

# BEMSEE 68



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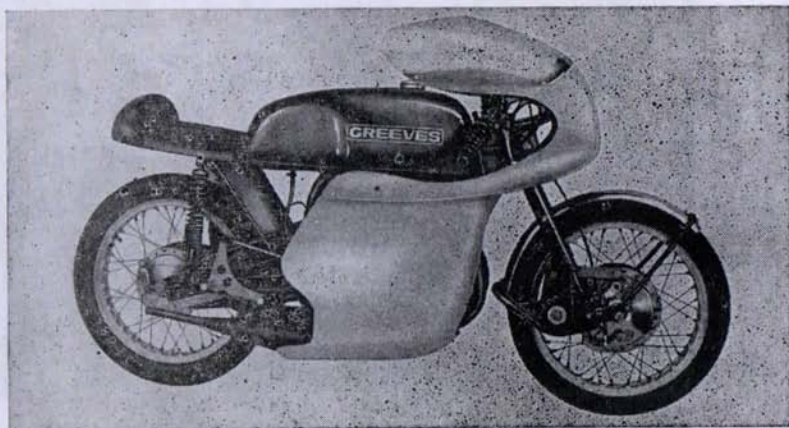


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THE JOURNAL OF THE  
BRITISH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB

# Bemsee



## EDITORIAL

Most of us, I've no doubt, watched with considerable interest the Winter Olympic Games from Grenoble via our television sets. If you are anything like me then the spectacle of the world's foremost athletes pitting their wits and skills against each other was received with great interest and, at times, with not a little excitement. What a disappointment it was therefore, that Mr. Avery Brundage who appears to head the Olympic Committee was reported to have dictated a policy of 'no trade support' for the athletes. In a television interview he said that it wasn't a question of the advertisements on skis but the payment method to the people who used them. He disagreed that such trade support was an asset to the movement.

Whilst, at 82, the American millionaire may have put some of his finest years into the sporting world and, I don't doubt, a great deal of his hard-earned wealth, I can't help questioning his attitude. His inference that the sport could do well without trade interest has an acceptable foundation only so far as continuing the basic conception of every athlete having an equal chance. This we all know cannot be achieved. Certainly some countries spend an awful lot of money on subsidies to sport and who, therefore, can differentiate between trade support and political success? That De Gaulle is using the Games for political status is obvious to all and, as he cannot afford to be ridiculed, a vast amount of money has been spent to ensure the success of the venture. Just how much can be judged from the sudden enlargement of Grenoble which used to be a small, much praised ski-ing resort of no greater consequence. France has reaped the benefit—greater tourist attraction and now greater status in the world of sport. She alone can judge if the money spent has been worth it. I believe it has.

Mr. Brundage's remarks on the subject of trade interest and the consequent acceptance to deplore the whole question is very idealistic. Perhaps he can afford to be. The athlete cannot afford it that much is obvious. Take a small example—Great Britain. What national interest prevailed there. What trade interest and how much money was spent to ensure that the British participants had as much chance as all the others? Basically very little I assume. The ideal is of course, to ensure that every competitor arrives without financial support other than his

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own, competes as best he can, and goes home to his office desk or factory floor. Perhaps the Games are unfair in the first place. Brundage was quite right when he said that the winter olympics only interested those countries which had natural facilities of their own. His intimation was that it was unfair to impede athletes who had lesser training facilities in their own country and who had to spend a great deal of money in getting to places of superior benefit.

A sport is a sport and here at home we have a similar problem—but for one or two similarities there the comparison ends. There is at present much argument being given to the subject of trade support for riders and drivers. Like winter sports, racing is expensive to the novice and more experienced rider alike and is not being offset by the promoter. It could be argued that money in the right hands could produce another Killy in the world of motor cycling. Quite right, but without the initial investment we shall never know and neither shall we have. It therefore seems to be a little ludicrous to prohibit the infiltration of finance where and when it is most needed despite the acceptance of equality for all as an idealistic prohibition to the system. Advertising is not in question, states Mr. Brundage, but the fact that the winter sports industry is paying sportsmen who are therefore not true amateurs, and who should not therefore be competing. In his view, if the games reverted to its original conception it would be much the better. It would appear that, in this, he is not considering the spectator or the world at large. The Olympics have become big business all round. It seems to me that the only reason it is held is to promote competition throughout the world. Why worry who pays for it. You will never stop countries with the greatest financial assets spending fortunes on preparation for the games and the only way to offset the immense barrier for lesser mortals who may, indeed, have potentials that have not been fully released is to allow private industry to take over where their country cannot or will not.

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Road racing in this country can learn a lot from listening to and recognising the plight of others. Perhaps it is a case of looking at the subject too close. I believe that if the A.C.U. stepped back a few paces they might see what they have otherwise missed. But now we have even industry quarrelling with each other. Whichever way you look they are the only leaders and when you get Television companies dictating a 'no advertising' campaign where can it all lead to. Certainly not to the benefit of the riders.

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## GUNS IN THE AFTERNOON

Jim Swift

Funnily enough, the article which I wrote very hurriedly to fill a space last year on shooting was received with some enthusiasm. Like John Denny (see Odds . . .), I was only writing on something which I was, to a lesser extent, an authority, although I would never in a month of Sunday's claim that I knew any more about guns and their purposes than I have learned through personal experience, oft times through very hard experience.

As you may be fully aware, a new law on guns comes into force on May 1st which will prohibit anyone obtaining a gun without first producing his 'firearms certificate'. I have put this in inverted commas simply because there is, at the present time, a firearms certificate in force in rifled barrel guns (pistols included) which fire a single projectile. To obtain the present licence is very difficult because, not only have you to prove to the police that you are a fit and proper person to hold a certificate, you have also to prove to them that your use will be within the terms of reference, and, more important still, that you have somewhere safe to use it. Each site is checked by the police by a personal visit before being recommended to the chief constable. The new firearms certificate covering shotguns (smooth barrelled) ought to be a little more lenient and it seems to be a case of the police having to prove that you are unfit to hold such a firearm rather than the other way round. From what one hears the certificate will take the form of a licence which carries the holder's photograph and provision for endorsements.

I was interested to have a long natter with Ralph Bryans on the subject of shooting which is very much his hobby as well as mine. Perhaps it was one of the reasons he moved from Ireland to Scotland. Talking to some other friends in the United States when I was there in 1964 brought up some interesting and amusing stories which are nonetheless supposed to be true. In the first week of the open season that year it would seem that no less than fifteen hunters were shot, some more seriously than others and one gentleman shot at something moving in the grass only to find out it was another hunter. A farmer in the hills outside San Francisco was woken late one night by a whole crescendo

of shots reverberating throughout the night. In the morning he found that the stag's head which used to be mounted in the porch was in tatters. Another farmer had to paint COW in whitewash on his cattle so that the enthusiastic marksmen could tell the difference. Hard to believe perhaps? I wouldn't doubt it for one minute. If you have glanced through the American hunting magazines you would be surprised that most American hunters wear brilliant coloured clothes not, I suspect, because they like their traditional garb but because it is an insurance against being picked off by some trigger-happy cosmopolitan. People tend to laugh these days to see a truly British gentleman in his plus-fours out on a days shoot. Believe you me that they are by far the most comfortable trouser although I wouldn't be seen dead in a pair.

If you want a successful day's shooting, a dog is a must but there are good dogs as well as bad ones. I had an English Springer some time back which would go off like a rocket from the time it was released until you packed up in the evening. It loved running—still does in fact—but was no earthly use as it wouldn't take a bit of notice of any instruction which it was given. The dog is very happy with Freddie Steward at Reading but I think that it's beginning to get his weight down a bit by now. Unexpectedly, one of the finest working dogs I think I have ever seen is owned by fellow member 'Lofty' Thomas. We've been out shooting together many times and always the dog has caught more rabbits than we've shot between us! It gets quite disgusted when you miss and many a time, after several misses, it has sat down with a bored frown and waited for you to be successful before it takes any more interest. Either that or it goes off stalking through the corn on its own. Lofty brought down a duck over water at quite some range with a single barrelled 3" magnum loaded with some American 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  oz. shot. The dog went straight in but the duck wasn't completely dead and when the dog had almost reached it after a swim of some fifty yards, the duck dived. You could literally see the complete expression of disgust from the dog who would still be looking for it now if we had't managed to call it back. Lofty's "we've missed it boy" normally does the trick! We got the duck a little later and the dog was happy. Some dogs just aren't cut out for shooting. Frank Gillings has a three and a half stone Staffordshire which normally has to be carried back. Once he recalls that a rabbit jumped over its back and the dog didn't even see it! Some dogs like water, some don't. My dog didn't . . . until I kicked it in one afternoon. Since then it has loved the stuff. We tried Peter's dog (my assistant's) one afternoon. It had never been shooting before and we were a little worried what effect the noise would have on it. Really and truly we only took it along for a bit of company and exercise for the dog. It put up with a few bangs until we both let go with both barrels at a flock of pigeon. Looking round afterwards we couldn't find the dog at all. Two hours later we found it asleep by the car—the noise had definitely not been to its taste. Mind you the dog is a wonderful housedog although the postman has long since refused to put letters through the letterbox as the last time it bit his fingers. The dog used to wait for his morning visit with great anticipation!



Guns are a matter of personal preference. It has taken a long time and five guns before I have found the gun which really suits me. Of course it has to be Japanese, made from the finest metal to a precision which would do credit to the finest English gun-makers. Traditionally, English gunsmiths are the finest in the world. Not only are they the finest but also the most expensive. Only the German Merkel comes up to the English prices. But it isn't a matter of how expensive the gun is but more a question of how confident and proficient you are with it. I have loaned my gun to a couple of close friends who have produced some very fine scores at clays with it in comparison with their efforts with any other. It's not a question of what shot you use but where you point it. Some people seem to be of the opinion that you can't miss with a 'scatter-gun'. Sometimes I wish I couldn't!

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#### **ODDS . . . . . AND SODAMINTS !**

**Jim Swift**

It amuses me to read a recent R.A.C. circular which cites the case of a motorist being released from 'custody' after it had been proved that the speed limit 'repeater' signs along a Surrey road were incorrectly sited. So there you are—if you were caught speeding in Middleton Road, Guildford recently you can now apply to the Home Office for your free pardon. Oh, incidentally, were you one of those that the R.A.C. managed to obtain free pardons for who were caught on the A.48 between Camarthen and Swansea? If you were, you might like to know the reason—the lamp posts were set too far apart!

Well, isn't this what we need in road racing? The British International Support Fund, headed by Alan Kimber, have so far managed to create support from sixteen people, some of whom are dealers, to loan machines for the I.S.D.T. in Italy this coming September. Even the British Army, headed I've no doubt by Lt.-Colonel Daniel (an enthusiastic member of Bemsee who organises the Royal Corps of Signals assistance at the Hutch), have now added the use of their training grounds in Hampshire. Alan Kimber's comment that "we all believe that Britain can win" is further qualified by "all we need now is the cash to provide for the basic expenses and a thoroughly professional effort is guaranteed." What have we been saying about trade support—advertising—professional attitudes? Surely, if one needed more proof this is it. If the riders come back with the honours it will have been proved, and if they don't then it will be proved yet again. You can't run a serious crack at any championship title these days without resources and money. One reads that other team entries from foreign countries are government backed, or are backed by industry. Great Britain—well how great is it? It breaks your heart doesn't it. A £10,000 appeal fund was launched late in



January. If you want to contribute please send your donation c/o the A-C.U. at 31 Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1. Great Britain hasn't won the International Trophy for fifteen years, the Silver Vase for the last eighteen. Wake up everyone—we need money and advertising!

Recently the Club has received several complaints from members on the service of L.E.T. Photos specifically where money has already been paid and photographs haven't been received. Other complaints have been self erasing—no address, etc. Each individual complaint the Club has followed through and I have spoken to the firm personally. On each occasion I have been satisfied that every effort has been made to fulfil the contract. The firm has been informed that, should any dissatisfaction arise in the future, permission to take photographs at meetings will be refused. Insofar as we have been assured that the basic trouble is one of time and the quantity of business, we are happy that

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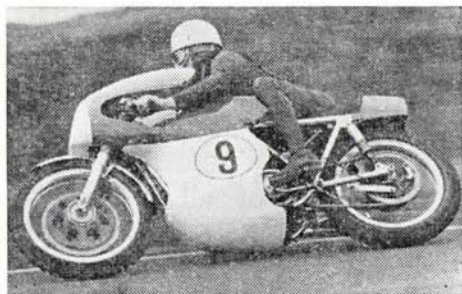
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there is no intention to defraud and would ask members to let the Club know of any complaints which are legitimate and reasonable ones to make.

As a new set of tyres was required for the Hillman, we recently changed from the standard C41 Dunlops to the new G800 Good Year radials. A recent report in "Which" gave incredibly good reports on the handling, braking and wear characteristics so I thought that I would try them. Previous experience of radials was rather limited to SP41's and Michelin X, the latter fortunately on a borrowed car. Imagine my surprise therefore when I found that the handling characteristics were so much altered that it almost felt as though the steering wheel was completely divorced from the road wheels. Fast cornering was dangerous in that the steering did not give any indication of wanting to return to neutral. Ah, ah, thought I (or words to that effect) the tow-in needs altering for radials of this nature. The tyre fitters said no; the Rootes dealers from who we bought the car didn't know; my local garage, although sympathetic, couldn't help so, in desperation, we turned to Rootes. Now I always thought that it was only with Pirelli's that the track was automatically neutralised but it would also appear that the track on the Hillman has to be altered for G800's to plus or minus one sixteenth from the standard eighth. I haven't yet had it altered so I might have another surprise coming.

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Speaking of tyres, what do you think of the new law on tyre tread depths. Now you must have at least 1mm. of tread. Have you ever measured 1mm.—most of us would never dream of running with treads as non-existent as this under normal circumstances which only goes to prove just how fatuous the new law becomes. But I suppose that they had to define 'bald' somehow. The reason why the tyres had to be renewed on the Hillman was a simple one of economics. I suppose that there was about 3mm. of tread left but the weight was such as to minimise the effect of the tread even more to the stage where the car would tend to slide and step out under the least provocation.

There is a new move afoot to legalise the use of suppressors on racing machines. I gather that the A-C.U. Competitions Committee almost choked when a letter was read from the Postmaster General during their Committee meeting asking for the support of the Union in observing the common law. Yes, I'm afraid that it is a legal requirement that generators are suppressed. I can only assume that the inhabitants of the environments of such places as Brands Hatch or the Crystal Palace have written to the P.M.G. over the interference of their sets during a race meeting. If you have ever watched a race meeting on a T.V. set whilst the actual meeting was going on within a few yards of you, you will immediately appreciate just what a disastrous effect racing engines have on T.V. sets. Purely as an aside, I was surprised to see just how much in phase the sound of the set was in comparison with what was happening outside. Must prove something I suppose. If any member has experience of using suppressors on racing machines I've no doubt that others would be pleased to hear of it from these pages.

No doubt that you have all read of the infiltration into racing of the Player's No. 6 group who are planning to extend their promotion of scrambles to include the art of road racing. Naturally, they are concentrating their efforts on non-Groveswood circuits and are hoping to include our own meeting at the Crystal Palace on September 2nd within the overall championship. One snag however. The Greater London Council are against cigarette advertising! Whereas we all welcome the increased financial and promotional advantages of such a system (in effect the same as the Castrol Championship) where it differs from the Castrol

scheme is that money is being spent on each round of the event in terms of increased prize money, with an additional bonus to the organiser to use howsoever he wishes.

A recent experiment in the use of u.h.f. radio equipment was carried out at Brands in February to determine whether or not it would have a use in solving our more intricate communication problems at race circuits. All too often members want immediate answers to queries when I am elsewhere in my official capacity as Clerk of the Course; queries which cannot be answered or solved by anyone else. The result was a huge success but the price . . . . it tends to give one the proverbial jitters! I didn't realise that each piece of equipment that the police are issued with—you know, these hang-on-pocket type instruments—run out at around £110 each until the fateful Wednesday afternoon at Brands! Plus the fact that one needs a base set to increase range and audibility at around £200. Just this for a simple system that not only becomes a better service but a safer one for everyone concerned. It's worth the expenditure but can we afford it?

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The Annual General Meeting has been fixed for May 16th, I regret to say a Thursday evening but we hope to provide more amiable surroundings for the business of the evening. The place hasn't yet been fixed but if you make a note in your diary now for 8 p.m. somewhere in London it will help a lot. Of course, it goes without saying that the Annual General Meeting provides the opportunity for you all to bring up subjects that you would like to see debated. A meeting of this nature is intended to improve the Club, its facilities and its organisation. We like to believe that we're near perfect but this stage is never reached by anyone. Amongst other things, you might like to discuss 'outside assistance', further developed in this magazine by Eric Vant (see Postbag). An A.G.M. is the only place to bring such a resolution forward especially as we then have the backing of the meeting to apply for any relaxation in the rules which might be deemed to be necessary.



I was quite serious last month when I asked for contributions to this magazine. We have had few of these over the last four years, the exception being the notable contribution by John Denny on Diesel engines. He remarked to me the other day that he regretted that this was the only subject on which he was an authority and was this what the members really wanted to read about. I couldn't answer that of course, but my own personal reaction was that I've learned quite a lot about diesels (I thought they used sparking plugs!) and I welcome any form of increasing my knowledge.

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## MUTUAL AID

### FOR SALE

SPARES. Greeves Silverstone Coil—30s. Two new clutch backing plates—£1. Several used clutch plates—5s. each. Francis Barnet forks brand new—£5. Also 225 c.c. FB engine—£2 10s. Other spares. Bantam Racer with Todd head, c.r. gears—£15. A.10 spares including mags and dynamos.

G. F. Ridgeon, Janetta, Ash Lane, Down Hatherley, Gloucester.

125 O.H.C. Honda CB92 in racing trim (1965). With full factory conversion kit—has not been used for 12 months. Engine just overhauled with new crank, rods, pistons, valves, etc., all bearings and seals to £45. Frame and wheels serviced. Engine has to be put back in frame. New 12 volt battery uncharged, newish tyres, good brakes. Needs new tank to be really smart. Perfect for starting in the sport or to develop from Bantams. Come and take it away for—£100, assembled it will be £125. My emigrated brother's B.S.A. B.40 350 c.c. road bike. Neat, tidy and economical. Ride it away for—£65 (would be £85 at any dealers).

Allan Robinson, 21 Stringham's Copse, Send Marsh, Ripley, Surrey. (3491).

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## ASSISTANCE

In tracing my 350 c.c. Gold Star which was stolen from the M.I service station at Trowell, Notts. Registration No. 464 MMC. Engine No. DB32GS889. Frame No. CB325073. The machine was fitted with chrome forks, Superleggera alloy top yoke, white glass fibre petrol tank with the initials P.D.S. on the side. Pale blue frame, racing seat, white central oil tank, alloy guards and rims. £15 reward for information leading to the recovery of the machine.

J. W. Cheshire, 7 Mount Pleasant, Castle Donnington, Derby.

Following enquiries from several of our members who wish to marshal at the T.T. and the M.G.P. races this year, arrangements have been made with the Chief Constable of the Isle of Man for Club members to assist. Particulars of members wanting to marshal have to be forwarded before the end of April.

In order that the high standard of the Club is maintained, all members putting their name forward should have at least two years marshalling experience at road races. This facility applies not only to this year but for future years.

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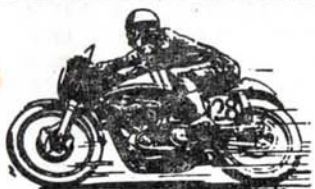
## THE WOOLER STORY

Vernon Wardall

Now that motor cycle racing has become so expensive and the chances of the privateer winning becoming as slim as the next budget-reducing income tax, one wonders why a British motor cycle capable of winning Internationals has not been produced in the past few years. Upon reflection, I think that perhaps there was such a machine which could have been developed to such perfection—the Wooler. Perhaps I could quote from my article which appeared in the Journal of the Westminster Bank Motoring Club in April 1964, for I am sure that many of our members have probably never heard of this fine two-wheeler.

Of the late John Wooler, the immortal Graham Walker said, "He is that rare combination—a brilliant engineer, an enthusiastic and practical idealist. He believes wholeheartedly in light weight, accessibility, simplicity of maintenance, an absence of afterthoughts stuck on like presents on a Christmas tree and, above all, the benefits of an infinitely variable gear."

My exclusive interview with Ron Wooler, John's son, was on the subject of the world famous machine, the Wooler motor cycle. On being introduced to him in the surroundings of his father's workshop, I was immediately aware of the continuance of his father's ideals. The words of John Ruskin, "Life without industry is guilt; industry without art is brutality," were adopted as the family motto. Seldom have such words been more faithfully applied to a family industry.



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Ron is a practical man; if a job looks right it proves to be so. His measure is the rule of thumb, guided by a touch of genius and years of experience. Good fortune was mine that evening for after tearing myself away from the home of the "Flying Banana" I drove to see one of the latest machines. Mere words cannot describe the feeling I had on seeing such a magnificent motor cycle. Only an enthusiast knows such a moment. Oh, for a win on the pools or a redistribution of wealth; perhaps then this machine could be mine, but I fear this power-packed beauty is priceless to the owner.

Through the dusty window of the garage in which this gem rested I also saw one of the earlier belt-driven two-wheelers, the design of which was years ahead of its time, (as are all Wooler products). From the first 200 c.c. machine produced in 1902, the tri-cars and the 1909 horizontal two-stroke "Rocket," powered by the first ever motor cycle engine that would drive at speeds up to 50 m.p.h. and could be run on petrol or paraffin, the formula has been simplicity, accessibility, superb finish and styling and above all, a tremendous pride in the finished product.

The year 1912 heralded the production of a 350 c.c. single cylinder, two-stroke machine with belt-drive. The double-ended piston travelled in a completely closed horizontal cylinder, the motion being transmitted to the crankshaft via a long gudgeon pin protruding through slots in the barrel, there being external connecting rods. The bike was actually manufactured to Wooler's design by the Wilkinson Sword Co. This "Colonial" Model as it was called, had plunger springing both at the front and rear.

In 1919 the famous "Flying Banana" was launched. This was so named by the late Graham Walker because of its yellow bulbous tank. The "projectile" was a horizontal flat twin, with inlet-over-exhaust valve arrangement and an outside flywheel. Capacities were available of either 350 c.c. or 500 c.c.; there was also an infinitely variable gear, as with so many of the Wooler machines. Consumer demand abroad necessitated a modification, so a new model with a three-speed gear-box, plus chain drive to the new sprocket, became available. During 1919, the "Flying Banana," (not eaten or beaten), created 29 world records for speed and fuel consumption at Brooklands with McNab in the saddle. The record of 311 (repeat 311) miles per gallon, still stands. It was entered in the Junior T.T's of 1920 and 1921 when it finished 34th, and as recently as 1952 it still reached 65 m.p.h.

Undoubtedly the most interesting machine of all was the "Flat Four." This famous beam-engined horizontally opposed (B.M.W. wise) four cylinder machine was produced in 1948. The engine included



dynamo and distributor, weighed only 62½ lbs., it produced 25 b.h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m. giving a speed of 85 m.p.h. The whole machine weighed 248 lbs. and cost £200 without Purchase Tax. A supercharger was an optional extra. At normal running the rider could expect to cover 100 miles per gallon. The "Four" was enhanced by twin headlamps mounted in the tank extension styling so predominant in Wooler products. The main and pillion footrests telescoped away into their supports when not in use. The two lower tubes of the sprung frame were used as exhaust pipes in order to save weight. There were no gears or clutch, but a torque converter equivalent to 330 gears. The machine could not run backwards as it was shaft driven. There was a 12 volt electrical and coil ignition system (manufacturers please note) giving 60 watts output at 500 r.p.m. One spanner of 2 B.A. x ¼ B.S.F. fitted every nut including the 14mm. sparking plugs.

The 1953 "Flat Four" of 500 c.c. cost £243 (plus P.T.) and was capable of over 100 m.p.h. It had shaft drive to the rear wheel incorporating a Layrub shock absorbing joint and a Hardy-Spicer universal coupling with special bevel pinion and crown wheel. The machine was said to cover 100,000 miles without any adjustment or minor attention and to use only one gallon of oil per 10,000 miles. There was a return of 50-55 m.p.g. at 30-40 m.p.h. It could reach 85 m.p.h. in second and 97 m.p.h. in third gear.

The use of the silencers and exhaust pipes became the style in 1954 at a time when Arnold Jones used to race a production sports model. A year later, Wooler introduced a hot air induction system to the carburetors. During recent years the Wooler concern have made frames for the E.M.C. to the design of Dr. Ehrlich.

As I came to the end of my interview with Ron Wooler I knew that whatever machine has been or will be produced by his family business, the result has been and will always be, a combination of genius, know-how, pride and perfection. If ever I am again the proud possessor of another motor cycle the choice will have to be second best, unless Wooler produce a four-cylinder again, for now I have been spoilt for ever.

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**Ed.**—As we have been blessed with some pretty far-fetched accounts of motor cycles in recent magazines, I must point out that the facts above are true.

## POSTBAG

Dear Sir,

After reading both Mr. Doyle's and Mr. Bates correspondence, concerning outside assistance given to riders, I would like to put forward my views on this matter, for what they are worth.

We all know (or should do) the G.C.R's with regard to this, but surely they can be interpreted in that; if outside assistance is given, the rider concerned cannot be included among the finishers. Not that he is not allowed to ride, and is black flagged.

As Mr. Bates states, the G.C.R's are to ensure that no rider is given an unfair advantage over his rivals, but if the rider accepts this ruling, and still wishes to ride, what unfair advantage is he being given if he will not be classed as a finisher?

If a rider fails to get away from the grid, and knows that he has lost any chance of a place, but that a ride is better than nothing, then he could signal (by raising a hand) for outside assistance.

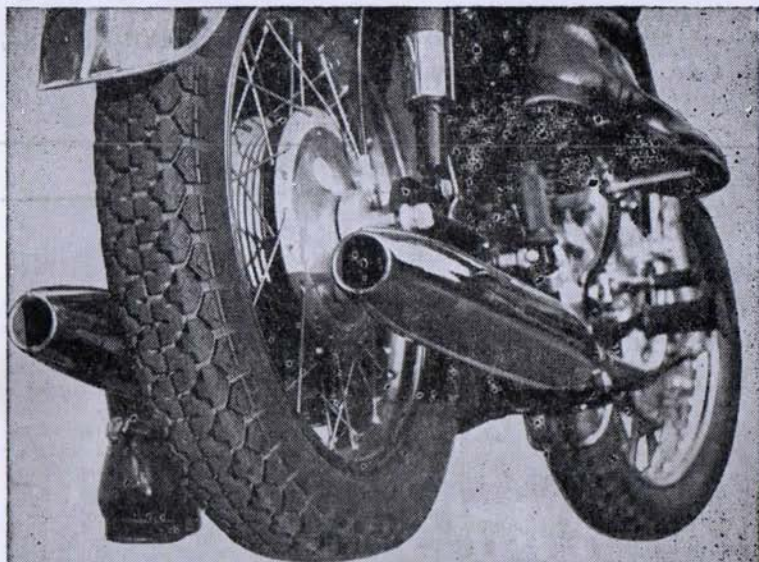
Mr. Bates also suggests that poor machine preparation is the only reason a machine fails to start. Granted this could be so in some cases, but surely we all know (and may have had) a temperamental plug, etc. This can and does happen sometimes, through an over-long wait on the grid with a dead engine, and this is no fault of the rider.

By the way, I am not writing this to gain personally, as I have my own "inside assistance" carried with me, in the form of a sidecar passenger.

Well I hope there is food for thought contained in this letter, and I wish all riders a successful season, with good starts.

Yours, etc., ERIC L. VANT, Edgware, Middx.





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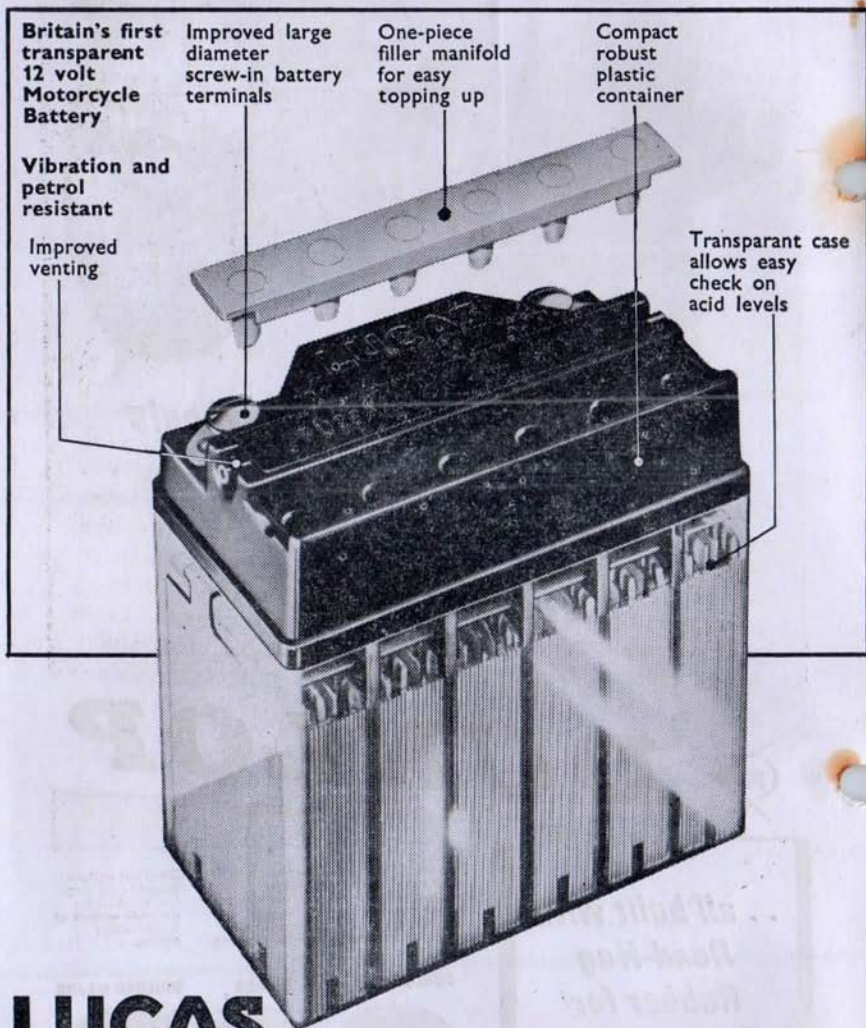
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