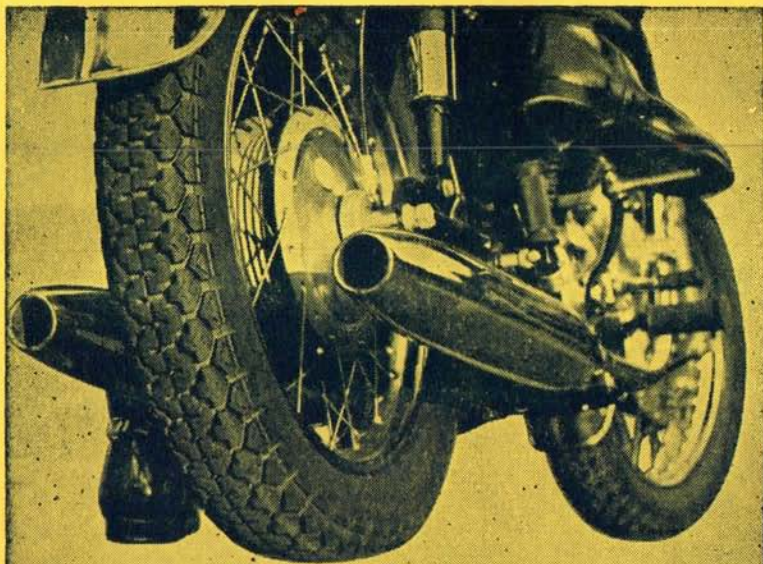


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THE JOURNAL OF THE
BRITISH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB

Bemsee

EDITORIAL

Now that we have seen a number of meetings in this country at which no start money has been offered it is possible to draw a few conclusions. Of course any conclusions drawn must be of a personal nature but it is not difficult to judge that the racing has been of a much better nature, prompted of course by the fact that one has to earn one's money.

But what of the potential interest of the meeting from a spectator point of view? We are beginning to see the same old faces at all meetings and the scraps are becoming very much the same. Where the star riders are guaranteed of a better income they are taking the opportunity to give the home meetings a miss and are thus providing the opportunity for the 'also-rans' to give their pockets a welcome boost. One cannot complain of that but I fear that the home scene this year will develop as a boring procession of meeting after meeting with little variety at each.

The spectator will soon catch on that he can miss a few meetings which he would otherwise have gone to see with the knowledge that he hasn't missed much. I have a distinct feeling that there might be one meeting with a difference this year where the support of those that have so far coined it in, to put it in the vernacular, might find some cause for complaints when they see the prize money list. But you can't have it both ways can you!

MAY, 1968



As someone who has played with motor cycles ever since the day I stole a master's Cyclade power assisted pedal cycle from the school cycle sheds, I feel that our dear old friend (!) Jim Swift has overstepped the bounds of possibility by far too wide a margin in the Bemsee magazine with an article about guns! Too far by half for he has forced me to respond. As interesting as guns are, the Bemsee magazine is surely for racing enthusiasts and with my vague claim to a National Union of Journalists card I am now going to ply my wife on a typewriter in an effort to produce something rather closer related to things inside the world of motor cycling.

I had an axe to grind at one time for Honda and am now extremely sorry that they have seen the hard economics of the world of motor cycling which decay a little every day and especially when 560 potential purchasers are being killed weekly in Vietnam. Anyway the end had to come and better in the winter than half-way through the summer season.

I believe that Reg Dearden in his letters to the weekly 'comics' had not realised the sheer and utter enthusiasm that Honda generated among young people who have grown up into motor cycling and motor cycle sport over the past eight years. Nor can he have realised that the sheer volume of finance poured into the sport by Honda's sponsors insisted on world-wide activity and support. We tend to think that Castrol pay for publicity only in the U.K.—not so, they are an international product company and so are Dunlop. In consequence interest in Holland, Germany—all Europe, and Japan results in greater support of racing and we progress past the minority sport we are at present. The interest Honda generated was not just in the U.K. but on a world front and now that the Japanese have decided that the world of four wheels offers more profit in terms of publicity for their road products no-one can deny that the millions of pounds they have put into the game have really improved racing and kept alive the sport on an international basis.

Reg Dearden has said that the Japanese lost the war, but it is sheer nonsense to bring the fighting of 25 years ago into today's sport when 87.3 per cent of all competitors have been born since VJ day. Certainly Honda with an average company age of 26 can hardly be dragged into any 'war-mongering' slanging match. Nakamura was involved with the Zero fighter—now he designs the car engines, surely a better outlet.

Where racing will go if the other big Japanese names pull out is uncertain, but certainly the sport cannot return to the halcyon days that existed in Britain's heyday when the Norton reigned supreme. Let's get on with what we have got! Everybody has grown up past the attractive amateur professionalism and the erratic business arrangements sur-

rounding racing that existed in those far-off days. The past has been overtaken by the desire to sell at a profit either machines or the facility to go racing. Bemsee and all racers have got to be part of the picture and to exploit it to the full.

I see that Bemsee have been getting some knocks in other club magazines about its £3 subscription and £2 per ride policy, but it is a fact that as a very impartial observer at Bemsee meetings and one or two others, those run under the command of the crossed Union Jacks seem to instil in riders the essential need for a bit better riding and a bit more professionalism than elsewhere. Grand Prix discipline is good for the clubman.

Scrutineering by B.M.C.R.C. is particularly good, and essential too for if a starry-eyed youth produces his ill-prepared first racing machine to an inefficient scrutineer and gets away with it, his preparation will ever after be sloppy, the machine will be dirty and tatty and motor cycling as a sport will be decaying that little bit more. The image of a sport is all important to spectators, especially new spectators or those who only watch certain meetings each year. Footballers invariably wear clean boots, stockings, shorts and shirts, and car meetings specify in their regulations that mechanics and drivers must wear clean overalls. Motor cycle meetings seem to start badly with haphazard parking all over the paddock. People rush about on racing machines without helmets, goggles or gloves and Fred always wants to park next to his mate Joe who is trying to avoid him because he hasn't had all his tools back since the last time they parked together. In short, it starts a mess and can finish the same way unless the marshalling is slick, the organisation firm and just, and the racing keen and as professionally done as possible.

The payment of a fair subscription to belong to a good club plus the fact that a reasonable entry fee almost guarantees a reasonable standard of rider gives Bemsee meetings that atmosphere shared only with the really good enthusiastic clubs elsewhere.

I am certainly no snob, although the foregoing may imply this, but would think that by the time you have paid a minimum of 9d. per mile to transport the machine to a meeting, plus at least £60 a year for essential maintenance, tyres, chains, etc., it is well worthwhile guaranteeing yourself a decent ride.

Bemsee seem to provide that guarantee and how pleasant it is to have a printed programme and really experienced organisation that can cope when weather, or an accident, upset the days well-laid plans.

It's great to have a magazine too and I hope that we can get more articles—even ramblers like this—on motor cycles and less on shotguns!

Concluding Ivan Hackman's Article on Machine Preparation

Camshafts are the next point. There are many types on the market at present. Some, with contours like bricks, may impress the tuner but do not mean guaranteed performance. The really "square" jobs give very vicious valve acceleration. This results in rapid guide wear, a risk of bent pushrods, and great strain on valve springs. A slightly milder contour may result in less spring acceleration, hence less tendency to valve bounce and consequent increased r.p.m., plus power coming in at lower r.p.m. This was demonstrated on the two Atlas motors at Monza last year. The benefit in reliability goes without saying. Stellite cam build-ups are popular, but often lose the cam lobes in mid-stride. Lumps of stellite flying around inside a motor do not do a lot of good!

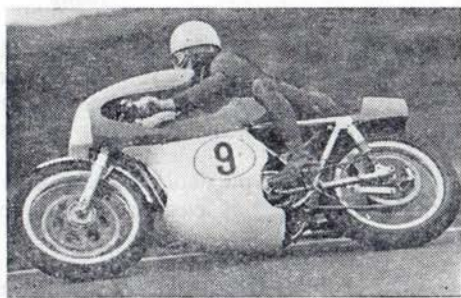
I have often met people who will increase compression and advance their timing. With an increase in C.R., the timing will often have to be retarded from the standard settings to avoid pre-ignition and overheating. The more efficient an engine is, the less advance is required in any case. A motor with a deep combustion chamber and high dome pistons—as a Triumph—needs a fairly high advance as the flame travel is longer (in time) due to the combustion chamber shape. A Norton twin having a flat piston and shallow chamber has more direct flame travel, and thus more efficient combustion. A Norton racing 650 will thus use only 28° full advance as opposed to 39° on the Triumph. (With high compression pistons.) Over advance on either will take the edge off performance.

The greatest gain in performance comes with very efficient breathing and valve operation. To this end, light pushrods, valve spring retainers, rockers, cam followers, will all assist in increased r.p.m. without valve bounce. Thus the improvement. Larger ports, inlet valves, and carbs. also help this, although the larger the port, the higher the r.p.m. needed to preserve the power band, i.e. a small carb. motor may be slower, but will come on song at lower r.p.m. A medium between the two is preferable for most, unless one has mastered the art of riding a motor with a narrow power band, where more than four gears can be very useful. The great success of big twins lies in their broad power band compared with that of most singles. Polished inlet ports, and the precise length of exhaust pipe required for the engine, plus the right megaphones, will often make the difference between being placed and "also ran." Ignition and valve timing are also critical, and precision here makes for greater power and reliability. An engine correctly set up and run in should then run a full season without so much as taking of the head—only valve, plug, and contact clearances to be watched. (IF you are lucky!)

Many disagreements—yes—bound to be. In general this commenting is sound for most club racing however. I ran a Dominator 99 last year, with standard cams and $1\frac{1}{8}$ " carbs. It was absolutely reliable mechanically, and was placed in the first three nearly every time out. Max. r.p.m. 7,800—no valve bounce. I have been beaten by more highly tuned motors, but they have often blown up since then. I have also been beaten by slower motors, but they had better riders. Plenty of highly tuned bikes of course are dead reliable, but maybe their owners are less lazy than me on maintenance.

Anyway, as I said, I am only voicing an opinion. Now perhaps the dissentors will have a go at contradicting, but at least my way is the cheapest way.

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Advertising may be displayed on a motor cycle and on the driver's and/or passenger's clothing and helmet in any competition held under the permit of the A.C.U. or a Local Centre of the A.C.U. subject to the following conditions.

- (a) No advertisement shall be displayed within three inches of any number plate or number plate panel.
- (b) No advertisement shall be displayed on a driver's or passenger's clothing below the knee.
- (c) No driver shall be permitted to display any advertisement on his motor cycle or on the clothing and/or helmet of himself or his passenger (if carried) unless he (the driver) is the holder of a current National Competition Licence and the licence has been endorsed to allow advertising to be displayed. The fee for endorsement of a National Competition Licence for advertising to be displayed is £2 for the period of the National Competition Licence. This fee must be paid in addition to the normal National Competition Licence fee.
- (d) The name of the motor cycle and/or sidecar and/or the name of the driver will not be regarded as advertising.
- (e) Notwithstanding the above conditions the promoters of any competition may, at their sole discretion, prohibit the display of any advertisement, or any particular advertisements on a motor cycle or on the clothing or helmet of any driver or passenger.
- (f) Where advertising, or any particular advertisement, is prohibited all drivers must be notified at least seven days before the date of the meeting.
- (g) The A.C.U. may prohibit the display of any advertisement which it deems to be offensive or not in the best interests of the sport.

(NOTE: Advertising at International Competitions must be in accordance with the provisions of ART 0516 of the International Sporting Code.)

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KNOW YOUR LAW — No. 1

Bert Beavis

Having driven and ridden many types of vehicles for over thirty years, and having studied the various and many Traffic Laws for nearly as long, I am still finding out things I did not know, and yet we are told "Ignorance of the law is no excuse." How then can the ordinary motorist or motor cyclist expect to understand the many and varied laws.

My aim in writing this article is to help unravel some of the lesser known facts of traffic law, I do not intend to deal with the well known facts, such as speed limits and similar misdemeanors; these are understood and the penalties well known. It is impossible in one short article to give all the answers, so maybe, if this is suitable, I may be asked to continue at a later date.

I shall from time to time refer to 'Stated Cases'. What is a 'stated case'? A Magistrates or other Court may dismiss the charges against a person or persons, the prosecution, very often the police, may disagree with this finding and well ask for a 'case stated'. This means the evidence will be heard by three Judges who will make a decision as to whether an offence is committed or not their findings give other Courts guidance, should they be confronted with a similar case.

Most of the laws revolve round a contraption called a 'Motor vehicle', but what is a motor vehicle? The Road Traffic Act defines it as 'a mechanically propelled vehicle intended or adapted for use on roads'.

A man buys a second hand car which requires an engine overhaul, but unfortunately he hasn't a garage, so he parks the vehicle in front of his house. He then removes the engine and takes it into his shed for overhaul. As this is a lengthy job the vehicle without engine stands outside his house and the insurance expires. He was later reported for 'using a motor vehicle on a road, without a policy of insurance being in force'.

Two points arise from:—(i) Is he using the motor vehicle? and (ii) Is it a motor vehicle? This is where stated cases are useful, you may say, if the vehicle is stationary on a road it is not being used, but a stated case, *Elliott v. Grey*, 1959, held that if a motor vehicle is on a road it is using the road, and therefore the vehicle is being used. In the second point, is it still a motor vehicle? Our definition states it should be a mechanically propelled vehicle, is this one mechanically propelled, without an engine? The first thought is, no it is not a motor vehicle but here again stated cases come to the rescue. In *Newberry v. Simmonds*, 1961, a similar case was dealt with. Here it was held that a car did not cease to be a mechanically propelled vehicle on the removal of the engine if that engine might shortly be replaced. Similar decisions have been made where persons are coasting downhill without petrol or where they have a flat battery. The Judges in their wisdom can see the loopholes in the law if they allow one like this to escape. So our friend was rightly convicted of no Insurance.

I will deal with one more small point in this article, no doubt already you can see there is more in the law than you thought. The other point is in relation to 'trailers'. What is a trailer? The Road Traffic Act defines it as 'a vehicle drawn by a motor vehicle'. So a broken down motor car being drawn by another car becomes a trailer, the steersman of which does not require a driving licence, the vehicle does not require an excise licence, and insurance is unnecessary. What then from the points already spoken about would be the position if the tow rope broke? The steersman would become a driver and need the lot. Stated case *Wallace v. Major*, 1946, held that a towed vehicle is a trailer.

I hope in this short article the appetite is wetted but I will leave you one to sort out, and should I be asked to write again, I will clear it up. This was a question put to me this week of an actual incident.

He was asked to go and tow in a broken down vehicle, having a little knowledge of the law (he is one of my students). He took with him a young apprentice who could handle a vehicle but was unlicensed. Whilst towing the broken down vehicle in, the apprentice who was steering it misjudged his distance and knocked down a cyclist. The question I was asked is, "Are any offences committed and by whom?"

In the stated case *Wallace v. Major*, 1946, a steersman of a towed vehicle was also involved in an accident, he appeared at Court on a charge of dangerous driving but it was held this offence only applied to a driver, Section 2 of the Road Traffic Act, 1965 states: "If a person drives a motor vehicle on a road recklessly, etc.," so the steersman of the trailer cannot be convicted of this offence. Does he then get off without committing an offence, the answer is no, although he does not require a driving licence when acting as a steersman, he can be guilty of aiding and abetting a dangerous driving charge served on the driver of the towing vehicle. The Court on hearing the evidence will no doubt dismiss the charge against the driver or give him an absolute discharge, and convict the steersman of his part in the offence.

This point of driving a motor vehicle on a road can also raise some interesting arguments. In one case, a woman, Mrs. Henderson was driving her car along a straight road when she fell asleep, her car swerved across the road and collided with a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction. She was charged with dangerous driving, but pleaded if she was asleep, how could she be driving, a petty sessional court agreed with her and dismissed the case, the prosecution however asked for case stated where it was held she was driving and therefore must be convicted. (Henderson v. Jones, 1955.)

A vehicle was left standing in Stockport Recreation ground when some youths got into it and the vehicle was pushed along by other youths. They then attempted to start the vehicle but were unable to do so, when they were caught. They were charged with 'taking and driving away a motor vehicle without either the consent of the owner or some other lawful authority'. At court they pleaded they had never really driven the vehicle, the Stockport Justices accepted this and dismissed the charge. On appeal, the divisional Court stated 'The mere moving of the vehicle constituted driving away' and the Justices were ordered to retry the case. The Divisional Court also stated the moving of a vehicle by a person because it was blocking his way would be a sufficient excuse that he had reason to believe the owner would permit it. (Shimmell v. Fisher, 1951.)

What does all that add up to, it could mean, if pushing is driving, that a person who buys a motor cycle from a friend who lives a short way away cannot push the motor cycle from one house to the other on the road, and road includes the pavement, or he will be deemed to have driven it and will require insurance, driving licence, tax the lot.

Since my last article we have had two new Acts which effect Road Traffic:—

1. Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1967.
2. Road Safety Act, 1967.

The first Act really does not alter the law much but in general cancels certain sections of the Road Traffic Act, 1960 and puts them into this new Act, these variations relate mainly to Traffic Regulation, Speed limits, pedestrian crossings and school crossings, but one definition of interest arises that of a hover vehicle. A hover vehicle is a vehicle designed to be supported on a cushion of air, and in the Act it states it shall be a motor vehicle and will be subjected to any Regulations the Minister may provide.

The second Act deals with breath tests and driving under the influence of drink, a subject which should not affect students but in case it does I will go into it in my next article. Included in the Act are sections bringing about a slightly different control of Goods vehicles, another very big subject which can be dealt with perhaps later. Heavy goods vehicle driving licences are also mentioned so it looks as if they may come back.

Now for this issues poser. Some time ago I was driving my car down a hill when, to my amazement, I noticed another private car travelling at the same speed and direction as myself on the offside of the road. As my speed was about 30 m.p.h., I thought 'the clot', but when I looked again at the vehicle I noticed it was driverless. Luckily it finally swerved and ran into a lamp-post doing quite a bit of damage. Now what is the legal position? Who is to blame? Are any offences committed?

Finally, I was approached recently and asked about the position of the Excise licence on a private car, as the enquirer had been told his was incorrectly placed. Looking around I find them showing in many and varied positions, is there a legal position? I'll tell you next time if you don't know.

That's the lot this time, I hope it gets you thinking and arguing.

(The Club acknowledges the fact that this and following articles may have previously appeared in the Auto Club magazine.)

COMING AND GOING*

Dennis Bates

Looking at a beautifully prepared machine often engenders the thought that it must have taken a long time. It is also apparent that the owner wanted to create the best possible motor cycle for the task in view—winning races.

When we organise a meeting we are in a similar position, except that probably few people ever concern themselves with the intricacies of it. Nevertheless, the pride with which the many duties are carried out—duties which interweave to produce highly effective race operation—are a source of considerable satisfaction to the individuals and to the Club as a whole.

Subjects like first aid; like the team of three surgeons in attendance at The Hutchinson 100 (one of which is motor cycle mounted to reach the more inaccessible parts of the course), like the insistence on Scrutineers with racing and engineering experience. These are two of the numerous aids to riders which in the long run benefit everyone.

So when last month mention was made of radio communication this resulted from the need to further improve efficiency, for we are

aware of certain limitations which rigid land line telephones impose on the race organisation, especially when emergencies arise. The obvious advantage immediately springs to mind of greater speed in dealing with accidents, but it also means that more rapid and accurate information is available to the Clerk of the Course; and accurate information is the basis upon which the right decisions can be taken.

Later this season—because it takes time—B.M.C.R.C. will be radio equipped. At the present we shall have a master control unit mounted in the Club vehicle, with two hand transmitter/receivers. The range is considerable and under test good reception was made from the road behind the main grandstand at Brands Hatch to the road beyond the corner at Westfield on the grand prix circuit. The system will be on ultra high frequency on a wave band allotted by the Postmaster General, and we will be able to employ it at Snetterton, Crystal Palace, Brands Hatch and, looking to the future, at any other circuit in the country.

An outline plan now exists as to procedure, but the real test of its advantages will only come once we take delivery and can carry out trials. The object will be to become fully operational as rapidly after delivery as possible so as to have the service for as many meetings as possible in the late summer and autumn. Naturally correct short wave radio procedure will have to be carried out.

Perhaps one might look back over the years and consider some of the heart stopping incidents which may have been less important if radio had then been available. There was the case of the hare racing the bikes at Silverstone, and the pigs which somehow got under their protective electric fence; at Crystal Palace the female spectator who caused a long delay because she should really have been in a maternity ward; the fire at North Tower Crescent, and the never to be forgotten eight-man pile up at Park curve which caused abandonment of the race; the thick fog at Snetterton where the travelling marshal's bike expired trying to conduct the riders around in mass practice formation.

The R.A.F. slang for radio was 'coming and going' hence the title to this article. The aircrew realised its enormous value, we shall surely prove it to ourselves.

POSTBAG

Dear Sir,

I have read with interest the letters from Declan Doyle and Dennis Bates regarding assistance to riders who are unable to start. This is a problem that affects most riders at one time or another. That sinking feeling one gets as the pack disappears into the distance in a cloud of smoke has to be experienced to be believed. Dennis Bates asks if poor

machine preparation is a justification for aid. But is it as simple as this. I think not. I know the technical bods will say that if the carburation, ignition and timing is correct a machine should start first time, but they don't always! To start with, some machines have a reputation for being hard to start—Gold Stars, Velocettes, etc. Then again a 500 twin is usually easier to start than a 500 single. Some bikes have to be warmed up on soft plugs and then changed to hard ones for the race which is quite O.K. if you are not kept waiting on the grid. But most important of all I believe is the fact that, although our sport is not a test of physical strength, some riders suffer a handicap all the time because they are smaller than others.

I think most riders will agree that the start is the most worrying part of any race and that it causes more pre-race nerves than any other aspect of the game. The whole question of pushing dates back to the times when 'bikes had to be pushed to start them so why not do away with it altogether and start a race with engines running. Scramblers do it, cars do it, so why not us? This would make things a great deal easier and give everyone an equal chance. This method is not as dangerous as it might at first sound because even with the present system about 85% of the machines start together. Also quite a number of accidents are caused by machines at the rear of the grid starting before those at the front.

These are only my own views of course, but I should be interested to hear what other members think.

C. McDONNELL, St. Neots, Hunts.

Ed.—The question of starts with running engines has been in our minds for a little while. It may be that an experiment will be necessary so any riders with ideas for and against are asked to write in for the pages of this magazine.



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Dear Sir,

Here are my answers to the questions put forward by Dennis Bates in the order in which he asked them:—

1. No
2. By using your loaf
3. When everyone's gone
4. Marshals or temporary marshals nominated for this purpose
5. Obviously one does not push for two hundred yards or anything like it.
6. No, the motor will be hot and working by that time
7. Give it to him. He has certainly earned it if he starts after all the others have gone.

Perhaps some of my answers may seem to be a bit frivolous but they are my earnest opinions. I won't dwell on the classic start that was delayed for an incredible time because of a bod on the Norwich Straight but I know of a lot of blokes that never rode because motors were stone cold. I realise there was quite a lot of assistance but not enough for the unfortunates. Some of these big twins with little or inexperienced pilots are right pigs to start at Snetterton.

I honestly think an effort should be made to get a clear grid and get everyone a ride if at all possible. Here's wishing everyone a good season. If you see me not starting for . . . 's sake give me a push!!

DEREK FILLER, Hatfield, Herts.

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FREE

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read the letter from Eric Vant in last month's issue.

Perhaps I ought to make my position clear: I am not out of sympathy with riders whose machines fail to start, although from my own observations poor preparation accounts for a goodly percentage of these failures. Another aspect is unsuitable machinery, either because it hasn't dawned on the rider that a machine needs to be tailored to suit him, or because it is too high, too heavy or a combination of both factors.

The real crux of the matter is surely, can assistance be given which is fairly given, which also means that it has to be seen to be fair. And if it is permitted just how is the operation defined? I do not think that Mr. Vant has answered me.

Elsewhere in this issue members will find that the Club is relaxing the rule for one meeting only in order to find out how. But in the end the answer lies with riders as to whether they are willing to accept a change—for make no mistake, the rules under which we all operate are a powerful protection for competitor and organiser alike.

Yours, etc., DENNIS BATES.

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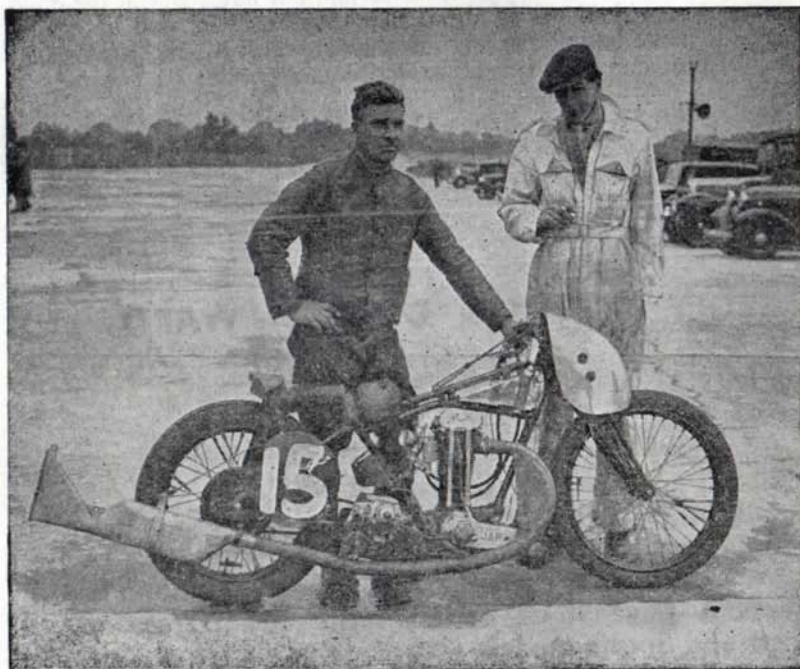
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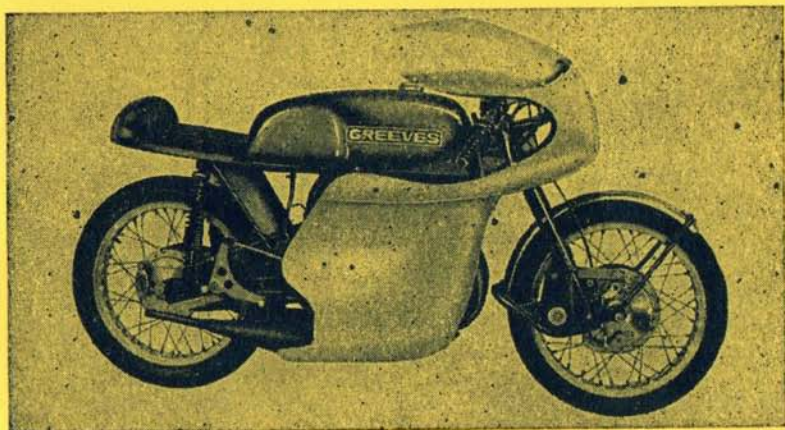


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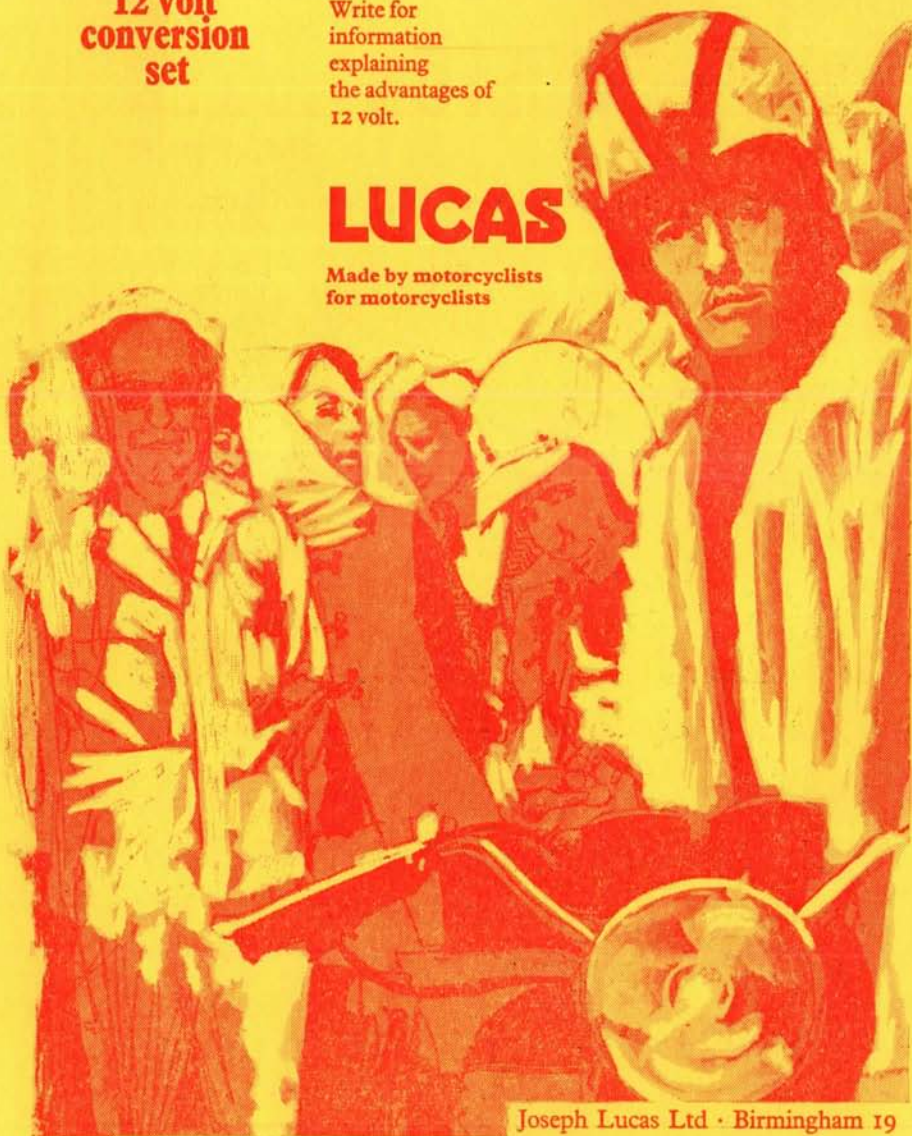
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