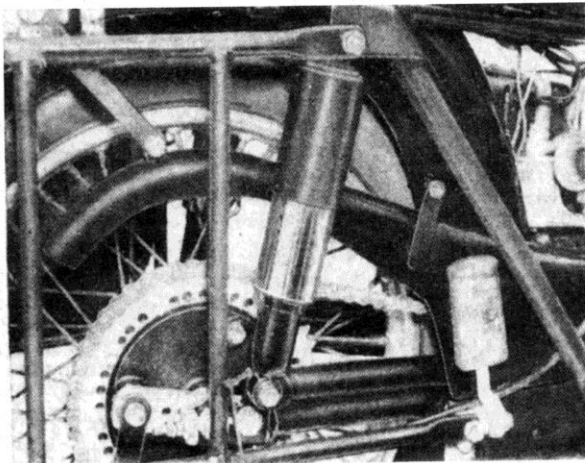
What optimum use of the gears could achieve is shown, strikingly enough, by the graph and tabulated figures; but under road conditions change-points were by no means critical. Although third could be held to 90 or even 100mph, this was quite unnecessary. The machine has been fettled to give shattering acceleration in top gear at 45mph. Good results were forthcoming at 40; at about 43 one felt everything get into phase - then one had to hold on very tight. And pick-up persisted at 100 if the half-open throttles were suddenly fully lifted.

The gearbox has the low "Rapide" bottom. Top and third have been given extra backlash. Also non-standard is the multi-plate dry clutch, made from Norton parts.

This combination gave faultless gear-changes. A Vincent can be stiff to put into top around 90mph, but this did not occur. Neutral was easily



Fixed main footrest and modified brake pedal are details seen in this nearside view. Both crankcase breather pipes enter the pannier rail so that discharge occurs at the machine's rearmost point.



(Left) The home-brewed swinging-fork rear end, with Armstrong damper. The axle lug is cut from solid high-tensile steel. The pannier frame is q.d.; the wheel is not.

found from bottom or second. The gear pedal, however, had too long a travel.

The clutch was excellent, light and jerk-free. There was no overheating, slipping or need for adjustment during the test.

Carburation was unhesitant throughout. The modified mixing chambers permitted light wrist action. General fuel consumption was 53mpg over an extended period of really hard driving. "Super" grade petrol was essential to avoid pinking.

Main jet size is 190 instead of 180 to promote reliability at prolonged high speeds. PJO 846 has not been recently decoked - in accordance with the widespread belief that this process is simply unnecessary with a "1000" Vincent.

The handbook advice of "straight" oils - SAE 50 summer, 30 winter - is normally followed. In deference to the high-speed work at MIRA, we kept to heavy oil this month and paid the penalty with an engine stiff to crank when cold. No chokes are fitted, nor were they needed; a good flood was enough. The rear float-chamber is sensibly mounted on the left so that the petrol

may be left on when the prop-stand is used; its tickler is extended for easy access. The standard Vincent drill of raising the footrest before kickstarting was not necessary; the pedal-piece to the rebent crank is fixed permanently out; it did not foul the leg.

Vincent braking has always been superb and indeed set the road-test record for a long time. The "Lightning" racing anchors on this mount were first-class. Pedal pressure on the single drum back stopper was less than standard for the marque. Neither it nor the Ferodo-lined dual front brake were affected by heat or rain.

The Marchal lights were admirable, especially the asymmetrical cut-off to the dipped beam of the headlamp, the set of which is adjustable from the saddle to compensate for load. The "flamethrower" spot is aimed 30yd ahead, aligned on the verge of the centre strip of the M1. The fog lamp gave a spread pattern at short range.

The note of the twin Lucas Windtone horns, set to fire up the left airscoop, was lethal at 150 yd during 90mph motorway cruising. Boosted

dynamo output kept the battery up, though charging as heavy as 8 amp, was seen at times.

The power unit was oiltight with the exception of the kickstarter cover, a "dry" compartment anyway! Oil consumption however, was high at 200 miles per pint. There was considerable engine-to-chaincase transference, which called for levelling and probably accounted for most of the oil loss. KLG FE75 plugs were used. They never fouled, even in prolonged central-work (inlet valve and rocker drainage been improved).

Exhaust silencing was up to the usual Vincent standard, which is good. Mechanically, the engine was clattery, but wear may account for some of this; for example the cams are the originals. There was slap from the cylinder group, which has some 90,000 miles and is due for renewal.

Many detail points are worthy of comment. The special prop-stand is excellent - easily found with the foot, always supporting the machine firmly and tucking up well. The centre-stand is really repair-maintenance equipment, so its heavy lift may be overlooked. Neither grounds on corners. Regrettably, there is no front stand, so a small jack is carried.

The handlebar mirror is free from vibration blur and was a boon. The speedometer, which had been regearaged to remove optimism, was accurate. There are 16 attachment points for elastics on the luggage equipment.

To sum up. Here is a 1945-designed, 1951-built machine that has been modified for a particular purpose. The success of those modifications in dealing with certain known Vincent shortcomings provokes, inevitably, thoughts of the mount that Stevenage might have been producing today - and points sadly to the gap left in the British production pattern by the death of the big twin.

End

Anything But Smooth

A contribution from Kevin Cameron, USA

SOMEWHERE IN SCHOOL, STUDENTS sit through a brief description of how the four-stroke cycle works. Thus we learn (if paying attention) intake, compression, power, exhaust. Those of us who later become at least part-time students of the internal combustion engine are left to wonder what keeps the engine going through intake, compression and exhaust when power is delivered on only one stroke out of four. The correct answer is that the kinetic energy stored in the flywheel is what keeps the engine going when combustion pressure isn't actively pushing on the piston.

This means that the engine cycle is like the bank account of a weekly employee. The power stroke is the deposit of the pay check on Friday, and that, plus what's already in the bank is the flywheel that keeps the groceries coming and the bills paid the rest of the week. Sometimes, as we all know, the energy in that flywheel can dwindle away to be pretty small. The result is the occasional near-stall when we have to search in jacket pockets and under sofa cushions to pay for the pizza delivery.

What this means is that the actual speed of the crankshaft is at a maximum as the power stroke ends, and that it slows down steadily through exhaust, intake and compression until the next "deposit" of energy is made to kick it back up to peak again.

Okay, that's a story about single-cylinder engines. As we add cylinders, crankshaft rotational speed smooths out, right? Yes, it does, but at the same time we are sensibly reducing the engine's flywheel mass to just a bit more than it needs to maintain a smooth idle. A Single naturally needs mighty flywheels to keep it going, but by the time we get to three or four cylinders, nothing like a round flywheel remains-just the bare crankshaft and its counterweights. This means that there is still a fair amount of crank speed variation.



Who cares? We can see that there's a spring drive in most motorcycle clutches to smooth out this crank speed variation so that the gearbox doesn't have to endure a series of hammer blows from the cylinder firings. Those springs or rubber elements in the clutch outer hub handle it.

But wait, there are no such flexible elements in the cam drive. That means that crank speed variation will travel through the chain, belt or gears driving the cams, and that something like crank speed variation (minus whatever is lost in translation) will appear at the cam lobes.

This takes us to the observations of many eminent speed men such as Rob Muzzy and the late Dick O'Brien of Harley that "engines top-end better with a heavy crankshaft." When Muzzy said this to me in 1982 he was speaking of an inline-Four. When OB said it, he was talking about Harley-Davidson V-Twins. This appears to fly in the face of the other common observation that bikes accelerate best with the lightest possible crankshaft. It's certainly true that energy put into accelerating heavy flywheels would look better on the stopwatch if it were put into accelerating the motorcycle instead. How do we resolve this apparent contradiction?

At the Houston NHRA drag-race national, Byron Hines told me that crank speed variation in his 160-cubic-inch V-Twin was so great that actual valve motion was nothing like what the cam profiles implied. To correct this, separate and differently shaped cam lobes were required for each of the engine's four valves. Otherwise, valves were floating and bouncing from the sudden

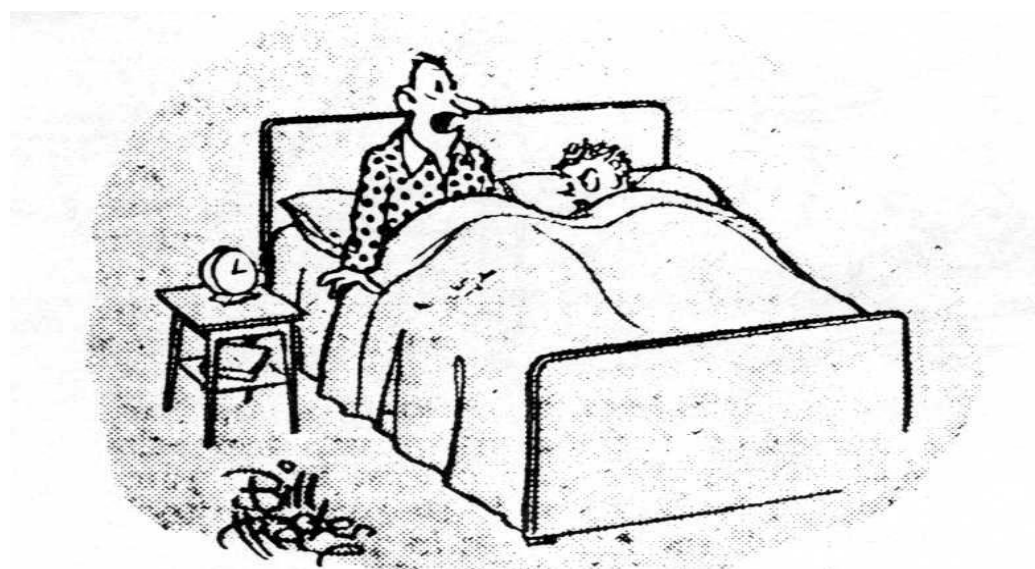
tosses they were receiving as their cams were suddenly accelerated by a cylinder's firing. As cylinder-head airflow specialist Kenny Auqustine likes to say, "Engines make no power when the valves are open," so this unscheduled valve motion was letting the engine's power leak away. Old-time Harley tuners have always noticed that their engines top-end better and better as they add flywheel mass. This works because more flywheel mass takes the sharp edges off the crank speed variation, allowing the valve motion to settle a bit closer to what the cam profiles suggest it should be and thereby making closer to normal power rather than some lesser amount defined by valve float and bounce. Let the light-flywheel advocates recite their reasons; the old-timers knew that heavy cranks made their bikes run faster, so that's what they used.

One V-Twin engineer recently described to me watching valve motion at high rpm under a strobe light. As a valve lifted off its seat, its head waggled from side-to-side as the slender stem flexed. As the valve approached its seat again, this waggling motion had often not yet died away, causing the valve to hit on edge rather than all around the seat. Seating velocity caused the stem to keep moving even after the head was mostly on its seat, deflecting the valve head like a trampoline, which then snapped back to unseat the valve for the first of a series of bounces. This is an extreme case, but even at the best of times, high-speed valve seating provokes one or more small bounces. This is "normal."



Others describe what happens in some cases when a gear cam drive is substituted for a chain or belt in a race engine. Crank dynamics that were formerly to an extent filtered out by the flexibility and mass of chain or belt now come through at full strength-and the result is a rash of broken valve springs or other parts. Note that Yamaha, in its 990cc YZR-M1 MotoGP engine, uses a combination of chain and gear cam drive. In some other engines, flywheels are attached to the cams themselves in hopes of moderating the worst of sudden speed variations coming up from the crank. So think again before you start lightening anything.

All these titbits of knowledge further increase my respect for the degree of engine reliability that has been achieved in so many designs. How do the parts tolerate all the unscheduled banging, flexing and twisting? We humans never give up, that's how.



"Of course! I timed it on the exhaust stroke!"

IN the August 2, 1951, issue of "Motor Cycling," P. R. I. ("Punch") Glanville, an English motorcyclist resident in Persia, described the arrival in Teheran of two Australians, Bob Chambers and Brian Chaseling, after they had ridden a 1939 500 c.c. Velocette and box sidecar from Colombo, Ceylon. The breakdown and subsequent arrival in Teheran of the Velocette described by Glanville was merely one incident of hundreds experienced by the Australians on their 12,000-mile trek from Sydney, Australia, by ship to Colombo and thence overland to London.

The full story of this intrepid journey was made available to "Motor Cycling" when, after eight months of adventure, tribulation and enjoyment, Chambers and Chaseling clattered across Westminster Bridge on September 11 last. For obvious reasons their account must be abbreviated, and it will appear in two parts, the first of which we publish below

IT was at a party given by the Indian Trade Commissioner in Sydney that our plans for hitch-hiking from Ceylon to the U.K. were shattered. The wise words of Prince Duleep Singh, of cricketing fame, convinced us that it was impossible to "thumb" our way through India, but he suggested an alternative—motorcycling.

We thought this was good sense and, as the Chambers family already possessed a 1939 MSS Velocette, affectionately known as "The Monster," half our initial problems were solved.

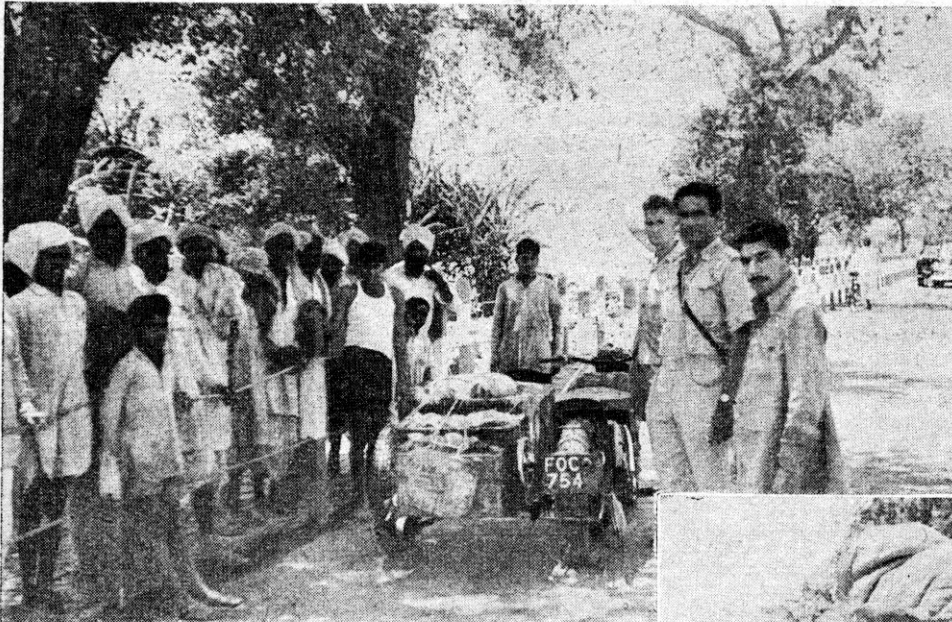
At that time—about September, 1950—Sydney was suffering from an acute shortage of sidecar chassis, but

UP FROM "DOWN"

the moment came for us to drive away from the Customs area "The Monster" wouldn't start! Finally, dogged by visions of the exaggerated newspaper reports of our super-efficiency, and by the amusement of the populace, in broad daylight we pushed the MSS through the main streets of the city.

Our stay in Colombo was longer than anticipated for we had the good fortune to meet Andrew Mirando, who, as most readers of "Motor Cycling" will know, is the local Velocette agent and one of the keenest men in the game. He personally attended to the multiple mechanical adjustments needed to the Velocette, despite the "overhaul" in Sydney. Not satisfied with this kindness, he conducted us on a 500-mile tour of the scenic beauties of the area.

The auspicious day came when we embarked on the first leg of the long, long road to London. From Colombo to Talaimannar, on the north-west coast of Ceylon and the hopping-off place for the Indian mainland, the roads were good. After making the crossing by Indian Railways ferry service to Dhanushkodi, on the south-west Indian coast, we found there were no roads out of the town! We had to take the only way—the railway. Normally, vehicles can be unloaded at Ramnad, 20 miles north, where the road commences, but after considering the difficulties of unload-



(Left) With an already battered outfit, the Australians reach Attari Road, on the India-Pakistan border, where Customs officers (right), passed them through.

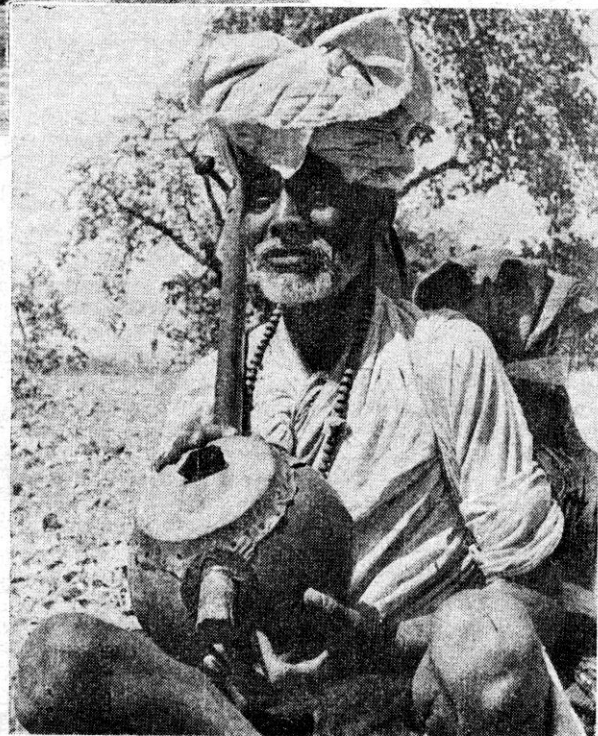
(Below) "A wandering minstrel I..." En route to Delhi, the travellers stopped to hear the tunes of an old Fakir music-maker.

after many weeks of searching we stumbled upon an ancient structure, the identity of which was concealed in the engraved word "Special." It's still a mystery!

There remained one important item—a box. About 25s. worth of solid timber and plywood panels, plus a little "bush carpentry," provided this shortly before we sailed for Colombo.

The necessity for travelling "light" restricted our personal luggage to two overnight bags each, while the remainder of our load consisted of sleeping bags, ground sheets, a tent (this proved superfluous as we encountered 10 minutes' rain in six months), a collapsible primus stove and accessories, three two-gallon petrol cans and a few spare parts for the MSS. The latter comprised chains, a set of valve springs and guides, a piston with rings and some sparking plugs, bolts and nuts. Of course, the Velocette had been overhauled by local Sydney "specialists," a service we later found to be lacking in refinement.

Eighteen days aboard the U.K.-bound liner gave us time to recover from too many farewell parties and strength to recoil from the first embarrassing experience of our journey. On arrival at Colombo we battled for three days to retrieve the outfit from H.M. Customs, and in that time we had received much flattering publicity in local newspapers, complete with vivid descriptions of the machine. When



-UNDER"

by
BOB CHAMBERS
and
BRIAN CHASELING

The Story of a 12,000-Mile Trek by Two Young Australians Overland from Colombo to London on a 500 c.c. Velocette and Box Sidecar

(Right) A forsaken place to break down! The Velocette comes to a stop in the fastnesses of an historic battleground, the 30-mile Khyber Pass.



ing almost immediately after loading and, later, gazing with horror while a gang of coolies tried savagely but vainly to force the outfit through a 3-ft.-wide van door, we settled for the ride straight through to Madras.

The total cost of conveying the model on this section was approximately £3, which we later discovered was half the correct rate. We had caught the station-master deep in sleep at 5 a.m. that morning. In his comatose state on being awakened, he wearily looked up the charges for *solo* machines, issued the necessary tickets and dropped off to sleep again—on the Booking Office table.

Our first taste of bad roads came after leaving the garden city of Bangalore in South India. The bumping and rattling on the endless corrugations became so bad that, long before reaching Poona, a fork link had broken and the mudguard on the side-box followed suit. The latter emitted so much noise that it now lies rotting in a gully somewhere south of Poona.

The local Triumph agent in Poona, Mr. Modi, came to our assistance and, while his mechanics fitted a new link, he took us on a tour of the city.

Descending the Western Ghats en route to Bombay, it became very evident that the rear brake was either missing completely or was sadly in need of relining. On arrival in Bombay, the "Gateway to India," the local Velo. agents did the job which still threatens to throw us over the handlebars if we brake too hard!

For one rupee apiece, a couple of grubby urchins polished the old outfit up like a new pin. When the time came to depart there stood "The Monster" ready to leap off to Lahore and beyond, all a-gleamin' and a-glitterin' like the "Royal Scot."

The next leg of the trip was to Delhi, a distance of 900 miles over what we had been assured was a far superior road to the one we had just traversed. We received all such information cautiously. Frequently some enthusiastic character would wisely say, "Yes, I've travelled over that road recently myself; it's a first-class metal road from A to B." Invariably he omitted to mention that there were 18 ins. between lumps of metal.

Twenty miles from Shirpur we encountered trouble. The centre chassis connection bolt sheared off beneath the saddle, causing the old model to sway like a windjammer in a "blow." Speed was reduced to 3 knots.

Our peculiar and pre-historic chassis had only three connections instead of the usual four, a factor which contributed largely to a deal of trouble later. Sometimes we really thought that the MSS and chassis were allergic to one another, for at regular intervals and distances they insisted on breaking up a beautiful friendship and going their separate ways.

Luck favoured us and we limped to Shirpur without further fractures. In this small, dusty town a wizened old Moslem gentleman, complete with fez, squatted by his little forge surrounded by his tools of trade and swarms of flies. No certificate proclaiming his graduation from a Technical College graced the wall, but, nevertheless, he quickly effected the repair for a few rupees.

We continued to Indore, Gwalior and Agra, experiencing for the first time the curse of all Indian motorists—bullock cart nails. Once we found an enormous wedge-shaped nail in the tyre which, luckily, had not penetrated the tube.

Nearing Gwalior, disaster almost overtook the expedition. The Velocette got into a deep rut on the side of the road, causing the outfit to veer sharply to starboard and plunge over the side. Leaving the road, the combination, its occupants, riding whip, spurs and all, hurtled 15 ft. down the steep bank to make a perfect three-point landing, right side up. Examination showed no visible damage, so "The Monster" (in disgrace) once more pointed her nose towards Delhi. Peasants nearby, watching the episode, seemed disappointed when the act was not repeated.

At Agra we found the famous Taj Mahal even more beautiful and impressive than anticipated. One American present summed it up typically by saying, "Boy he sure must 'a' loved her."

Previously we had decided to leave the outfit at Delhi and proceed by train to Darjeeling to see "The Roof of the World," the eternal snows of the Himalayas and one of the wonders of the world.

While on an 80-mile trek on foot to see Mount Everest we had the honour to meet Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark. First at an alpine bungalow at 10,000 ft. on the border of Nepal, and again at his home in Kalimpong, near the Tibetan border. We spent a happy evening high up in the Himalayan foothills hearing of the strange customs of the Tibetan people, on whom the Prince is quite an authority.



Two days out from Meshed, Persia, the Velocette down-tube broke and was later welded unsatisfactorily by this aged Afghan.

We were sorry indeed when the time came for us to leave those majestic mountains and travel on. However, we took with us many happy memories of Darjeeling and its towering sentinel, Kinchinjunga; of Everest with its constant companion, the long streamer of snow which is carried away to the east by fierce high-altitude winds; of Kalimpong and its swarms of big, bronzed, happy Tibetans who throng the market places wearing everything from high peaked lama caps to American-style ten galloners.

Back again in Delhi we gave the bike a thorough once-over. The chassis connection bolt had fractured again. A local engineer advised that a rigid connection of this type was useless. The manufacture of a ball and socket type delayed us a further two days.

The temperature when we left Delhi was 105 degrees—a warning that higher temperatures, of 120 degrees and over, could be expected, when the monsoons came in June.

Up through the Punjab we rolled, the flat country and tarred roads making motorcycling a pleasure. Overnight we stayed in "Dak" bungalows, which in the north are quite elaborate, for about 2s. each. These bungalows, an inheritance from British occupation, are scattered over the length and breadth of India and Pakistan for the benefit of travellers. They are provided with beds (no linen or blankets) and bath facilities. Our system was to purchase fruit and vegetables from a market place daily for a few pence and, on arrival at a bungalow sometime in the evening, cook dinner. This mode of living was very cheap. We estimated that total expenditure per one thousand miles was approximately £6, including petrol, food and accommodation. Living in the larger cities was another matter altogether. In Bombay, for instance, it cost both of us more than £7 each a week.

A chance meeting with two English women resulted later in our staying with a fellow Aussie in Peshawar, T. C. Miller, Director-General of Agriculture for the Frontier Government. We tarried here for a fortnight during which time Mr. Miller showed us some of the little-known tribal areas where fighting still flares up occasionally, and the picturesque Kaghan Valley ringed by snow-capped mountains.

The climax of our long stay was a plane trip over the western extremity of the Himalayas and through the narrow Indus Valley gorge to Gilgit and Skardu. What a memorable experience! As far as the eye could see was a vast pattern of eternal snow peaks and ridges, while towering 10,000 ft. above our Dakota reared the notorious Nanga Parbat (26,660 ft.), claimant of the lives of so many unfortunate climbers.

We left Peshawar early one morning carrying enough petrol for the 180-mile stretch to Kabul (made necessary by petrol rationing in Arghanistan). Despite the wild and bloody stories one has so often heard of the famous, 30-mile-long Khyber Pass, we were not held up or fired upon from the barren and rocky ramparts that dominate it. But

one desperate-looking character, armed to the teeth, wandered nonchalantly past as we halted halfway through to let the engine cool off.

The first-class Khyber highway ends abruptly at the Afghan border, and one is then confronted with a track winding along the Kabul River valley. It is composed mainly of water-worn boulders averaging 3 to 4 ins. in diameter, over which numerous lorries lumber to define the roadway with two parallel tracks. Progress from here to Jalalabad and Kabul was, naturally, slow. On the Lataband Pass climb we did 11 miles in 5 hours! The engine continually overheated, necessitating frequent halts to cool off and tie wet rags around the carburetter. The old Velo. boasted a 19T solo sprocket, which had evidently been fitted by mistake in Sydney. The result over such tough gradients can well be imagined. Often one of us rode while the other alternately walked and pushed.

We chugged into Kabul one night at 9.30 and were made welcome by the good folks of that outlandish British Embassy.

The Expedition stagnated for several days owing to the Afghan Government's refusal to grant us petrol coupons. However, His Majesty's Ambassador, Mr. Gardiner, came to our assistance. This act of kindness was indicative of the generosity, hospitality and friendship extended to us by British Embassy staffs throughout our 12,000-mile trip.

Afghanistan was crossed by the desolate southerly route through Kandahar, Farah and Herat. There is another route to the north touching Mazar-i-Sharif which, besides being 200 miles longer, has several passes and bad stretches of sand to be negotiated. We decided against this.

Surprisingly enough, every 100 miles along the south route one finds a hotel. Some even boast clean sheets and Persian carpets. For 1s. 6d. we slept indoors every night. A word of warning to travellers in this region—Afghan hotels, although possessing all apparent "mod. cons.", are misleading, for taps don't run, switches don't work, cisterns won't flush and doors don't close.

Two water hazards were soon experienced. One at Dilaram, where the two Norton "Dominator" boys* had to load their machines on camels, and the other at Shindian. By the time we reached Dilaram the water level was considerably lower and we forded it without difficulty, except that the silencer filled with water during these operations.

Once over the border into Persia the good roads about which we had heard so much failed to materialize. True, they were made roads, but the corrugations were interminable and unavoidable. Darkness found us still grinding along at 12 m.p.h. towards Meshed. This, incidentally, had been our average speed for several hundred miles.

A quick maintenance check at Meshed and we were off on the 600-mile hop to Teheran via Naishapur, Omar Khayyam's last resting place. The outfit bumped and rattled over corrugations for mile after weary mile. Two days out we struck disaster—one broken down tube just below the steering head lug. A horrible ½-inch of daylight showed between the two ends. To make the best of it, a stout piece of cotton rope was lashed over the petrol tank and underneath the engine cradle several times.

Under this jury rig we rode for a further 50 miles before any "oxy" equipment was found! The owner performed a most unsatisfactory weld that broke 30 miles further on. Despairing of finding any skilled tradesmen in these desolate regions we thought it wisest to get the outfit to Teheran, 300 miles distant, by any means. Perched high on the top of a wheat lorry, the expedition made an undignified entry into the Persian capital.

(to be concluded)

* Lennox-Cook and Hamilton Fletcher, who rode from London to Sydney, Australia, earlier this year—Editor.

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For Sale: Modern gaskets for the Vincent.

The gasket materials, known as 'AFM' is a chemically blown, compounded nitrile synthetic rubber, bonded to an aluminium core with temperature resistance of over 250° F. AFM material does not require gasket sealers or silicone bead. Re-torque is NOT required.) These gaskets can be used many times over.

Post war Vincent twin gasket set includes:ET106, PD14, ET105, 2 each ET102, ET182/1, ET180l and 2 each ET181. US\$52.46. Also ET 140 Clutch cover gasket available, US\$14.56

Post war Comet and Meteor kit includes (pictured): ET 106, ET180, ET182, ET181, PD14/1, and ET106. US\$52.00

Pack and post is additional

All gaskets are .060", ET106, is supplied in .032". (gaskets are available in .032" & .018" thickness). Contact Paul Holdsworth of the VOC Chicago section c/o phpeh@hotmail.com Located in Chicago IL USA.



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

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

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, 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

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 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

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

VMS, Holland: 2x2 leading shoe brake kits for Vincents; high quality 30mm wide 4 leading shoe system. Email vspeet@vmsmetaal.nl for info.

François Grosset, France: Electric starter for Vincent Twin. Electronic ignitions for Vincent Single and Twin supplied complete with drive gear. Email pontricoul@gmail.com for more info.

Cometic Gaskets: Modern, reusable gasket sets for Vincent twins and singles. If you actually USE your Vincent you are mad not to have these. Contact Paul Holdsworth of the VOC Chicago section c/o phpeh@hotmail.com Located in Chicago IL USA.

Nuts n Bolts:

Classic Fastners, Australia: 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 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

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

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: ogrilp400@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

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 . Their Web page is www.aceclassics.com.au

Terry Prince Classic Motorbikes, Australia: Specialises in 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

General Services :

Balancing Services Australia, Experts in the dynamic balancing of all motorcycle and automotive crankshafts, flywheels and the like. 43 Chifley Dr. Preston, Vic. Contact Murray on 03 9480 4040 <http://www.balserv.com.au/>

Peter Scott Motorcycles, Australia: Top quality magneto and dynamo services, from simple repairs to complete restorations plus a comprehensive 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

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

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 too small. Has been recommended by multiple OVR readers. Phone 03 9878 2337

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

Reflection on a Tour

A contribution from Tony Page, UK

I rode into the ferry at Caen and put my bike on its side stand as instructed and next to an enormous BMW GS Adventure behemoth. Dwarfing my T160, the thing was massive, had two (!) SatNavs, a full set of expensive massive panniers and was ridden by an older guy dressed from head to foot in BMW branded adventure riding gear. He looked as though he was on the final leg of a world tour.

The natural banter between fellow riders ensued and it turned out that, in his seventies, he was



returning from his first ever bike trip abroad. He'd been riding the GS in the UK happily for over a decade, but - as Peter Hammill sang - 'fueled by alcohol' after a night down the pub - he had agreed to join a group of friends on a trip to the South of France.

It was heart-warming to see how proud he was of himself. A trip like his, or mine come to that, would seem nothing to a round-the-world-veteran, but adventure is relative to your own experiences. For this guy, a blast through France was a journey into the unknown. And that, actually, is all it's about.



**Vincent H.R.D. Owners Club's 2019 International Rally
in Belgium and Austria.**

If it's on your bucket list are you going to join them?



The First Stage of the International Rally will be held from 3rd to 9th June 2019 at Houffalize, in the Ardennes region of **Belgium**.

The Second Stage of the International Rally will be held from 11th to 17th June 2019 at Wagrain, **Austria**.

Please visit **THIS LINK** to secure your place.

Rally Costs £70 per attendee for one stage, or £100 per attendee for both stages.

To keep up to date on all the latest information about the **VOC 2019 International Rally**, simply visit the Vincent Owners Club's online forum website at www.vincentownersclub.co.uk