



The Oz Vincent Review

Edition #65, August 2019

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



Bob Allan and passenger James Salter at Montlhery, France, June 2019, taking part in the Tribute Parade to remember Patrick Godet. See more of this event in the soon to be released film “Speed Is Expensive”

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Melbourne, Australia.

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Letters to the Editor

Hi Martyn, In the last OVR In the Ted Davis memories it shows Burns at 186 solo and 176 sidecar. In fact of course Russel Wright 186 solo and Burns 162 with sidecar.

I never seem to stop proof reading for all sorts of things!!!! Usually restricted to restaurant menus..... And I can miss page after page of MPH with the wrong date!!!

Cheers, Robert Watson

Martyn,

This is a heads up, particularly for your readers down under.

Just over twenty years ago Ultan Guilfoyle and I were co-curators of the record-breaking The Art of the Motorcycle exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. During its time at the Guggenheim in New York, Bilbao (Spain), and Las Vegas over 2 million visitors saw the motorcycles we selected, a quarter-million bought the 432-page catalog, and countless others watched programs about them on television and read about them in upwards of a thousand magazine and newspaper stories.

Ultan and I are now creating a completely re-imagined look at the past, present, and future of motorcycles with the working title Motorcycles: Desire ~ Art ~ Design.

The exhibition will open at the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) in Brisbane on 28 November 2020 as their summer blockbuster and run through April 25, 2021. QAGOMA is one of Australia's most important visual arts institutions and has more than one million visitors annually, 30 percent from interstate and overseas.

We also are in initial discussions for the exhibition to travel outside Australia following its run in Brisbane.

Thanks, Charles Falco

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

A contribution from Phillip White, Australia.

Not that long ago in the popular press an article appeared which celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of Hondas 4 cylinder 750. The confident assertion that this machine is widely accepted as the worlds first “Super Bike” cannot go unchallenged.

Let us get straight to the point. It is not possible for the Honda to be the first “Super Bike” because the rather more “super” BSA Triple was launched prior. As was the Vincent range of post-war twins.



It is an interesting to note that enthusiasts for the golden age of Japanese motorcycles tend to be somewhat younger than the average Brit Bike enthusiast, I understand that the author was ten years old when the CB 750 was released so his was not the voice of first hand experience.

I was 19 when the Honda Four hit the market. I was fortunate enough to be a mate of the late Moto Journalist Trevor Thomas. Trevor was a paraplegic due to a motorcycle accident and therefore could no longer ride. He did however own both a new K1 Honda Four and a Vincent Black Shadow. Both of these bikes were in my

care and I rode the Honda quite a bit. And by the standards of the day it was very good, as reliable as a hammer, comfortable and smooth with the luxury of an electric foot. Life With a CB 750 was not all beer and skittles however, I well remember its quaint habit of going into a tank slapper at moderate speeds and also sliding off the thing on wet roads.

It is important to stress that this article is not a platform to denigrate Japanese motorcycles, however the idea that these oriental offerings descended from heaven and swept British Bikes into the dustbin of history due to their superiority in every field is not correct, though it has become dogma in the motorcycling press. It is said that oppositions do not win elections, Governments lose them . The once great British Motorcycle industry , along with the car industry, had been in decline for several decades and the root causes were largely political and social. The unions were full of dedicated Marxists who had no interest in the capitalist system working, they sincerely wanted to destroy the status quo and set up a workers paradise [Remember the Meriden sit in?] Class driven poor management played its part as well, nature abhors a vacuum and the Japanese ably and legitimately occupied this turf.

It is important at this point to try and define whether the word “Super Bike” Is just subjective opinion or a measurable definition. The Dictionary defines the word Super, when used as an adjective linked to another word, E.G Super Man, Super Car, Super Power ad Nauseum, to mean “To be Placed above or over” Now the label “Super Bike” is a sixties phenomenon. If it were not so the Worlds first Supebike pre war would be the Brough Superior and post war the Mighty Vincent , a



machine capable then and now of blowing a stock CB 750 into the weeds, but we must stick with the Sixties when the term was coined.

The author does quantify his assertion by listing the Attributes which, in his opinion, qualify the Honda for the top slot. They are: Performance , Technical Superiority, Finish and Accessibility. Let us deconstruct these claims one by one:

Performance: Honda Claimed 67 Brake Horsepower and the BSA a mere sixty. How come a standard Rocket Three on test in America exceeded 130MPH? Which BSA were happy to advertise. When 110 to 115 mph would finish of the Honda, Performance of course, would also include braking and handling. The Honda,s Disc Brake was about on a par with the TLS Drum of the BSA until it rained, whereupon the honda,s Front Brake effectively disappeared. When it came to Handling the Honda was inferior in every respect with bad Shocks, bad frame and bad tyres. I well remember the Honda,s charming habit of going into a tank slapper on wet roads at low traffic speeds, aided by its nylon tyres, plastic swing arm bushes and unstable suspension A well ridden Bonneville would Triumph [excuse the pun] in the twisties and the Rocket three would outperform the oriental four in outright speed. Let us not forget, that as the British manufacturers bowed off the world stage the Triples were still pretty much all conquering in the major production races with victories at The I.O.M in 71, Daytona in 72 the Barcelona 24 hour race as well as a host of others.

Technical Superiority: Well, as far as Hondas are concerned that mantle belongs to the Earlier CB 450 “ Black Bomber” (pictured) with its torsion bar valve springs . This design was far more cutting edge, unfortunately it was overweight and underpowered with a truly awful frame. “Cycle World” Magazine dismissed it as “a buzzing little anvil” and certainly no match for sporty British twins. It also had weird “Jelly Mould” styling, a legacy of Honda designers love affair with German and Italian styling cues of the late fifties. In fact, the Honda Four broke with that tradition by copying British Motor Cycle styling with its traditional looks and rounded surfaces. Readers may be surprised to learn that one of the very first CB 750,s available in Britain was purchased by BSA for evaluation. On test it threw its chain



and smashed its engine, as the early Gravity Cast Engine bikes were very prone to doing ,So BSA dismissed the design as below par [Honda later brought out a mod to cure chain breakages]

Finish: With modern production techniques the Honda did have a good finish, but no better than the British offerings and worse as regards plated parts. Honda used “Tool Chrome” as their plating process . This is chrome applied straight to the base metal with no copper or nickel underlay, Cheaper than proper chroming, but not as good.

Accessibility: It was indeed easier to buy a Honda as opposed to the English offerings, So What? The next qualifier was reliability, It is true that all Honda Products were and are extremely reliable, just like the Ubiquitous Honda Cub and that is on no ones list of Super Bikes.

I am afraid these last two categories are irrelevant, other wise a Kia car would trump a Ferrari!

In Closing it is worth noting that the T160 Triumph is not a contemporary of the Honda. It is a much later bike made when the BSA group was in its death throes. It was designed to have an engine capacity of 900cc and is a heavier bike than the 1969 originals. So its not an apples to apples comparison.

Now don't get me started on the blindingly obvious superiority at the time of innovation, build, performance, handling and more of the post-war products from Stevenage.

OVR Event Schedule, updated 26 July 2019

Date	Details	More Info?
2019	2019	
August 4	Dandenong Swap Meet, Showgrounds, Bennet St Dandenong, VIC	
August 16-18	VRV run to Wimmera Silo Art	sec.vrv@gmail.com
August 25	Federation Picnic at Marwong, Victoria.	neil.athorn@bendigobank.com.au
Aug 21-29	2019 Vincent Owners Club North Queensland Atherton Tableland Tour	mdbarr48@bigpond.com
Aug 24-25	BULLI ANTIOUE MOTORCYCLE WEEKEND, Bulli Showgrounds, Grevillea Park Road Bulli NSW	
Aug 31 – Sept 1	All-Historic Racing at Wakefield Park, Goulburn, NSW	
Sept 8	VRV Annual General meeting & elections	sec.vrv@gmail.com
Sept 15	Ballan Swap Meet, Recreation Reserve Ballan, Vic.	
Sept 29	Bay to Birdwood Rally, South Australia	
Oct 4 - 6	Iron Indian Grampians Rally hubbed at Dunkeld. more info on VRV Web Site	
Oct 6	Pakenham Swap Meet, Old Princes H/Way, Pakenham	
Oct 6	HTPAA Antique & Collectable Tool Market, St Anthony's School Hall, 164-168 Neerim Rd, Caulfield East, 9am start till 12.30pm	
Oct 11-13	Motorclassica, Royal Exhibition Buildings, Melbourne, Vic	
Oct 19	VRV Bit on the Side Run, for outfits but singles also welcome	brianh1967@yahoo.com
Oct 22	VRV First Anniversary Event	sec.vrv@gmail.com
Oct 27	Federation Picnic at Baw Baw, Victoria	neil.athorn@bendigobank.com.au
Nov 16-17	Bendigo Swap Meet, Bendigo showgrounds, gates open from 6 am!	
Nov 22, 23 24	VRV Annual Vincent Riders Dinner	brianh1967@yahoo.com
Dec 8	Geelong Swap Meet, Broderick St, Corio, Vic	
2020	2020	
Feb 3 - 18	2020 International Jampot (AJS & Matchless) Rally in New Zealand	matchlessnz@icloud.com
March 10-19	Tassie Tour 2020, held in association with the British Motorcycle Club of Tasmania.	www.tassietour.info
March 28-April 4	Australian Historic Motoring Federation 2020 National Motoring Tour, Albury NSW & Wodonga Vic.	www.ahmf.org.au
Aug 22	Tour De France – for old motorcycles; duration THREE WEEKS!	
Sept 21-25	Australian National Vincent Rally, McLaren Vale, South Australia.! Timed to align with the Bay to Birdwood event for vehicles built up to 1960 which will be held on the following Sunday 27 Sept.	lesbeyer@internode.on.net
Sept 27	Bay to Birdwood Rally, South Australia	http://baytobirdwood.com.au/
Nov 28 2020 – April 2021	Exhibition: <i>Motorcycles: Desire ~ Art ~ Design</i> . The exhibition will be at the Queensland Art Gallery Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) in Brisbane, Australia	

”Le tour de France des motos anciennes”.



While at this year’s VOC International Rally your OVR reporter caught up with Danny Vincent , a member of the VOC French Section who enthused about next years “Tour de France for Old Bikes”.

Here is what he told us.

The TDF happens every 2 years, next one is in 2020, starting the 22nd of August. There are some remaining places available each time, but rules are pretty strict.

You need to be member of the club at least 2 years in a row before the event to be allowed to participate, means for 2020 you have to pay the member fees for 2019 and 2020 now. (cheap just 23 Euros/year)

If you want to take part Here is the link to join the club :
<https://www.gavapmoto.fr/uploaded/bulletin-dadhesion.pdf>

I think Aussies will be more than welcome in this event as it gives an exotic and international touch to the rally, but I'm not in the staff so I cannot promise

This rally is probably one of the longest rallies for veteran bikes in Europe as it last 3 full weeks with a different stop off every evening. [CLICK HERE](#) for a video of part of the 2018 event.

The rally is organized by le GAVAP Moto, a very active French club located in the north of France [MORE INFO HERE](#) , and participants are coming from all over France but also abroad as it becomes more and more famous.

The first day attendees are welcome to participate to a “concours d’élégance” (means riders wearing clothes in sympathy with their bikes age), a good way to meet other participants.

The rally starts in Picardie MAP not far from Montdidier where the club is located and makes a loop in France to return to Picardie after some 5 to 6000 km (3100 to 3700 miles). The rally occurs every 2 years as it requires a lot of preparation from the club staff.

Bikes cannot be ‘younger’ than 1954 and as the rally as a great success, no more than 50 bikes can enter. There is also a selection by bike used, the older the better. Girder forks are a good ticket to enter...

Every day, participants have to do 200-250 km, but this could represent 6 to 8 hours (or even more for those who have trouble with navigation...) in the saddle as the rally is only using narrow lightly trafficked minor roads.

Each days route is studied in advance by a local participant to ensure very twisty roads as well as wonderful landscapes and/or interesting visits along the way.

The fees to participate are low (just 650 Euros in 2018) and for this you have the breakfast, the dinner and the camping each day for the entire 3 weeks. It explains also why preparation is so long as the club tries to obtain subsidies from cities where the rally stops.

The idea behind this is that money couldn't be a reason to be unable to participate. And this also reinforces links between the rally and municipalities as the club organizes every evening a show with all bikes and inhabitants can exchange with rally members.

The club also offers several vans to follow the rally:

- One dedicated to luggage and tents, so no need to carry them on the bike
- One to carry participant spare parts, oil, etc.
- Two for administrative purposes
- One with a complete workshop to repair more or less everything.

Each van is also equipped with a trailer adapted to carry bikes, in case of break down and no possibility to rapidly repair along the road.

Bikes on tow have to be repair at night as they cannot stay on the trailer more than 1 or 2 days. At night, when this is something to repair, it is a real show as there are always some people able to repair everything, the mutual assistance is also a key point and makes this rally very friendly.

The rally is really gorgeous and this creates an issue as it becomes more and more difficult to enter in this group as every year as it is somehow booked early by the same regular participants.

A road book is given every morning to participants. The club recommends to ride by groups of 2 to 6 bikes by people of like skill but also to make the rally ride more interesting: fast bikes or fast riders haven't to follow low speed ones.

I did the rally several times with a Rapide B or a Black Shadow. Well prepared and maintained, these bikes required nearly no maintenance along these 3 weeks. But some guys are doing the "Tour de France" with 125 CC side valve bikes, you can imagine the challenge in the Alps with some passes at More than 2500 M above sea...

The great chance riding on a Vincent is, apart performances, spare parts availability; Entering this rally with bikes of the 1920's and 30's without strong club or professional to deliver spare parts in another challenge.

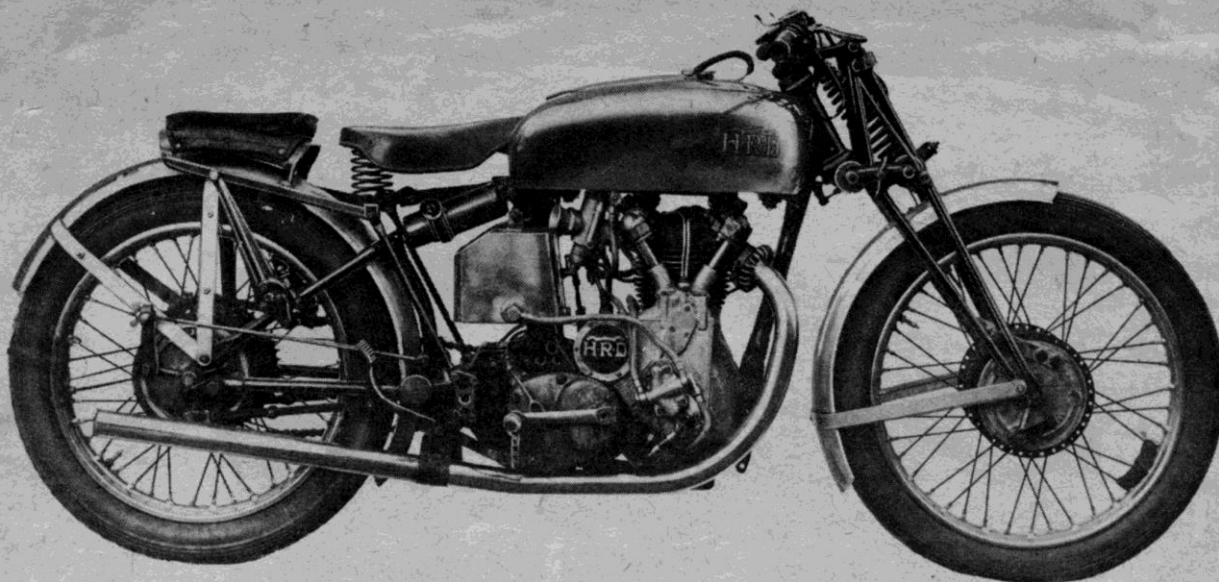
Using a Vincent for long travelling is easy compared to these bikes.

So, ride them!
Dany



La carte du 13^{ème} TOUR DE FRANCE des motos anciennes

L'étape de VALENCE est encore à l'état de projet.



1935 Vincent TT Replica, with Stevenage-built engine. Machines of this type finished 7th, 9th and 12th in the Senior race. The rear pad was mounted on a hinged framework

THROUGHOUT its history, the Vincent-HRD (initially plain HRD, finally plain Vincent) was a highly individual kind of motor cycle — a reflection of the characters behind it. The make began in Wolverhampton in 1924, produced by Howard R. Davies, the only man to win a Senior TT on a Junior machine. But by 1927 the company were in dire straits and production ceased. For almost a year they were in limbo in the hands of Ernie Humphries; then Phil Vincent came on the scene.

Vincent was a man of bubbling enthusiasms, and one of these was rear springing. Since his days as an engineering student in Cambridge, he had been experimenting with a triangulated rear sub-frame, pivoted on taper-roller bearings. So it wasn't surprising that this system was to feature on every bike bearing his name, from the 1929 restart to the close-down in 1955.

Says Vincent: "There were precious few assets left when I acquired the company from Ernie Humphries, but what I was mainly after was the HRD name, which still meant something to the public."

So, for 1929, the HRD returned — with much the same tank transfer as before, but with the name 'Vincent' in small lettering above the HRD initials. Home of the revived firm was alongside the Great North Road at Stevenage, Herts, and the policy of employing proprietary engines was continued. These included Python (Rudge), JAP (including, at one stage, a water-cooled side-valve) and Villiers.

Key year was 1934, when the

TRENDSETTER

by BOB CURRIE

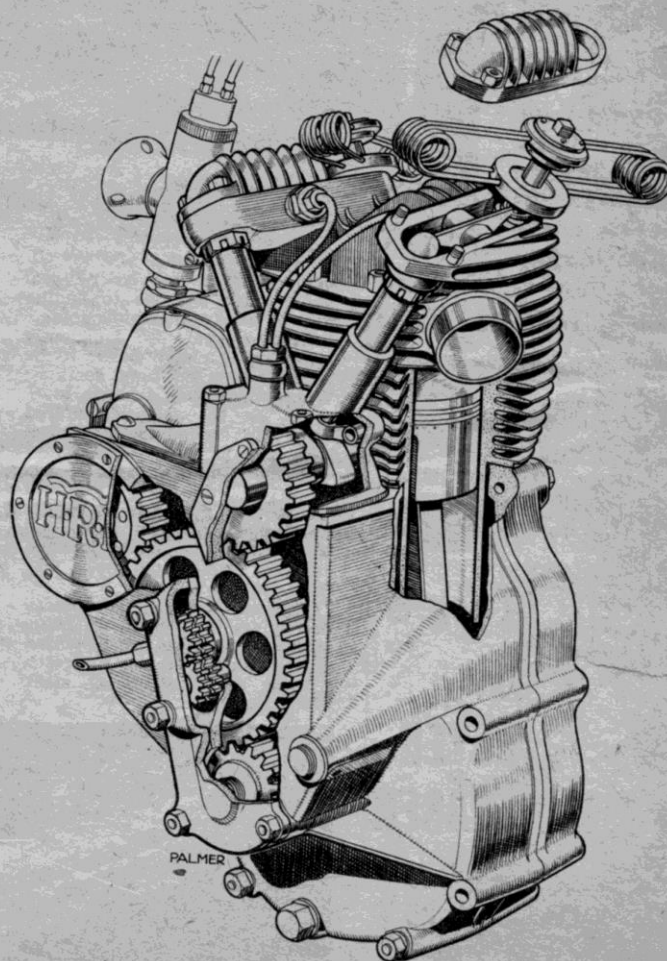
super-sports models had twin-drum front brakes, operated through a compensating beam on the girder fork. The rear wheel had not only two brake drums but also a sprocket on each side, with different numbers of teeth. By reversing the wheel, the rider could change the overall gearing quickly. And to simplify the change the rear spindle was a pull-out type, with integral tommy bar.

There was a disastrous first-time appearance in the 1934 Senior TT but, paradoxically, it set Vincent-HRD on the road to glory. Recalls Phil Vincent: "Our three works entries used JAP engines, but we had so much bother that we decided there and then to have done with bought-out engines and make our own."

"We came back from the Island on June 15 and started immediately. By October we were able to show the new machine to the motor-cycle press."

A 499 cc single, the new engine was the ancestor of every Stevenage power plant that followed, and Vincent fans of today would be quick to recognise the high camshaft, 62-degree included valve angle, tapered pushrods, and straight rockers in housings integral with the cylinder head. Even the 84 x 90mm bore and stroke survived to the end.

Especially interesting was the



The pre-war Vincent 500 cc engine had a very high camshaft and short pushrods. The straight rockers actuated collars halfway down the valve stems



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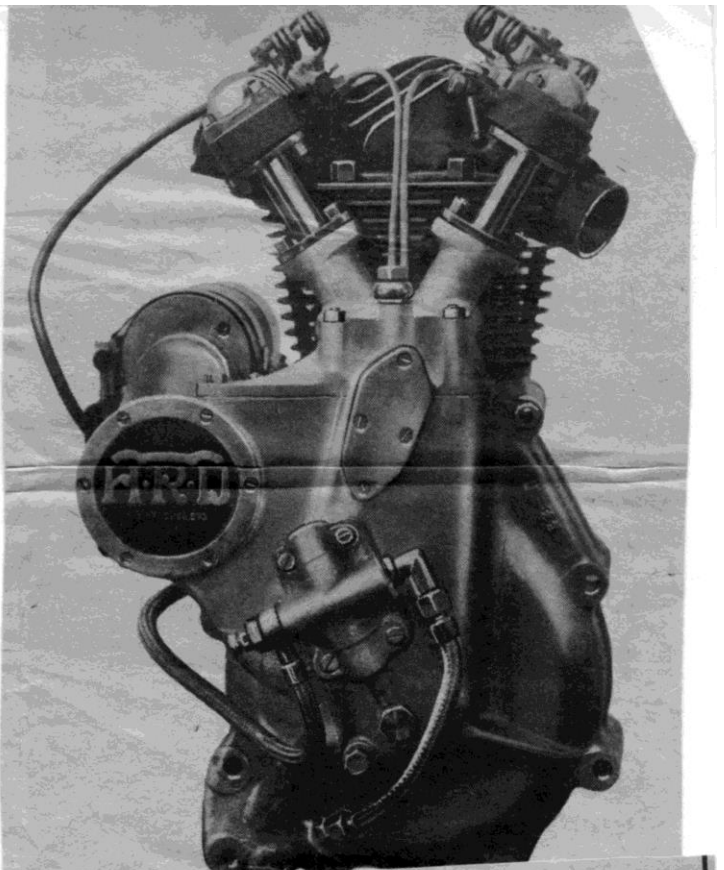
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rocker design, with a forked end that operated on a collar part way down the valve stem. The valve ran in guides both above and below the collar, with the object minimising wear caused by side thrust.

Initially hairpin springs were featured, outside in the open above the rocker boxes. This was said to keep the springs cool — and they could be changed quickly without dismantling the engine.

Design was the work of two men — Phil Vincent and Phil Irving, who sparked and bounced ideas off one another, with Irving keeping Vincent's more fanciful schemes within the confines of practicability.

At first there were three versions of the engine, differing in degree of tune. These were the Standard, Sports and TT (the last a genuine over-the-counter racer, with duralumin guards.

Left: External oil pipes — two to the pump and two to the valve rockers — gave the engine a busy look

straight-through exhaust, racing magneto, and close-ratio gears). But within a couple of months the Standard and Sports names were replaced by Meteor and Comet respectively. These were the first Series A machines, though it was another year before that designation came into use.

Again the factory entered a three-man team in the Senior TT, mounted on the production race models (only major change was raising the compression ratio to 8.6 to 1). This time the results were far more heartening, for they finished 7th, 9th and 12th.

Seventh man at 75.26 mph was Jack Williams, father of British 500 cc champion Peter. Says Jack: "The bikes may not have been particularly quick — after all, it was a brand-new design with almost no development — but they were supremely comfortable after years on solid-frame models. I remember telling a local reporter, rather rashly, that the Vincent-HRD was the first really successful rear-sprung racing machine. Stanley Woods flew into a rage, threatening to sue

all and sundry and accusing Vincent of cribbing the design from Moto-Guzzi!"

For 1937, the first 998 cc vee-twin was added to the range. Known as the Series A Rapide it was, in effect, two of the 499 cc cylinders on a common crankcase. Like the single, the Rapide had a double-gear oil pump on the outside of the timing chest, and the consequent eruption of external piping gave it the affectionate nickname of the plumber's nightmare.

Single and twin, the Series A model carried Vincent-HRD through to the outbreak of war. The post-war programme concentrated mainly on the twin.

single, the post-war Meteor, Comet and Grey Flash were really just twins with the rear cylinder removed. Though overall design was cleaned up, especially in using the engine and oil tank as frame members, they were still the same bikes in essence. Indeed, many parts were still interchangeable with those of the 1935 ancestor.

Yet one thing did change. From 1950 on, the HRD part of the name was abandoned. Why? "Well," explains Phil Vincent, "when I made a sales tour of the USA in 1949, everybody thought we were some sort of offshoot of Harley Davidson. So, much against my will, I put business before sentiment and called the bikes just Vincent."

Comet/Burman Drive Gear Replacement



The output shaft Drive Sprocket PR50-22A has a nasty habit of coming loose if its securing nut PR50-218AX is not correctly fitted.

If this does happen the drive gear will wobble on the driving gear shaft PR50-15BA and if you do nothing about it eventually the dogs (or teeth) on the inside of the drive sprocket will be destroyed allowing the sprocket to rotate independent of the driving gear – net result if you are out riding is the engine revs rise as you roll to a halt.

This happened to me and at first I thought I must have broken or lost the rear drive chain – but that was not the case. I eventually discovered that the inside of the drive sprocket was completely smooth with not a trace of the dogs meant to engage the splines on the drive gear shaft.

One of the problems is that it's hard to detect if the drive sprocket is making its way loose as it's hidden behind the primary chain case T4/2 which needs to be removed for access. And to remove that you must first remove all of the parts inside the primary drive case – the ESA and the complete clutch assembly. As a consequence is better to make sure you install the drive sprocket correctly in the first place.



When you install the new drive sprocket (PR50-22A) be sure to also install a new lock washer (PR50-17-1BA) and if there is any sign of damage to the nut (PR50-218X) replace that as well.

If you are performing the work with the gearbox removed from the bike you will need a Chain Whip to hold the drive gear while you fit and tighten the drive nut. It's not that difficult to make your own chain whip, [CLICK HERE](#) to see how.



If you are doing the work with the gearbox still in place on the bike getting access for a chain whip can be a problem. You will need to devise a way of 'locking' the output shaft of the gearbox so that when the time comes you can tighten the securing nut. You may be tempted, leaving the drive chain in place, to simply put an object, like a broom handle, through the rear spokes to prevent the rear wheel and thus the gearbox drive shaft from rotating – this will work BUT be warned you will end up with a bent or broken spoke in the rear

wheel. A better method is to have a "stout" assistant apply the rear brake very very firmly while you tighten the nut

Save yourself grief and purchase a "long" 52mm Land Rover wheel bearing tube/box spanner that fits the Burman nut like a glove. These are readily available for a very moderate cost. I obtained mine from eBay .

You need to get that nut dead tight then secure it with a new lock washer; do not use Loctite!



Africa... *by Bantam*



A real life travel adventure of Julian Preece, first published in Classic Bike, Jan 1987.

IT WAS the month of October, 1983 and my destination was India. Wearing my WWII flying jacket, open face helmet, 1945 flying goggles and with my scarf blowing in the wind, I couldn't help feeling like James Dean. However, my 175cc BSA Bantam was unfamiliar with such long journeys and the shock of actually driving past Northampton dole office broke the speedometer cable. Seeing the needle shoot to zero reminded me of my mechanic's encouraging words: 'You'll never get to Dover on that, let alone India.' Relative to terraced street life in Northampton it was a big step and it took a few days before we could give the journey our full concentration. Consequently the first day was one of mechanical problems and map-reading blunders. The bike stopped on a long hill near Wolverton, but slight adjustment of the pilot air screw appeared to solve this problem, much to my surprise. We got lost in Milton Keynes, but then who doesn't? We had to wait eight months before seeing the A5 again. I was riding a 1966 Bantam D7 with a three-speed gearbox which I had treated to a few new parts: a new big- and little -end, piston, clutch plates and chains. I expected it to break down early on (I had a secondary plan of hitching to India) so carried few spares, just piston rings, gaskets, points, plugs, a small-end and a universal spare tyre. Two one gallon petrol containers were rubber-mounted on the rear shocks and rack. Also carried were small tank panniers carrying miscellaneous food items and a hip-flask of whisky — after all man cannot live on bread alone. My luggage, although I had considered it light, rendered the bike almost uncontrollable unless I sat on the tank. As time and miles went by and road surfaces got softer I was to discard items until only the bare essentials remained.

I left England with £750 in my pocket, travelling swiftly through Europe trying to escape the bitterly cold weather, and my own exhaust fumes. I stepped off the bike on a wet Alpine corner, but fortunately the footrest took most of the impact. I came off a second time as I rounded a corner on the Yugoslav coast and met the Krashka Bora wind, which has been known to blow buses full of screaming tourists into the sea: it had no trouble de-seating one screaming motorcyclist. I also nearly decapitated myself entering a garage that had a rope stretched across its entrance.

The clutch refused to work 20 miles out of Dubrovnik due to its retaining nut working loose. When I left England I thought that if I reached Dubrovnik on the bike I would be well satisfied. On reflection I am ashamed of my lack of confidence in the Bantam.

And so began an overdose of hospitality that was to last until my return, spending most nights with the indigenous folk: the poor people of Yugoslavia and Turkey (the rich don't invite you into their homes), the Muslims of Syria, Jordan and Egypt, relief workers in Sudan, the negroes of Black Africa and the Bedouins of the Sahara. I didn't get to India, as I shall explain.

This hospitality is what made the trip enjoyable, but at times it could get a little stifling, being on show every night. The important members of the village would visit to see the white man on a motorcycle, poke him to see if he was real, watch him eat, wash, clean his teeth and sleep in that funny bag. Occasionally, hospitality was taken to embarrassing extremes. In Syria I stayed with a family in a one-roomed house and they insisted I slept in the double bed whilst they all slept on the floor. I visited a member of the family in hospital with a broken leg — they had me lie on his bed and eat his fruit while the poor fellow sat in a chair grimacing!



I approached every border with apprehension as my documentation did not bear close inspection. I had no Carnet de Passage, no frame number, and my engine number differed from the registration document — even my library card was out of date. Most border guards looked at the bike, then at each other, had a good laugh and waved me on. However, it was not always that simple. In Turkey, one particular guard took a dislike to me, snatched my passport back, scribbled out my visa and sent me back to Greece. He gave no explanation — he didn't have to. I spent the night under a tractor and crossed the border again the following morning after the guards changed. And the bike was still going.

The Iranian embassy in Ankara told me I would have to wait two months for a visa to leave Turkey for Iran. I was initially bitterly disappointed but was of the frame of mind that whatever happened was for the best. My thoughts changed, with regret, from India to Africa and I began travelling from one country to another without any idea of a final destination.



I had a quiet Christmas in Syria and an even quieter New Year in Jordan. On the Gulf of Aqaba I could see the lights of Israel and Egypt but could not travel through Israel on a motorcycle and had to get a boat to Suez. In Cairo I met a few more travellers: everyone appeared to be hanging around waiting for something. I was no exception, having to wait two weeks for Sudanese road permission. I was to be in Sudan six weeks but never did find a road there, let alone get challenged over permission to use it!

The bike was running badly, so whilst kicking my heels I changed the piston rings in the hope of improving things. I took a circuitous route through the strange land of Egypt, 1,000 miles through the desert via four oasis towns then down the Nile Valley from Asyut to Aswan. The Bantam behaved impeccably except for the kick-start which sheared and fell off in Sohag. Fortunately, an Egyptian fellow jumped on the back and guided me through a maze of backstreets to what was the nearest thing to a motorcycle shop. My new kick-start was about two foot long and could not be used whilst sitting on the bike.

To increase petrol carrying capacity I bought two five litre cans so I could now carry 28 litres. At my average speed, which had come down to 32 miles per hour — the speed at which the bike felt most comfortable — I was getting 90mpg. The problem with travelling so slowly was that I had to sit on the bike all day to cover any great distance, resulting in that common motorcyclist's complaint, a tender backside.

As I crossed the Aswan dam I stood up on the pegs, shouted, sang and pulled faces. This was one of those occasional moments when I was overcome by the thrill, success, and sheer unreality of it all. Until Sudan, I had not realised how bad a road could be and still be called a road. Wide expanses of sand were dissected by tyre tracks all disappearing in different directions. It was so bad I travelled part of the way to Khartoum on the railway track, a very bumpy ride indeed. I passed through small villages where children stared in disbelief before running away — one child jumped off his donkey because it wasn't running away fast enough!

The flimsy, yet evidently durable, front forks had long since leaked all their oil. The springs had weakened and the forks began to bottom out on even the smallest pot-holes. I replaced my rear tyre with the new tyre I had carried all the way from England, not because it was worn, but in my effort to decrease weight. I began to fall off frequently in soft sand. The front wheel would sometimes disappear into a hole of dust or become entangled in a web of tyre tracks.

The Bantam coped well, though, and forged on, often with me alongside pushing. I often expected the clutch to burn out but it was strong to the end. However, one problem had developed. It refused to start when warm: if it stalled in soft sand I would have to push it to firmer ground, empty the carb and clean the spark plug several times, then run-and-jump on the kick-starter. This soon got tiresome and I push-started for the remainder of my journey.

I was still travelling without destination, unsure which direction to take next. Travel in Sudan was limited, as were petrol supplies, the south being engulfed by Civil War and a prohibited area. My only way out was west into the Central African Republic.

I reluctantly took the train from Kosti to Nyala across western Sudan as there was no road I could use. On the train, I met another biker called Jamie. He was riding a Yamaha XT 550 and we travelled together to Bangui. Perhaps together is not the right word: his bike was so much faster than mine he would drive ahead and a few hours later I would find him asleep under the shade of a tree.



In Nyala we spent a few days preparing for our 1,000 mile journey through the CAR, finally leaving the desert. A Sudanese mechanic welded my front mudguard stays back on, and I bought 28 litres of black market petrol at £3 per gallon. Nyala to Bangui took ten days because the road was so awful. It was either soft sand, where it was preferable to wind our way through

trees alongside, or hard rock similar to a dried-up river bed. We celebrated arriving in Ndele, the first major town in the Republic, by sharing a bottle of beer, which, after abstaining for three months under Islamic law, sent us both to sleep.

Between Ndele and Bossangoa I had my only puncture of the whole trip. Despite my frantic shouting and waving Jamie (my foot pump carrying friend) disappeared into the distance leaving me coasting to a halt with a deflated rear tyre. Fortunately I was only five kilometres from the nearest village. After hiding my valuables, I removed the wheel and walked back to the village where a friendly lorry driver came to my aid.

I roared out of the jungle down the mountainside into Bangui with a smile on my face and a feeling of relief in my heart. This was as far south as I would travel: I could feel the heat of the equator but must turn northwards and homewards, though not until after sampling the delights

of a little civilization in Bangui. There was some friction between blacks and whites here because of French military presence. Three days before my arrival, the situation deteriorated when a French fighter aircraft crashed into a local school.

Jamie and I found sanctuary in a Catholic Mission overlooking the Oubangui river and across to Zaire. I was both pleased and amazed when the French Father showed me his motor cycles — two D14 Bantams no less! Neither worked due to the lack of a local BSA

spares stockist and the Father had no objections to me renewing a few of my bike's weary parts. I exchanged the drive chain as I had already removed two links, though the replacement was not much better. The primary drive chain was replaced with a modified Renault type which took a great deal of finding. Whilst waiting for visas I carried out repairs. I tore my sleeves off my only remaining shirt to use as engine wipes, and de-coked the exhaust.

I was saved from the perils of the sands of Chad by the re-opening of the Nigerian borders after three years. The embassy tried its best to strangle my carefree spirit by making things difficult. Over five visits, the price of a visa gradually increased to the equivalent of £14, my most expensive so far.

The Cameroon embassy asked to see my bike insurance so I quickly corrected myself and said I was hitch-hiking, but at the Cameroon border there was no mention of insurance. I said goodbye to Jamie, who was off to Zaire, and completed my preparations for the next stage by buying three cans of sardines. Leaving Bangui was like starting the journey over again but for the first time I knew my exact route: Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger and Algeria. I also left with a new approach to my travels. The journey had turned into a crusade to show the world the greatness of the British motorcycle.

It was now April and beginning to get hot. I was not looking forward to the Sahara. It's the sort of thing you attempt at the beginning of a journey when you are feeling strong and enthusiastic, not at the end when you



are tired and weary. I left Bangui with \$400 but a thief in Cameroon stole \$150 leaving me with \$250 and my three cans of sardines. I would have to declare \$220 at the Algerian border in order to be allowed into the country, and the border was 2,500 miles away. The roads began to improve through Cameroon, the only problem was the dust and occasional sections of corrugation. I met a Spaniard on a Vespa Scooter who had come by the route I was just starting — we shared a mango, exchanged stories and parted company thinking each other mad.

How boring Nigerian tarmac was after the tracks of the Central African Republic. Between Maidugari and Kano we achieved a new mileage record of 260 miles in one day, but it was painful and exhausting. The Bantam was tired and must have been longing for the old days in Northampton when it's only function was to sit outside the house leaking oil.

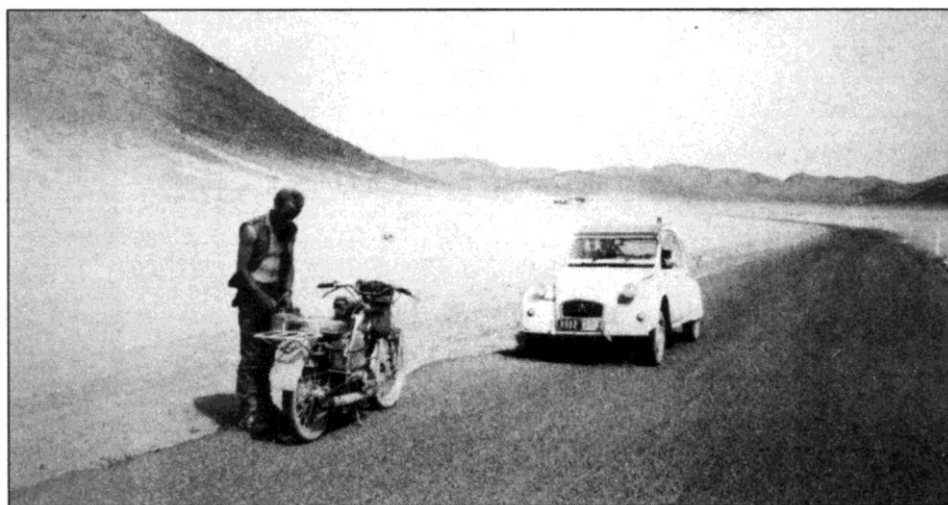
The piston rings had worn so much the end gaps had enlarged to almost half an inch. Consequently, gas was bypassing the piston and the engine didn't know whether it was coming or going. I replaced the rings with the old pair which were not much better. The bike's performance was very fickle but seemed better with a regular de-coke. After entering Niger — a place I never thought I would visit — I lifted the cylinder for a good clean every two days. On reflection, I think the majority of my mechanical problems were caused by poor petrol.



The Nigerian border guards were reluctant to let me leave the country. They accused me of being a spy and threatened to impound my bike and camera. However, after several hours of interrogation they all wanted my address in England so they could write to me!

The next problem was with violent and sand-carrying crosswinds. Despite my precaution of putting an oil-soaked sock over the air filter, sand was seizing the throttle slide. It was very difficult to clean the carb in the howling wind: it took three days to travel from Tahoua to Agadez, a mere 260 miles.

I was beginning to wilt under the Sahara sun with temperatures at 40°C or more. I had lost my appetite for manioc and maize porridge and was only happy drinking Coke or Fanta. I vowed to drink nothing but Coke for the rest of my days. The occasional village would have an old fridge kept cool with water-soaked hessian sacking — they had no electricity.



The writer and his Bantam on one of the Sahara's better roads.

In Arlit, the last asphalt outpost, I met Jacques, an intrepid French Citroen 2CV driver who was going north. What a relief. Together we travelled the worst section of the Sahara, from Arlit in Niger to Ain-Salah in Algeria over 800 miles of corrugated rocks, bulldust and soft sand. In some parts the 'piste' is two kilometres wide and it has been known for travellers to lose the track, get lost, and perish in the intense heat.

After all my misgivings, the Sahara passed quickly. After seven vague days we arrived in Ain-Salah. The corrugated sand had taken its toll on both me and the bike. I was totally exhausted and went down with a fever for three days, kidneys and backbone aching after their continual pounding. The Bantam's front mudguard stays had sheared and a few spokes had broken, the mechanical noise had become louder than the exhaust noise as the big-ends and mains had worn. Both sprockets were almost round and the chain was like elastic; the carburettor was temperamental and began flooding at random. Basically the bike was a wreck, but it still moved forward. My God, it looks like we might make it all the way back to England!



I had no money left, so because of Algerian currency regulations I was obliged to catch the Algiers-Marseilles ferry and not travel through Morocco and Spain as hoped. I received money from my father through the British embassy in Algiers and left Africa on May 10 aboard the old tub El Djazair.



The BSA didn't like the good roads and short distances in France and complained bitterly, especially climbing the Massif Central. I only spent six days in France as my thoughts were back in England and I was eager to see my family and friends. Then — there they were, those white cliffs of Dover — was that a tear that just fell from my eye? I was conspicuous doing 20mph on the hard shoulder of the M20 which was probably why the police stopped me. Considering the un-roadworthiness of the vehicle and the absence of MoT, tax, and insurance they were very reasonable.

With my bike at Charlie's Motorcycles in Bristol having its internals looked at, I found myself propped up in bed in Bath hospital with malaria. But with the wonders of modern science, quinine and pretty nurses I recovered quickly and was able to reflect on my 10,000 miles journey.

A British motorcycle crusader's work is never done. When my bike and myself are both fully healthy we shall once more set out on the road to India, hopefully without deviation this time.

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I am Looking for FT163 Magneto Cover plain or in black for my Vincent Twin. If you have one to trade please contact me by email to mirkothun@hotmail.com

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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, ET1801 and 2 each ET181. US\$58.00. Also ET 140 Clutch cover gasket available, US\$15.28

Post war Comet and Meteor kit includes (pictured): ET 106, ET180, ET182, ET181, PD14/1, and ET106. US\$55.00

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.



For Sale: Taps n Dies

1/4" to 1/2" HSS BSF tap and die kit made in EU, just the thing for your Vincent, also available in BSC (CYCLE THREAD) A\$230. Contact vindian1952@gmail.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@outlook.com

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, Lucas, Amal and Venhill control cables. Ships worldwide. More info at the website www.unionjack.com.au or phone +61 3 9499 6428

VSM, Holland: 2x2 leading shoe brake kits for Vincents; high quality 30mm wide 4 leading shoe system. Email vspeet@vsmmetaal.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 :

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 cronometric 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 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.melbournmotorcyclefairings.com.au/>
Ph 03 9939 3344

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