



# The Oz Vincent Review

*Edition #85, March 2021*



A well used touring Comet. Not parked .. just waiting

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Welcome to the latest edition of OVR . Well at last things on the home front are at long last getting back to normal and with Autumn on us here in Australia it seems we will have at least another 2 months or so of great riding weather before the rain gear is required. Then come September it starts improving all over again. Bliss. Just in time for the Australian Vincent National Rally

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**Letters to the Editor** (a small sample of what I received)

Hi Martyn

This might provide an amusing aside.

Seeing Frank Sinclair belting around the Bathurst Circuit reminds me of my outback trip in OZ back in 2012 we hired an outback camper and made it up beyond the dog fence into Queensland and down through South Australia to port Vic on our 10.000 mile drive, among other places we visited were a number of sites where Ben Hall had roamed he is one of my heroes and that took in Bathurst we had the book Camp4 with which to find spots for the night, in Bathurst that meant Mount Panorama, our route up there took in the race circuit which we drove in the camper a 4.5ltr converted Toyota Land Cruiser with long range fuel tanks, the sort of thing the Taliban drive up mountains so we got to drive the Circuit and get the 'T' shirt, back home our son said "you drove the Mount Panorama Circuit"? we had no idea that the track was that famous!

Meanwhile I have fitted the indicators to the Comet just like yours.

Chris Roche, UK

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Martyn, You lifted my spirits, I was so pleased to read of the successful outcome of your brush with cancer, when you posted on the VOC forum "I have been diagnosed with cancer, bugger" and then left us hanging, I was really concerned for you, it is a subject pretty prevalent in my thoughts.

I was very saddened to read in MPH that Robert Watson has lost his wife Kathy, when we were at the international rally in Italy it was very clear that Kathy had undergone cancer treatment.

But Martyn, I repeat, I am delighted to read of your good news, and just for the record, I insist on a PSA every year, although initially my doctor told that without symptoms I did not really need to have it, but I rather forcefully explained to him that my cousin had just died of prostate cancer, and in the early stages he didn't have any symptoms either.

All being well with all of us I look forward to meeting up again in the USA.

Cheers

Peter Holmes, UK

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Hi Martyn,

Aye, prostrate cancer. I'll need to look through the sites you linked to. I have been, as ages with you, to my doc. For the finger up the bum inspection. Pee flow, and regularity is OK.

I had read that the PSA test itself was a bit uncertain, and if you had a biopsy, that could lead to complications of it's own. Perhaps, as you have had, a run of them to establish a floor. Something I should pursue, when things here calm down. I'll drop a line to Jean, I can still sing La Marcheuse, from school. In fact, I was at a demo in Inverness last year, and a french girl student asked me what was going on, and I gave her the first verse. The Auld Alliance.

BTW, I have a Comet, had 3 years, just started work on it, s/s F/F spindles, eccentric thingys, rather than replace, I took a few thou off them for the wear, made new bushes to suit. Just about to order ss hex bar for nuts.

Now, it has a Koni front damper, leaking, has anyone covered disassembly. Marked 1960. I seem to remember reading about them one time. Could not find anything doing a search.

Regards, all the best, Ken Johnston. Scotland

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## **On Scooters . . . . . Life's Not Just Vincents**

An OVR original from Paul Whittaker, Australia

Recently, I've noticed some disparaging comments about my love of scooters from friends and in particular my motorcyclist friends which, really, border on blind prejudice. Actually, a lot of people find these insults these quite funny, seemingly provoked into comedy or at least a disapproving frown. These are not about my race or ethnicity, nor about my work, my sexuality or my age, rather, the comments gently poke fun at my love of and use of fabulously iconic machines, Motor Scooters.

In fact, during a period when I worked in the centre of the city, I scooted around a corner one day, just as a powerful V8 utility swung around the other way. The fellow behind the wheel, bearded, tattooed and at a guess, probably 6' and 200 kilograms, burst out laughing, spraying spittle as he did so, eyes wide as he spotted the little blue scooter, sporting a full size windscreen and matching top box. I have to say that I was somewhat taken-a-back, not expecting such a colourful reaction, particularly from a guy I would have expected to easily stare down his angry Sergeant at Arms at the clubhouse. This experience did seem to confirm that these little bikes did however provoke passion in many.

This predilection of mine does requires some explanation. However, I do not wish for this story to be seen in any way as defending my attraction to, in particular, Italian utilitarian two wheeled transport devices. In fact, it is more an expression of a possible and latent artistic side, yet to be fully explored, because I see beauty and art in the design of these machines, much more so that the often beautiful but agricultural style of most motorcycles. I do understand that some do not see what I see but, in the spirit of arrogant superiority, I will forgive them their mistake.

I too also have had an enduring love of motorcycles, and I too have been smitten by the beauty of some. The excitement and dynamics of motorcycles and scooters are very different, but the pleasures of both are some of the best life can offer.

## Origins

For those who don't know, the Scooter was first invented in about 1894 in Bavaria, Germany. It had the characteristic step-through frame, a platform for the operator's feet and was driven by a twin cylinder engine. In fact, it was the first Motorcycle to be commercially available.



These distinguishing elements were present on many early motorcycle designs, particularly those which were more advanced than a mere bicycle with a small engine strapped onto the frame. It was not until Piaggio, ([piaggiocompany](http://piaggiocompany)) however, an Italian company who built fighter planes and trains, before these factories were destroyed by Allied bombing, decided that what war-torn Italy needed most was cheap personal transport.

Using the company's experience in aero design, Piaggio's prototype motorcycles (Scooters) were built and available from 1946. It was nicknamed *Vespa*, Italian for Wasp, because of its narrow waist and bulbous rear-end appearance, as seen from above. The design was a huge success. The use of an integrated steel frame and body cowlings and single sided suspension clearly show those aircraft influences.



In reality, some of the features and ideas which inspired the Vespa, in 1946, and Lambretta a year later in 47', should be attributed to the Cushman's Airborne scooter, which the Allies dropped by parachute into the European theatre in 1944 and 45'.

Following quickly on the heels of the Vespa, Lambretta, America's Cushman and many others filled the growing popularity of this style of transport. These companies included MV Augusta, Motor Guzzi and others.

Growing up, my understanding of what a Scooter looked like was limited to my own leg-powered pressed metal *Cyclops*. This was pretty cool as I recall, and allowed rapid commuting between mates' houses and the odd steal away to the shop to cash in bottles and buy some musk sticks or, if in summer, a Sunny Boy ice block. I suppose like most other boys, I became tired of it and progressed to a push bike, the first being a Malvern Star which I did up in royal blue and gold with my Dad. Interestingly, whenever I see an adult male riding a leg-powered push scooter, they seem popular again, I see a man who is still a child. It seems somehow, inappropriate.

The pushbike however really was a revelation, with speed and distance being the goal on every outing. The fact that it was special, even bespoke, added to my love of the thing and I had that for many years until sports pushbikes came onto my scene. My first really fast bike was a Bennett *Super Sports*, a model name that I would come to revere in future years, and in its day one of the best road bikes on the market.

I won't reveal my motorcycle buying and riding history here, quite frankly because it is just too painful, the money wasted, rare and exotic bikes sold off unappreciatively, such regrets are difficult.

What I do want to reminisce about are Scooters. The motorized, two wheeled types, most famously exemplified by the Vespa, of course.

I can't say that during my early riding years I had any attraction to them. They were strange, noisy and smoky machines which seemed to have even stranger riders. Pudding basin helmets, old duffle coats and old canvas lap-rugs did not seem very modern or likely to attract the fairer sex, at least I didn't think it likely then. The only thing I knew about them, Scooters that is, was that my uncle was killed riding one home to Maroubra in southern Sydney, late one night after work.

This is what I was led to believe in various discussions with my family and it wasn't until years later that I learned he actually died of a heart attack while riding his old Lambretta.

Even then, as now, the temptation for mothers to lie to their sons about the dangers of motorcycles was too much for them to resist.

This family tragedy had no effect at all on my interest in bikes and my first road going motorcycle was a 1947 BSA Bantam, 125cc of raw energy. I just arrived with it at home one day expecting a telling off from the folks. My mother told me years later that she said nothing in a fruitless attempt at reverse psychology, hoping that I would lose interest and move on to a nice little car. That would have been too many years to wait.

Alas, for her, I did not lose interest. As I said, I won't be regaling the reader with the horrors of my lost motorcycle opportunities, except the say that the next one was a 1971 Suzuki T250 Hustler and the first one I actually rode, legally, once obtaining my learners permit.

For those of a certain age getting a bike or car license was a natural rite-of-passage, or to misquote Thomas Jefferson, *'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that [all men are created equal](#), that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are the right to [Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness](#) and a motorcycle'*.

This inherent desperation for personal mobility was surely desired by everyone, or so I thought. Those years of sitting in the back of a car while looking for houses or visiting relatives was one of my driving factors. I was even kidnapped as a baby, when forced to share the ride with my parents. We had been visiting an aunt and I was placed in the car asleep while the goodbyes were said. Some malcontent tear-away, probably a late 1950's version of a Mod, sans his scooter, also desiring mobility, jumped in the already running Holden and drove off into the dark.

My wife likes to interject if I relate this event (the fact that I have no memory of it has not prevented the story) that when the thief saw my ugly face he dumped the car and ran for it. It is not surprising then that I was destined to ride free and make my own way in the world. Luckily for me, I was recovered without harm when following some panicked action by parents and local police the car was found not far from the crime scene, I slept through it all.

Today, there is an inexplicable trend towards teenagers and some much older, to not bother getting a license at all. I suppose their parents are slave to their needs or they are happy to be a drain on the public purse by requiring whole systems of transport to move them about, pathetic really.

In any case, this rite-of-passage involved a visit to the NSW State Motor Registry. My closest was at the overpass on the Neutral Bay side of the Cahill Expressway in North Sydney.

In these days a motorcycle or car learner's permit could be obtained once you had reached 16 years and 9 months of age. On the very day I turned this age, I rode to the registry. The idea was to ride the registered and fully functioning beast (250 cc limit) to the registry, fill out the forms and wait for an assessor to come to you. A stern chap with a flyer's moustache found me and his instructions were; *'Ride out that gate and up to Crow's Nest shops and back here. When you get back come and see me'*. This was it, he didn't follow me or watch, so I tentatively moved off and out the gate, heading across the overpass west and back to Crow's Nest. I got up to the big five ways intersection and bravely negotiated a U-turn once through it. I was so anxious, I overshot the U-turn and scrapped the opposing gutter with the Suzuki's left hand muffler. Wobbling away, I saw a couple of uniformed Fireman across the road. I pictured them laughing at me. I just prayed the assessor didn't see that or he would have failed me for sure.

Upon my return he asked; *'How was it son'*. I was so very conflicted as to whether to tell him about my slight mishap, in case he had spies along the route. I lied and without further ado he handed me a Learners Permit and a yellow and black cardboard 'L' plate.

I have never really reconciled how such a ruthless authority (NSW Motor Registry) was able to simply ignore the fact that for a young bloke like myself, to get to the registry to take the test was done without skills or a license. I supposed at the time that that the prevailing wisdom was, that if you survived, you must have done something right. Nowadays of course they sting you for a permit to do anything, before you can do it. In any case, I survived and went on to bigger and better motorcycles.

I can't actually recall the process for getting a 'P' plate, but it certainly would have involved an eyesight test, a short written examination and the payment of a fee. I also obtained my car license around this time as well, so the bike 'P' plate might have been automatic.

### **On the road**

Of course, part of this rite-of-passage was to experience the riggers of actually riding on the highways and byways. On one lovely afternoon, I was doing just that, driving my mother's car (yes, yes, I know) out near Wiseman's Ferry and listening to *2JJ's Nude Radio* programme on the car radio with two friends, when I inadvertently exceeded the speed limit.

This ABC associated radio station introduced a new style of radio programme which featured Holger Brockman and Doug Mulray, very irreverent and at times stretching the decency standards of the day. When FM radio was introduced it became Triple J, and remains the main proponent of modern independent music.

On this day however, the recently introduced 'radar' checked my speed at 82 in a 60 zone. Around this time, the metric system had only recently been introduced (1974) [Metrication in Australia](#) and allegedly some of the older signs were still showing around the various state council areas, well at least this Miles-Per-Hour signs fiasco was unsuccessfully used by some as an excuse for speeding. It didn't work for me either and the penalty was three months suspension. In fact all the old signs speed advisory were changed within a week across the whole country.

This automatically extended to my motorcycle license as well. Belligerently, I contested the ticket and was required to go to a traffic court situated someway up a set of famous steps, the *Moore Steps*, near the Sydney Opera House. These lead from the waterfront at East Circular Quay up to Macquarie Street. I believe that the first recorded murder of an Australian policeman occurred at the top of those steps, when a trusted convict, appointed as a Constable, stabbed his patrol partner to death.

The traffic appeals court was in a small stone convict built building close to the bottom and shared the foyer with a Venereal Disease clinic. Yes, clearly, those who were audacious enough to challenge the power of the state were also to receive an education in other elements of self-preservation. Following a very brief appearance before the Magistrate, I caught the ferry home. The stairs still exist but they are now flanked by high class restaurants, like *Aria* and luxury apartments, dubbed the *Toaster*, overlooking Circular Quay.

For three months I was forced to endure public transport or seek a lift somewhere, anywhere, from friends or family.

The Suzuki T250, quietly awaiting my return to mobility, however, was my first two stroke experience. This relationship was satisfying enough, not too many arguments or breakups, it did its job and got me to school and back and to my first proper job in fine form. It looked pretty as well with that tone of candy apple orange only ever seen on bikes of the 1970's. I did realize however that not everyone thought my bike was awesome. The older brother of a friend regularly pestered me to let him do 'burnouts'. I think the high revving two stroke style brought out the hooligan in him. I had too much respect for fine machinery.

It is heartening that some of these bright and interesting colours are returning, they are referred to by the manufacturers as 'hero' colours and are supposed to evoke nostalgic feelings of youth and a happy, less complicated time. Imagine thinking the 1970's was a happy or less complicated time. Most of Asia was at war, the Cold War fears of annihilation had everyone seriously considering building nuclear shelters and the oil crisis was in full swing, along with major changes to the social norms of most countries. The state police were still known affectionately as 'the wallopers'.

Yet, despite these fears and issues, I was quite happy, riding around on a succession of fast and exotic motorcycles, working at new jobs, studying new things, finding my way in the world. Some of these bikes included a couple of Triumphs, a 500 twin, a Bonneville and a Trident, a Norton, a quite special BSA 650 Lightning, a 51' Matchless 500, and few other outrageously unreliable and frustrating machines.

### **Need versus want**

I found myself with a new job at King's Cross. No, it isn't what you are thinking, I wasn't in that 'industry', spruiking for the strip clubs or walking the street looking for love at a price, the job was in the sales team at Budget Rental Cars. This was the firm famously owned by Reg Ansett of Ansett Airways. He was a controversial figure in Australian business, was American and insisted on working the front office himself on his many visits to the stores. The Budget-rent-a-car shop on the corner of William Street and Crown Street had no staff parking and I did not have a bike I wanted to leave unattended for long days.

At this time I was running a Triumph Trident T150. The Triumph triple had a very stiff and noisy clutch, it was heavy, and it stalled and kicked back and overheated. It sucked fuel like a jet plane and at the time was one of the most stolen bikes on the planet.

#### *Lovely old thing 1973 Model T150*

While there was a certain perverse pleasure in riding such a difficult and tough bike through traffic, and across the Sydney Harbour Bridge and into the city, what I really needed was something convenient that wasn't a damned bus.



I didn't know really what I was looking for but I knew it had to be economical and clean, as I had a new uniform to maintain, and of inoffensive style that would not attract thieves or the grey bombers. The Grey Bombers were of course parking officers who worked for the city of Sydney. Their uniforms were a dull mauve-grey colour.

About a decade earlier, Australia invented the Bankcard. That's right, there had been some credit and charge cards such as American Express and Diners Club, but an Australian economist designed and created the first Bankcard system (1974-2006) which allowed you to borrow money at a huge variety of locations and charged you interest to be paid back over a number of days, months or never, as many poor souls soon discovered.

I know this because one of the creators of Bankcard was Bill Gwynne, (*William Gwynne, BCom (NSW), MA (Lanc), MBA (Cran),*) once one of my lecturers in commerce at Kuring-Gai College of Advance Education, Lindfield, a fabulous campus recently absorbed into University of Technology, Sydney.

The significance of this revolution in finance and the ease in which a fellow could borrow money is probably lost on more recent generations; but it was used with relish by everyone. You can see how injecting motorcycles into a situation can even add a positive spin to that most negative of inventions, debt.

The downside was there were borrowing limits. Mine was about \$1400 at that time. I was able to convince the Bank that owing to my previous willingness to be fleeced, I could handle such a large amount.

So it was one morning, armed with that credit card, I walked up and down Elizabeth Street in East Sydney, the famous Sydney motorcycle hub of which I was quite familiar. I once worked at one of the stores selling accessories and helmets, amazing how many friends visited seeking discounts. Regardless, it paid well and satisfied my need for total immersion into the world of motorcycles.

I had written to many of these shops seeking work at the beginning of my working life and one famous owner and road racer wrote back, 'thank you for your interest in working for Tom Byrne, I would however caution your passion for such a Cinderella industry, good luck in your quest'.

I took a Commercial Trainee position with BP instead, starting in the mail room, moving through Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable. You can see why I wanted to work in the motorcycle trade. Incidentally, my brush with fame was that Alan Border also worked there. At this time, however he was famous for baseball and his cricket career started soon after.

The motorcycle industry survived the coming of midnight without turning into a pumpkin, as did I, and Sydney's bike precinct thrived. There were second hand bike shops, accessory and tyre dealers, new bikes like Triumph, BMW, Norton, Harley, Suzuki, Laverda, Moto Guzzi, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Honda. A new and aggressive business, a multi-franchise bike dealer, Action Motorcycles had opened not long before. A really great team and who went on to do even greater things, like sponsoring a race series and all things motorcycles, and more recently to create Deus Ex-Machina in Sydney. [Homepage](#) | [Deus Ex Machina](#) | [Deus Ex Machina](#) I'm sure that the young dealer and his father did not envisage such a success as this.

On this day, I went into Action Motorcycles and they had a very large Harley Davidson Electra Glide for sale on the floor, a favorite for me still today. It even had a name, 'Blue Hawaii'. Airbrushed artwork adorned all the painted surfaces, including ghostly images of Elvis. I think it was named after one of his movies.



The dealer advised that it was heavy and hard to ride. I took it for a run around East Sydney and I was very surprised how easy and maneuverable it was. It felt powerful, had mountains of torque and had just so much presence. I was reminded of my many Easters at the Bathurst motorcycle races and one of the very exciting and interesting subcultures I observed was the arrival each year in Mount Panorama's MacPhlamy Park of the Harley Davidson Owners Club of Australia. This was a long time before HOG clubs and company supported outings which today binds riders from all sorts of marques.

The vast majority of these chaps rode Electra Glides. The Electra Glide, let me write that again, *Electra Glide*, is surely one of the most emotive model names, ever. I just loved the way these impossibly big machines arrived and the fact that they always looked so comfortable and cool. It was also a bit different because the men on these machines always had their wives and women with them.

This was something significant and was missing from my motorcycling. So they were both cool, comfortable and had the right sort of company. These guys were not the outlaw bikie types either, who mostly rode Harley choppers and Norton's and behaved rather badly, if entertainingly. Things



such as setting fire to a Channel 7 camera car, throwing Molotov's and bricks at the police, that sort of thing.

One of my first experiences of the 'bikie' type, was in the pouring rain in a crowd at Bathurst, up on the hill watching braver and drunker men than me doing burnouts, feet up in those days, on hotted-up Honda Fours and Kwaka Nines. As I was milling about, the crowd separated in haste as a ghostly shape emerged from the shroud of rain and exhaust fumes, slithering and sliding in all directions through the deep mud and slush of the campground. A Harley, covered in thick brown mud thudded past, ridden by a totally naked bloke about 50, sporting the *Hells Angels* emblem, the winged skull and rocker, as a Tattoo covering his whole back. He seemed to be having a lot of fun scaring the 99%'ers. I couldn't, or rather wouldn't, criticize his commitment to the colours.

In a much more civilized place and time, I returned the Harley to Action and was immediately struck by my inability to afford this machine.

The salesman did however point out, probably as a jibe, that Honda had released a new runabout called the Honda Lead. They came in three sizes. 50 cc, 80cc and 125cc. The 80cc was blue, the 125 red and I can't recall the others colours, perhaps white.

Here was my chance to buy the machine I needed, rather than the machine I had dreamt of.

Really, a bloke should never be faced with this dilemma. Need verses want, a nasty position to be in!

### **Baby Blue**

The baby blue 80cc model was \$1200, registered and ride away. It was mine with the swipe of a card machine, a check of the credit alert list and a phone call to the bank by the dealer. There was no internet linked computer-pay-waves in those days. Within an hour I rode it home to the delight of my friends and family who thought it was a piece of garden furniture.

Regardless, it was the machine I needed and I rode it to and from the Cross, parking it in a disused doorway at the rear of the shop. No one stole it, I paid no tolls or parking fees and it got me to work and back dry and comfortably. It was however, as you may have guessed, a little underpowered and I had quite a few moments traversing the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Did you know or realize that there is a hill in the centre of that bridge, you find it when you have only 80cc to play with. The downhill run along the north side was always exhilarating.



*Baby Blue as opposed to Blue Hawaii.*

This was my first Scooter and a fine little Scooter it was. I had it for a few years, along with a few other bikes of course, until the mid to late 1980's, when the new BMW K100RS came into my consciousness.

I had met my future wife at this stage and obviously the scooter would not do. Great to park but as my work had moved from the Cross' to Homebush, I now needed something bigger and better. I test rode the BMW at Collins' Motorcycles in Parramatta and when the salesman asked if I had a trade, I gleefully advised him I was quite happy with the Honda and wasn't sure if I was ready to move up. In a classic pincer movement, he asked me what it would take for me to buy the BMW, if the trade-in was to my liking.

As it happened, I had moved into an apartment in the inner west and the only safe place to park was in the basement laundry. This was through two narrow doors and down one step.

The BMW, of course was a lot wider than the Honda and so I asked if the side mirrors were removable. With one strike, which I took to be a bit too eager, he smacked the right hand rear vision mirror forwards and it just popped off the fairing and dangled from its indicator light wires.

My last excuse not to buy the BMW was removed and so a deal was made. It is frightening how the mind conspires with itself to reconcile that want is actually, need. I was able to park it in the laundry space after all. I can imagine what he said to his fellow salespeople later about the trade he had made today, the fastest and hottest BMW on the market, reputedly capable of 250 kilometers per hour, for a blue scooter, actually capable of 80 maximum. He obviously had no conscience, nor should he, buyer beware rules.

## **Foreign influences**

My next Scooter experience was when deployed with the UN in Cyprus. This was in 1999 and 2000 and this lovely but troubled Mediterranean Island had its own style altogether. There were a few motorcycle subcultures here and they remind me that it takes all types to make the world go around.

The Capital of the Republic Of Cyprus is an ancient fortified medieval walled city called Nicosia. This remarkable city at this time was the last truly divided city left in all of the conflict zones. The most famous being Berlin, both East and West. It of course had its wall come down in 1999. Not so Nicosia which was divided in places by a 3 metre strip of contested land, basically an inner city street or lane, diligently patrolled and policed by the UN. In a charming cobblestone café district, I was seated one day on the Greek side of the town enjoying a coffee when I saw a young man dodging his way through the shoppers and diners. He was riding a small scooter of obscure origin but a two stroke of course, recognized by the putt-putt-putt of the engine, probably no more than 50cc.

He rode it one handed and in his other, a gold serving tray about 40cm in diameter. On the tray were several small fine bone china cups of coffee and some sweets, baklava, probably. To the tray at equal intervals were three cables about 20cm long running to a connecting ring, which he held with his spare hand. The whole rig swayed and swung as he wound his way through the street. He possessed amazing agility and I marveled at his skill. It also occurred to me that this use of a motorcycle was far from any I had ever conceived of and it gave new meaning to the idea of a utility vehicle. The scooter suddenly had a cultural and practical character I had not considered before.

Following these coveted UN deployments, the habit was to take extra leave and use the time to explore Europe or the Middle East. Cyprus was invaded and conquered many times, by Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Venetians, the French, various Christian Crusaders, the English, the Turks and others, precisely because it offered this strategic opportunity, easy access to Asia, Europe and the Middle East. My wife met me in Cyprus following a tortuous trip via Germany and after a wonderful adventure in Egypt, we arrived in Italy.

Italy, synonymous with fine art, food and emotive sport cars, is also very beautiful, with fascinating old cities and towns perched on nearly every hill. Some are medieval towns surrounded by fortifications, all adding to their charm for Australians starved of such historical marvels.

It is of course also a bike and car spotters' paradise. In the north, in Tuscany, I saw Ferraris, Lamborghinis, Maseratis, Ducatis, and Moto Guzzis, dozens of exotic and desirable machines. I also saw many thousands of scooters, modern types styled after their manufacturer's race winning Grand Prix bikes, and classic style scooters like Vespa and Lambretta and the Vespa Ape. This is a three wheeled Vespa which uses a Vespa scooter as its base to offer a small and maneuverable utility. Utilities are of course an Australian concept, being invented by Ford Australia in the 1930's. Of course there is dissent as to who invented the Ute. Australia certainly invented the combination of a two-seater sedan with an incorporated metal sided rear tray.

In a similar light, Piaggio also offered such a versatile workhorse. Called the Vespa Ape (Italian for Bee) it was a scooter with covered cabin and a two wheel cart grafted on the rear over the top of the engine.

Its worth was obvious in these old walled cities, where cars and trucks are either prohibited or unable to function. So wandering about in the towns and villages we were regularly interrupted by the passing of a Vespa Ape carrying all sorts of goods, luggage, fresh fruit, meat and fish, firewood and coal, you name it, these amazing machines carried them all to and fro.



The Vespa name has resonated with me ever since.

### **The Café Society**

Upon my return to Australia, I moved to a new job again based in the centre of the city.

Once again, I found myself needing transport which I could use to cover the 3 kilometers from home. As is always the case my justification for buying something new was concocted by a combination of need and want.

It didn't make sense to use my usual touring motorcycle (another BMW at this time) to ride the short distance to work. Of course the obvious answer was another motorcycle, one that offered cheap and simple transport. I had the promise of a parking space in the basement of the office, nestled in against a pylon or up against a wall. It's easy how one can justify a new bike, just think about the needs in your everyday world and a new bike of some sort will help.

Having experienced the scooter as both a transport and cultural icon in Italy, I could look further than Canberra Vespa Dealer, Motorini.

Vespa had been developing with the times since its inception in the 1940's and of course each new design was a milestone of design chic. At least in my mind.

The Vespa ET4 had been on the market in Australia for a short time and it was known as the Café set's Vespa. They all seemed to me to have that trendy style usually associated with the Café set. Notice that this is very different to the Café Racer set, of whose ranks I have filled at various stages of my motorcycle career.

In fact, one such bike I owned and loved and one that exemplified the genre, was the Ducati 750 Super Sport. As I relayed earlier, I am reluctant to discuss my motorcycles in a story about scooters because they have been emotionally and financially destructive at times.

For example, I was riding with friends along the Putty Road, out past Windsor, one fresh spring morning, dicing and slicing with big Hondas and another earlier model Ducati 750 Super Sport.

Mine was a most lovely 1978 model 750, one which was a re-run of the famous earlier Green-Frame and fiberglass tank versions. I'm told that some 200 of these newer 750's were made, based on the 900's engine, frame and ancillary bits.

Apparently five were imported to Australia and this one went to Bob Brown racing in Melbourne, apparently excess to needs and sold off. This version had a slim line steel tank, the traditional side covers and a dual seat and special 'gold line' Brembo brakes. Ducati enthusiasts will know how special these were. It had smaller carburetors than the earlier Dellorto 'pumpers' but was, never-the-less fast and sweet.



*This is my 1978 Ducati.*

It sounded absolutely fabulous with its Conti exhausts.

My favorite daily experience was the early morning commute to Lindfield from Lane Cove, the bellow of the exhaust bouncing off the glass fronted shops and buildings along the Pacific Highway as it wound its way through Sydney's northern suburbs.

This was a great way to start every day, but at 6am the residents along the road probably wouldn't agree.

On this particular weekend morning however, I was riding fast along the Putty Road admiring the workmanship of the convict road builders. There is a section of the road where a beautifully crafted drainage gutter snakes alongside the roadway for many miles, hugging close to the cliffs and cutaways that slice through the northern expanse of the sandstone plateau forming the basis of the whole Sydney basin and the Harbour, expanding north to Newcastle, south to Wollongong and west to the Blue Mountains.

Some of the more solid craggy outcrops angled down into these gutters and it is one of these that I collected head-on, having lost traction on a damp section of a corner.

The bike slid sideways, and back again, high-siding me through the fairing and over the front end. My efforts to correct restricted by the narrow steering lock and my lack of ability.

I did recall flying through the air, just missing an oncoming car and landing heavily, sliding across a dirt verge at the other edge of the road, rolling to a stop some 50 meters from the outcrop. I also sickeningly recall seeing the bike lie down on its left side, flip over onto its right side, prop and land on its rear end and spin out of control behind me. Very little of the bike was spared.

I won't mention the injuries except to say that Singleton Hospital was well enough equipped to deal with the result.

Following several months of rehabilitation, replacement casts and bandages, I began the mammoth task of rebuilding this rare and iconic piece of exotica. The frame was bent beyond help and most of the external and peripheral parts were destroyed or damaged.

I imported a brand new frame from the factory, specially stamped with the same frame number of the destroyed one. It matched the engine number and included the preface for the special edition run. A nice touch for authenticity, but one I later realized was probably not allowed by our design and insurance rules. It wasn't insured.

To thwart thieves, I had the habit of chaining the bike to a 5BX running machine squeezed in front of the car. A 5BX running machine was one which incorporated a number of tensile and resistance devices apparently designed for use by the Canadian Special Forces. It wasn't used much by my family but had pride of place at the front of the car in the car port.

About a year after the rebuild began I was back on the road, albeit with some paint matching yet to finish.

I was up one night watching the Grand Prix racing and in the morning (of my birthday!) came out to go to work and discovered to my horror that most of the bike had been stolen by some lowlife

scum. All that was left was the front wheel and forks, a bare frame and crankcases, the mismatched seat. The bonnet of the car had been used as a convenient workbench by these very quiet and evil intruders. The hardened chain I used to secure the bike however and the Master padlock were intact.

Defeated, I sold the wreck to an anemic overdressed vegetarian restaurant owner from Paddington. He seemed quite keen to rebuild it. Perhaps it was his lack of a protein rich diet. You can surely see now why I'm reluctant to discuss my motorcycling experiences.

In any event the ET4 was a lovely little machine. It was the first 4 stroke Vespa and built to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Vespa in 1996. It was the first truly modern Vespa. It did have a habit of running its battery low but was easily kick-started to get going again. It ran beautifully, faultlessly and did the job for a few years. It was a great machine and I just loved the look of it, modern and classic all at once, cheap to run, easy to ride and while it received some aggressive reactions from some sexually inadequate quarters it was a hoot.



It is about this point in any discussion about scooters that the tribal biases reveal themselves. There is of course a subculture of Mods, emanating in 1960's Britain, when famously the Bank Holiday weekend was spent brawling with the Rockers or normal motorcyclists, along the coastal towns of eastern England. The movie Quadrophenia, starring some great classic scooters and the music of *The Who*, best expresses the era. A revival in the late 1970's and the early 1990's was certainly missed altogether by me, so I had no real aversion to modern scooters.

I had of course experienced the same cultural biases in the motorcycle world when I insisted on riding Triumphs and Norton when the rest of the world had moved on to faster and more effective Hondas and Yamahas.

The argument still rages today in both classic bike clubs and in the motor scooter world. I choose not to be so exclusive as the so-called purists, and I see the machines for what they are, modern interpretations of those very same classics.

Having said that I am looking for an old 1970's or 80's Vespa to restore and ride, and perhaps I will change my views when this happens. In the meantime, I like the style, the amazing usability and the very real magic that these modern 'Autos' demonstrate.

Once again my job and the role differed and the little scooter was superfluous to need. I regret selling it absolutely, but at the time there was a greater need for a new Triumph Bonneville. Yes, I had had owned and ridden many Triumphs and other British icons over the years and I suppose in reality I had had my fill of the maintenance and unreliability issues. Even as an old classic bike to be ridden once in a while I found the fact they never really started properly or ran well, rather frustrating. I can understand what drove the success of Honda and Yamaha in the 1960's and early 1970's. People suddenly had a better motorcycle and they discovered that they could ride them as well as work on them.

A controversial statement I'm sure and one that risks having me drummed out of the ACT Vintage, Veteran and Classic Motorcycle Club (VVCMC).

Still, my experiences were real, even in their day as new bikes, the British machines required more effort to stay working than was reasonable or right. The fact that I have vehemently held onto a love of these bikes is strangely ridiculous.

Perhaps then this is the key to explaining the inexplicable. It's all about those intangibles. Visceral and personal elements such as the feel of the bike, the sound, the style, nostalgia, culture and history.

That's all very well but in deciding whether I needed a new Triumph, and when one's generous and loving wife herself suggests that she might buy it for you, well, all other considerations evaporate.

Actually the new era Bonneville was released in 2001 with the first one arriving here in Australia in early 2002. I wasn't quite taken by the colours and I decided to wait. I read somewhere that the next year, 2003, was to reintroduce the traditional engine style and colours. I saw an advance photo of polished engine cases, instead of the chromed ones on the then current version, shiny and glossy black on black with some proper chrome.

This had to be it, it looked to all the world as a proper Triumph.

So, with my infatuation for the new shiny toy, the pretty little blue ET4 was relegated to second place.

Just as my heart had earlier been stolen by the Italian, my deeper affection for a larger, more masculine machine prevailed.



The scooter was sold off unceremoniously to a young girl who was to use it to get to work.

So, as always, in my quest to find just the right sort of compromise between need and want, I found myself with want outflanking need, particularly as the darling wife paid for it.

The Triumph looking very traditional with screen and panniers in country Victoria

I still have the Triumph despite on several occasions thinking about selling it. It's great to ride, it looks so good and it owes me nothing. Each time I bring it out to service or clean it, I like it so much that I just can't bring myself to do so. This is it, it is lovely, isn't it?

However, within a short time I was distracted and once again fell for an Italian. During one of my regular visits to the Vespa dealer, I spotted a new limited edition GTS250 ie. There she was pouting in the showroom, dressed in a very 1970's shade of pale brown and metallic gold. This was 2011 and of course I simply needed her, if only to give the Triumph some respite.

I was too taken to resist and with top box and sports windscreen as part of the deal the Vespa was mine.

This one is a gem. The recent GTS range is well regarded by many and I can see why. It is quite powerful, certainly it can move when it wants to, runs easily and smoothly up to about 120 kilometers per hour. Yes it does actually run to this speed and it been tested against other machines with more accurate speedos.

At this speed, mind you, it is somewhat unstable, requiring concentration and a free hand on the bars. In normal use it has a wonderful looping gait and supple suspension. It really is very luxurious, far more than I expected. Of course it has all the usual attributes of a Vespa such as storage space, economy, about 80 miles to the gallon, fabulous looks and, as you can gather, I absolutely love it.

The GTS 250 has been around now for some years and has continued today even with the newer GTS 300 Super adding more torque and a few performance niceties like racing stripes and sportier seating.

The ABS on the newer machines is something really worthwhile, given the main purpose of the bike is to get you to where your going safely and happily. If it was available retrospectively I would have it fitted along with a slightly louder exhaust pipe, just for that fruitier sound, of course.

If you have not tried these newest Vespas, then do yourself a favour and take one for a ride. Be warned though, have your money ready, they are intoxicating.



Here is a bunch of modern scooters I photographed in London in 2014.

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## The Whys And Wherefores of Special Steels

*Hi Martyn,*

*Rummaging through a paper pile this old piece surfaced. Irving earning some extra cash moonlighting.*

*By this time he'd left Vincents in late 1936 just after designing the A Rapide for a better paying job at Velocette. Then onto AJS Matchless working with Joe Craig (Famed Norton race team head) in the early WW2 years then back to Vincents mid war to work on a gov. contract to develop a marine lifeboat motor.*

*During Vincents 1st of many bankruptcy's in 1949 Irving was ready to go home to Australia and Phil Vincent was happy to see him off to cut costs during the post-bankruptcy re org.*

*Regards, Carlton Palmer*

***This item, written by Phil Irving, was published in "Motor Cycling" 1939***

The major proportion of the weight of a motorcycle is amounted for by pans fabricated from steel, which, as any schoolboy knows, is iron containing a small proportion of carbon. Probably few riders realise, however, the number of different grades used and the varying heat treatments which are applied to them in order to cope with specific operating conditions, or to reduce manufacturing costs.

Mild steel (which contains on an average under 0.2 per cent of carbon) is the most extensively used, for it is reasonably strong, fairly ductile and easily machinable, thus lending itself to a wide variety of operations, such as turning, screwing, punching or pressing. As there is a big demand for it in other trades besides our own, it is produced by the rolling mills very cheaply and in a number of different forms; for instance, sheets, bars and strips in an almost infinite array of sizes can be purchased, either in black or bright finish, but as the former is difficult stuff to clean up properly in preparation for plating or enamelling and, in the case of bars, is not suitable for use in automatic lathes owing to inaccuracy of diameter, it is rarely employed, preference being given to bright cold drawn bars and rolled sheets, obtainable to within very close limits of accuracy as to thickness or diameter.

**"Work-hardened" Surfaces:** Unfortunately, the action of the drawing dies or the rollers "work hardens" the surface to a degree and depth varying with the amount of cold-work done and on the exact analysis of the steel, and this hard skin is less ductile, although much stronger, than the interior metal. Amateur mechanics often experience difficulty in cutting clean threads on bright bar with ordinary stocks and dies because this hard skin tears away from the softer core and leaves a ragged finish. For parts which are of simple form, however, and where stiffness is a virtue — mudguard stays or brake-plates for instance — hard rolled steel is often employed, but for more intricate parts which have to be rolled or pressed to shape, soft-rolled or annealed sheet must be used because hard steel is liable to crack at sharp bends and frequently bends in a series of flats and corners instead of a smooth curve.

In order to preserve the bright finish, sheets are "close annealed", i.e., heated up to redness and then slowly cooled in furnaces from which all oxygen is rigidly excluded, and are thus dearer to buy than hard material straight from the rolls. For difficult pressings even greater ductility may be necessary, and special material known as "deep drawing" steel containing less than 0.15 per cent of carbon is called for. The action of the dies is bound to "work harden" the surface again, so much so that some pieces have to be drawn in several stages, and annealed between each; but, even so, deep-drawing steel is so soft that it is not suitable for use where abrasive wear is present.

For turned work — bolts, studs, pins and so forth — which is all done on automatic or capstan lathes, the steel companies have developed a grade of steel known as "free cutting" — a term which is self-explanatory. This material can be turned or screwed at the very high surface speeds modern lathes are capable of running at, and a very fine finish can be obtained, even when using broad forming tools on shouldered or tapered parts. It is very desirable that the turnings or swarf from the steel should break up into short lengths by itself, otherwise the machines would soon get choked.

This was achieved in the early days by the inclusion of a high proportion of sulphur, which also aided the attainment of a smooth finish. Unfortunately, sulphur caused the steel to be coarsely crystalline, weak and brittle and free-cutting steel was for a time regarded with suspicion and not used for parts subject to shock. Eventually, however, metallurgists devised steels containing less



than 0.25 per cent of sulphur which cut even better than their predecessors, are not brittle and in some cases have a tensile stress of 30 tons per sq. inch.

For highly stressed parts mild steel, even of the best quality, suffers from the defect that its yield point is low which in effect means that it commences to stretch permanently long before it is stressed up to its breaking point Steel containing 0.4 per cent of carbon has a tensile strength of about 40 tons, and a yield point of about 25 tons in the heat-treated conditions; it is often used for forgings such as kick-starters or footrests.

For axles and highly stressed studs, 0.3 per cent nickel steel is more suitable, for it is rather more easy to machine and its fatigue strength and resistance to shock load is better. This steel forges easily and is sometimes used for connecting rods and rockers in engines where the duty is not particularly severe: it can even be used for inlet valves, but not for exhausts because it scales rather easily and its hot strength is poor. By varying the heat-treatment ultimate strengths of over 60 tons can be obtained, but its resistance to shock (or Izod impact test figure) becomes low at the higher strengths, and where very arduous duty is encountered steels of the nickel chrome, or nickel-chrome-molybdenum type, are to be preferred.

**Other Alloys :** These may contain varying amounts of carbon and alloyed metal, but range somewhere round 0.3 per cent carbon, 3 per cent nickel and 1 per cent chromium and in the fully hardened condition some can withstand 100 tons per sq. inch.

There are a number of different alloy steels of this class which are used for gears, connecting rods, rockers and other very highly stressed parts, and obviously they are expensive, both in first cost and in manufacture, as all accurate diameters can only be finished by grinding after hardening. Where extreme surface hardness is required, as, for instance, on cams, crankpins or splined shafts, case-hardening is employed and here again alloy steels are always used where great strength is demanded.

*Thanks to Carleton Palmer for sending in this item*

## OVR Event Schedule

Date	Event	More Info
March 14	VRV Day Ride - Alexandra	
April 18	VRV Section Meeting	
May 16	VRV Day Ride – Mount Macedon Region	
Sept 2021	Australian National Vincent Rally, South Australia	<a href="mailto:vincenthrdclubsa@gmail.com">vincenthrdclubsa@gmail.com</a>
Nov 19-21	VRV/VOC Annual Tour	<a href="mailto:ozvinreview@gmail.com">ozvinreview@gmail.com</a>
March 2022	Tour around Tasmania	<a href="http://www.tassietour.info">www.tassietour.info</a>

\* VRV = Vincent Riders Victoria

The 2021 French Rally

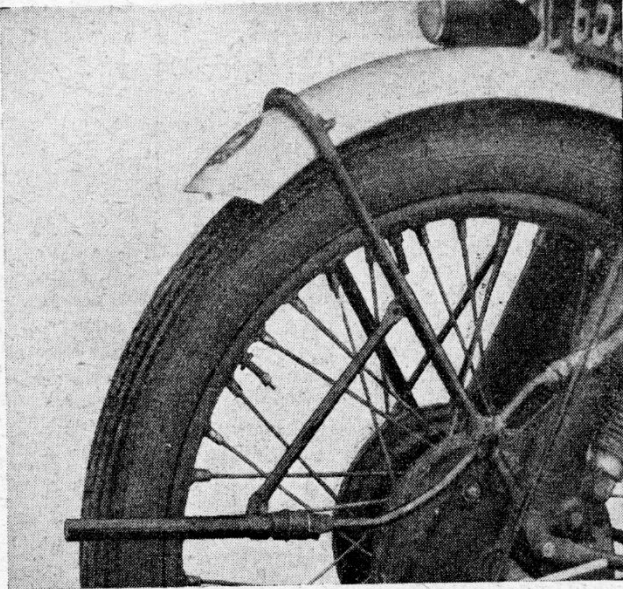
- **17th and 18th July 2021**
- Bourbon L'Archambault. Zip: 03160;
- Surrounded by beautiful countryside;
- Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/yxtfofhx>  
<https://tinyurl.com/yynjhppm>
- Traditional French entertainment;

- Magical fiesta Saturday night dinner;
- Campsite Website:  
<https://tinyurl.com/VOCFrance21>
- Rally fee approximately €63;
- Limited places available;
- See ~~page 30~~ for contact details.

# WIND IN YOUR SAILS

Experiments to Determine the Effects of Wind on Petrol Consumption

by RAB COOK



(Left) The air-speed indicator's pressure head fitted alongside the Vincent's front wheel. (Below) The "instrument panel" comprising A.S.I., speedometer and rev. counter.

HAVE you ever set off into a strong wind muttering "this is going to use some petrol!" and then comforted yourself with the thought that the tailwind on your return journey would make it all up again? If so, you've been living in a fool's paradise! Certainly a tailwind saves a little petrol, but not nearly so much as the extra you use when battling against the gale. If you are really interested in saving juice on a run against the weather-cocks, remember that air resistance increases as the square of the speed, so if you creep against the breeze and romp the other way, things will more nearly even up, and the wallet remain less molested. I recently decided to try a few experiments to ascertain the true effect of wind on petrol consumption.

The machines used for these experiments were a Vincent "Black Shadow," both solo and with sidecar, and, to a lesser extent, a C11 B.S.A.—"to a lesser extent" because it was difficult to reach with it the speeds where the air-speed indicator was known to be accurate, and the only way of using it with anything near accuracy was to check the wind-speed with the "Shadow" and then make a rapid switch to the C11—not a very reliable method at all.

## Checking Wind Strengths

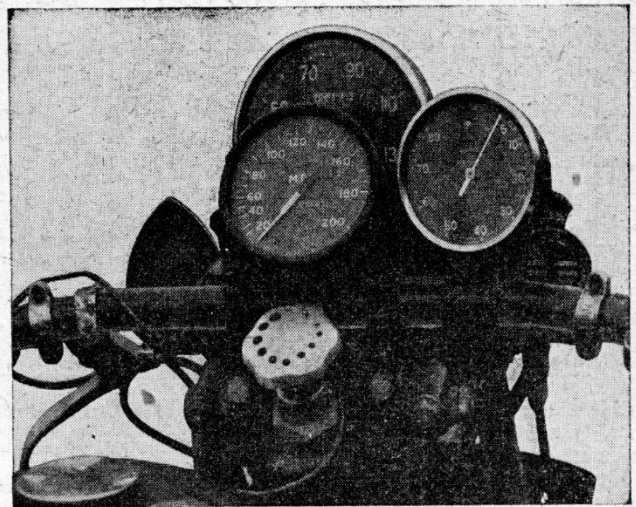
Wind strengths were found by fitting the "Shadow" with an A.S.I., calibrated in m.p.h. Many hours were spent in getting this to read accurately, and finally it was considered to be correct from 60 m.p.h. upwards and probably right from "50-ish."

The static tube was a rubber one, cut at an angle of 45° at the end remote from the instrument, this end being placed in dozens of different positions before a little patch of static air was discovered. It would appear that the only place where such a spot can be found on a motorcycle is just under the clutch lever and, even there, it has to be right within a quarter of an inch either way.

The pressure head was tried in various places in a search for lack of turbulence, and eventually the spot chosen was very slightly ahead of the front tyre and some four inches to the left. Further out, in, backwards or forwards found swirling air of some sort, and here again it was a case of finding out the hard way—by constant experiment. But it was very interesting, so no tears shed.

With the static and pressure tubes firmly fixed, it was still necessary to make adjustments to get correct readings on the dial and the method adopted was to fit various diameters of tubes to the pressure head, a method which would probably make any self-respecting aero engineer shudder violently, but it worked.

B8

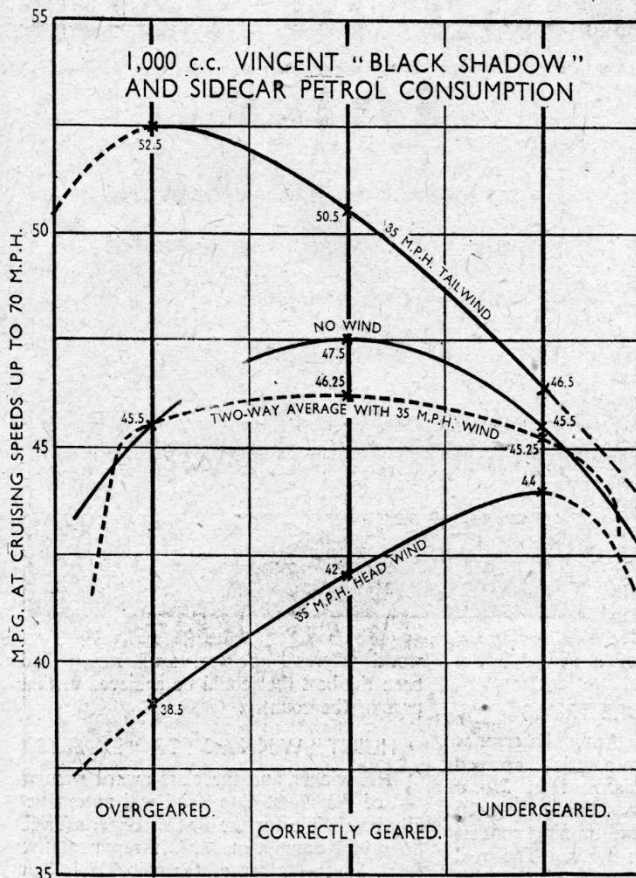


And how does one test an A.S.I.? Simple enough really—you find a long, straight road with a slight wind blowing as near as possible parallel to it. You then belt down the road at a fixed ground speed (in this case, 80 m.p.h.) and note the reading on the A.S.I., remembering to allow for initial instrument lag. If the A.S.I. reads 85 m.p.h. into the wind, then it should read 75 m.p.h. the other way. If it does you have a five m.p.h. wind and if it doesn't, back to the garage for further adjustments. All very simple until you learn that it took me two months to get everything just so! Relief was enormous when it was discovered that fitting the sidecar did not cause any alteration in the readings due to different turbulences.

## Measuring Petrol Consumption

Petrol consumption was measured by lashing a quart tin complete with the necessary rubber piping atop the standard petrol tank, and, for each run, a carefully measured pint was used and the machine run until spitting in the front carburettor indicated weakness. The wind-speed figures given should be accurate to within plus or minus one m.p.h. and petrol consumption figures were taken to the nearest quarter-mile because of the impossibility of knowing if the figure shown on the trip mileage was contemplating an early move forward or if it had just arrived to keep us company for the next tenth of a mile. The speedometer on the "Shadow" is accurate and possibly pessimistic, being on standard gearing but with a front wheel one inch larger than standard.

The fun and games started around last August and have only recently ended. Every time I went for a run of any sort, the pint was measured in and used, and I would then note the



figures and switch to the machine's tank and proceed like any normal motorcyclist, whatever that may be. The log shows 97 checked runs, a fair number of these being done in young gales which blew at between 34 and 36 m.p.h., so in order to have a common basis for the statistics, these only are dealt with here—allowing for gusts we will call them all 35 m.p.h. winds (enough to make whole trees sway and cause quite a bit of inconvenience to pedestrians). The route was always the same—a fairly flat road with moderate bends, the driving normal and, with the "Shadow," 3,500 revs. the limit in the indirect gears. The C11. was driven flat out most of the time but not wound up too much in the gears.

### Still-air Tests

In the flat, windswept country of northern Scotland where these tests were made, the most difficult task proved to be finding days when there was no wind so that "control" consumption figures could be obtained, and out of the 97 checks, only five of these could honestly be described as genuinely windless, or with a breeze of under five m.p.h. With the "Shadow" and sidecar running with 70 m.p.h. as the top speed and a minimum of 35 on one or two bends (an empty chair by the way), we were doing 47.5 m.p.g. A 35 m.p.h. headwind reduced this to 42 m.p.g., and, going the other way with the wind "pushing," we got a figure of 50.5, these being the averages of several runs. So you see the headwind was using more petrol to the tune of 5.5 m.p.g. but only handing back three m.p.g. on the return journey! Thus, over the whole series of trips, 2.5 m.p.g. was the toll of the breeze. At lower speeds this was reduced, and in fact, limiting the top speed to 60 m.p.h. almost exactly halved the differences, which is very interesting indeed; but the differences never quite evened out, and at higher speeds, involving higher revs. in each gear, they increased almost alarmingly.

Being a demon for work, I next decided to tinker around with the overall gearing of the model and more figures were obtained—"Mr. Vincent" was blessed for his q.d. wheel with its twin sprockets! Anyhow, the outfit was first of all over-

geared by eight teeth (rear sprocket of course!) and the figures were:

No wind, 45.5 m.p.g.  
 Headwind, 38.5 m.p.g.  
 Tailwind, 52.5 m.p.g.

Here we had the headwind drinking seven m.p.g., 1.5 more than when correctly geared, but it also handed back seven, thus seemingly proving either: (a) a case for over-gearing, or (b) that my ideas of correct gearing are all wrong. Actually not so, as the no-wind figure is down by two m.p.g. from the correct-gearing one and, of course, acceleration was noticeably lessened and more normal driving would call for higher revs. in each gear before changing up. This was tried and the figures showed considerable alteration, the headwind providing a decrease and the tailwind staying much the same, as also did the no-wind figure so far as could be ascertained. But no accuracy is claimed for these latter observations.

Then I undergeared by four teeth and took the final set of figures with the sidecar. These were:—

No wind, 45.5 m.p.g. (the same, note, as for overgearing).  
 Headwind gave 44 m.p.g.  
 Tailwind 46.5 m.p.g.—a loss of .25 m.p.g. on the round trip average.

Summing up, then, we find that, for a round trip, correct gearing would give an average of 46.25 m.p.g., overgearing 45.5, and undergearing 45.25, figures which speak for themselves, and one should also remember that correct gearing means so much extra driving enjoyment.

The solo "Shadow" was tried on standard gearing only (3.5 to 1) and the top speed was raised five m.p.h. to 75. No wind gave 68.25 m.p.g., headwind gave 60 exactly and tailwind 74.5—an average of 67.25 m.p.g. for a round trip and a loss of a mere one m.p.g.—a small amount as would be expected in view of the reduced frontal area with the sidecar removed. At higher speeds though, this one m.p.g. could be increased quite remarkably, again to be expected in view of the "resistance-increases-as-the-square-of-speed" affair.

### Wind on Small Motors

The C11 was not very accurately tested, but it was apparent that a small motor suffers very much more than a large one when driving into the wind, both in petrol consumption and, not unnaturally, in considerably reduced top speed. It would be interesting to know how such a model compares with the twin in this respect. On the other hand, a tailwind would make the C11 bowl along at more than its makers say it should, but, so far as I could discover, at an increased petrol consumption, although it is only fair to say that when a steady speed of 50 m.p.h. was chosen, a fair gain in consumption was noted.

Now what does all this prove? Primarily, that I've been having a lot of fun with myself and that many people who have of late asked why in heck my bike was wearing an A.S.I. at last know the peculiar truth instead of the evasive, facetious or even somewhat rude answers they got before. The figures do point towards the truth, but they cannot be taken as a standard, for another driver on exactly the same runs would possibly get higher m.p.g., whilst his friend would get lower. It all depends upon one's driving habits—I know a chappy who regularly gets 95 m.p.g. from a Vincent "Comet" and another who rides a machine identical in every respect and pays his 4s. 6d. every 50 miles.

What is shown is the importance of correct gearing. But I claim to do no more than show yet another way in which you can obtain interest from your daily journeys, not suggesting for a moment that you go to the lengths I have, but rough estimates can provide you with a fair number of figures with which to juggle and bemuse your friends. If, however, you are one of those people who gaze into the tank and say, "Hm—nearly full when we left, used about a gallon and I think it's about 75 miles. . . ." Leave it, boy, leave it—no one will believe you, in any case!

# Neracar Revisited

Did you like last month's item on the Neracar? If yes, here are some links relating to the Neracar that you may enjoy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS6LHXRvzss>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xSphrzpHI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSXz0rnFUUI>

<https://thevintagent.com/2018/01/30/road-test-1923-ner-a-car/>

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## Vincent Sets Another New Record

Yet another record falls to a Vincent, this one designed, built and ridden by Alp Sungurtekin is unfaired, starts on Methanol before switching to 100% Nitromethane. Happened last November at El Mirage on dirt, not salt.

See it all happening here <https://youtu.be/MsNcRWC7Ok8>

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## ***Buy, Swap n' Sell***

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

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### **WANTED: Series B Gear Lever**

Do you have a Series B G108 gear lever surplus to requirements? If so, please contact Dominique Malcor who is having difficulty sourcing one for his bike. Email to [ateliermalcor@aol.com](mailto:ateliermalcor@aol.com)



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### **WANTED**

A pair of Vincent twin matched crank cases in reasonable condition. Email Richard on [faulk@inet.net.au](mailto:faulk@inet.net.au)

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## SWAP - Series B UFM

I have a good condition (probably needs a repaint) Series B UFM, number R3576.

Would like to Swap for a good condition Series C UFM for Comet project.



If you can help please email to [Rodneybrown58@icloud.com](mailto:Rodneybrown58@icloud.com)

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**SELL: Amal Mk1 Concentric Carburettor Shim Kits**, provides for twelve 0.016" incremental needle adjustments to allow precise mixture tuning in the critical mid-range. Also suitable for Wassell carbs. Just A\$15 per kit including postage world-wide. Additional kits just A\$10 each. Email [ozvinreview@gmail.com](mailto:ozvinreview@gmail.com)

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## WANTED/SWAP: RFM number R2567

Hi Martyn, I purchased my 1948 B Rapide in 2006 and it came with non-matching RFM number R3269. With the bike having been in Australia for at least the last 60 years I am hoping to locate the original RFM number R2567, that may well be fitted to a bike or in storage somewhere in Oz. If anyone knows of the whereabouts of RFM 2567, I would consider any reasonable proposition to acquire it; swap of parts, \$\$ or whatever. Thanks, Mark Hamilton, Adelaide. email [markhamilton998@bigpond.com](mailto:markhamilton998@bigpond.com)

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## SELL: GREY FLASH 5 SPEED ALBION GEARBOX CLOSE RATIO CLUSTER

Albion 5 speed close ratio racing cluster from early to mid 50s racing. At the time these were the only 5 speed gear clusters available and were frequently fitted to Vincent Grey Flashes (fits straight into Albion gearbox cases). It originally came out of the REG 250cc DOHC twin racer that John Surtees won so many races on as well as setting several lap records in the mid 50s.

There is some water damage to the layshaft and layshaft 2nd & 3rd gears.

Included are the unique 5 speed gear operator "stirrup" and inner ratchet (both unobtainium) plus other gear change parts.

Pinion teeth numbers are as follows (paired numbers always add up to 48):

Main 5th - 28, 4th & 3rd (paired) - 26 & 24, 2nd - 22, 1st - 21

Lay 5th - 20, 4th - 22, 3rd - 24, 2nd - 26, 1st - 27

Item is located in Australia. Packed weight is 4.5kg.

If anyone is interested I can send detailed photos

Offers around \$AUD750



Contact [barnes2@inet.net.au](mailto:barnes2@inet.net.au) for more information

# 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.

## 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](mailto: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>.

**Maughan & Sons, UK** Taking pride in producing the highest quality spares, Maughan & sons stock over 1300 parts and produce over 800 for the Vincent Twin and Comet. Ships worldwide. More info here <http://www.maughanandsons.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](mailto:steve@conway-motors.co.uk)

**Tri-Spark Ignition**, based in Adelaide, Australia. Modern electronic ignition systems with models for all classic (and modern) bikes and the current system of choice by Godet Motorcycles (France) for installation in their superb Godet-Vincent machines. For info go to [www.trispark.com.au](http://www.trispark.com.au)

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

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

**Union Jack Motorcycles**, Australia: Full range of Triumph, Lucas, Amal and Venhill control cables. Ships worldwide. More info at the website [www.unionjack.com.au](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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 [pl\\_holdsworth@yahoo.com](mailto:pl_holdsworth@yahoo.com) Located in Chicago IL USA.

## Nuts n Bolts:

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

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

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

**Small Parts & Bearings, Australia:** Has an extensive range of small parts and bearings and also spring steel shims an an amazing range of sizes. More info at [www.smallparts.com.au](http://www.smallparts.com.au)

## ***Restoration Services:***

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

**Ken Phelps, Australia** – Qualified aircraft engineer and builder and daily rider of Norvins for over 30 years, who has the skill and experience to carry out overhauls, rebuilds, general repairs and maintenance to Vincent HRD motorcycles. Full machine shop facilities enabling complete engine and chassis rebuilds, Painting, wiring, polishing, aluminium welding and wheel building. Ken Phelps Phone: (61+) 0351760809 E-mail: [ogrip400@hotmail.com](mailto:ogrip400@hotmail.com) . Located in Traralgon, Victoria, Australia

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

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

**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

**John Parker, AMAL Carbs, Melbourne, Australia:** A specialist in AMAL carbs of all models, repairs, restorations and a massive supply of spare parts. For information phone him on +61 3 9879 3817 or email to [ukcarbs@hotmail.com](mailto:ukcarbs@hotmail.com)

## ***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](mailto:qualmag@optusnet.com.au)

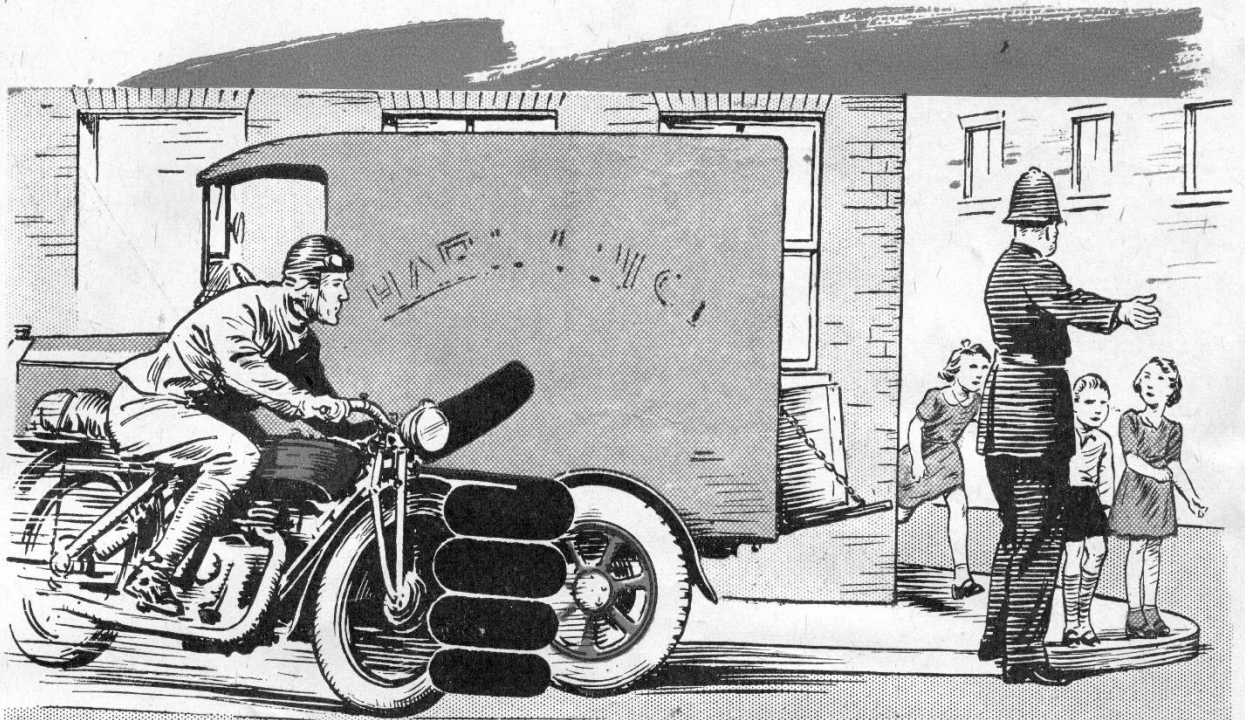
**LUCAS STUFF** – The man who bought Kevin Baker's Lucas Parts business is Danny Lee in Melbourne. Email: [dannyleepersonal@gmail.com](mailto:dannyleepersonal@gmail.com) His phone number is 0412 327 197 Apparently Kevin has moved to Melbourne and works with Danny one day a week.

**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, located in Melbourne, 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 total professionals when it comes to painting. Expert service, quick turnaround and fair prices. <http://www.melbournemotorcyclefairings.com.au/> Ph 03 9939 3344



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