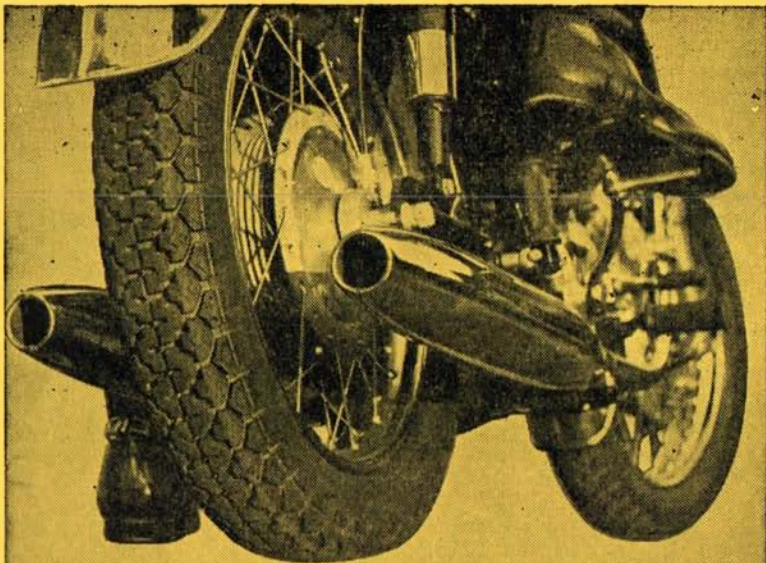


BEMSEE 68



OCTOBER



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THE JOURNAL OF THE
BRITISH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB

Bemsee



EDITORIAL

OCTOBER 1968

I AM very tempted to make a long reply to Arthur Bourne's comments in Postbag. I have the space but I don't honestly believe I am the right person to do so because, in the first place, I am gradually running out of ideas and in the second I believe that the present system is the fairest of all systems. We have our critics sure, but who doesn't.

Furthermore I haven't a hope of dwelling in the past to the extent that Arthur Bourne does although I am grateful for him correcting me on the 'history' part. I am afraid that to me 'history' only goes back as far as my meagre knowledge and that obviously isn't far enough.

But as I have some space to fill this month let me answer for his benefit and for the benefit of others without his immense knowledge the problems facing racing today. I hope you will not get bored if this turns out longer than I intend although I shall endeavour to keep it as short as possible.

Racing is suffering from a lack of spectator support. Unlike the Brookland's era I would suggest that this has mainly come about from the glut of racing and the varying present day habits of the general public. The riding of motor cycles has become less popular since the prices of solos have increased out of all proportion with the relative costs of a small car. Saturday sport is almost a thing of the past but as there are so many people wishing to race and the number of vacant Sundays in a year limited, some sport must take place on a Saturday, and here we must stress that motor cycling is not alone with the problem. Since Saturdays are a dead-loss spectator-wise, it is equally unpromising to note that many of the Sunday fixtures—perhaps I should say the greater majority of motor cycle fixtures—are a complete waste of finance. Try as you might, there is now no way of guaranteeing that you will not be out of pocket. You run a meeting and just hope. On top of this you are completely at the mercy of the elements. Your loss may be a few hundred or a few thousand. Big profits are a thing of the past.

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Now I cannot easily compare our present plight with the era of Brooklands but I will say that the hey-day of motor cycle racing was just before and just after the last world war. I can understand the struggle which the Club must have had in the early days from 1909 to about 1925. One world war had already intervened and when it was back on its feet another one came along. But one could certainly say that, in those far off days, things were a lot better than they are today. At least I assume there was plenty of trade support around compared to the dismal lack of it today.

It is quite obvious that the plight of racing today needs a drastic step to right it. Gradually it will right itself for no other reason than a lot of people are going to lose a lot of money. There is too much racing to please the public as a whole and the spread out attendances do little for the coffers. No there must be a drastic slicing of the number of meetings if we are to see individual gates rise again. Whether we are to see, as a result, gate income rise is debatable, but I can't honestly foresee anything else rescuing road racing.

So, where does Bemsee stand in all this. Well, it runs Club meetings for the sport on the basis that the riding members must pay for their sport as does any other sportsman—shooting costs me a fortune too—and Club meetings must show a profit for reasons that I have expounded so often that I am becoming bored by my own torrents. It runs one National from which it receives a clear-cut profit and one International on exactly the same basis. At present it does not consider any other ventures that are in the slightest bit insecure for the obvious reason that it cannot afford to lose money at a time when making it is so damned difficult. In the near future some severe cutbacks in overhead expenditure are envisaged in an endeavour not to increase prices. It is most annoying to save a few hundred pounds and then have Graduated Contributions and Postage charges increased which immediately neutralises what you have saved. This has just happened. Charges are going up all around us—one cannot foresee where it will all end or, indeed, when!

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POSTBAG

DEAR SIR,—In the September issue of "Bemsee" you say, "If I may go back into history . . ." Later you remark, "Nobody in this country has ever tried clutch starts for solos before." Shush! As I passed Brooklands today, in my mind's eye I could still see dear old Ebbie (A. V. Ebblewhite, father of the late "Lew"), watches in one hand and flag in the other, being sent sprawling on the concrete opposite Chronograph Villa—yes, a clutch start. This would be in the late 1920's and I seem to recall that the incident was immortalised in a drawing by (Leslie) Grimes.

True, the event was a handicap. Whether clutch starts were used in scratch races I am blessed if I can recall. Perhaps Bill ("Nickel-plate") Lacey, Victor Horsman, George Tottey, Harry Weslake or friend Cobbold can oblige.

What always made me chortle was the Lepel "High-frequency Converter." This device, unique among all the items of equipment the lads used, carried **no** "bonus" . . . It was a "MUST": it really did help to prevent "hot" plugs oiling up on the line (yes, those clutch starts!).

But it is the earlier part of your excellent, revealing commentary on the problems of today I want to dwell upon: yes, the average crowd at a Club meeting at Brands this year of about 600, at Snetterton fewer; the reason for "Open" events at Brands; the need to give the maximum number of members a "run" and recoup expenses by drawing in all the entry fees one can.

May I take you back in history? The time I have in mind is a long, long while ago, but there might be something to it.

It was late in 1929 or very early in 1930. Bemsee had not been drawing the crowds. Brooklands said it was losing heavily on Bemsee meetings, and the Brooklands' authorities (A. Percy Bradley—then Clerk of the Course—and Co.) stated that either the position improved or no more Bemsee at Brooklands.

There will probably be some in the Club who will remember a meeting of the Bemsee Committee in the Main Committee Room at the R.A.C. I, who had been a Bemsee official before I joined "The Motor Cycle," was asked to come along. With the sanction of my then Directors, I offered to lend the weight of "The Motor Cycle," with its 160,000 a week, to the promotion of one of the meetings provided we could agree the programme—a different type of programme—and readers, armed with a coupon from our pages, could get in at half-price (1s. 3d. including motor cycle).

April 5th, 1930, was "The Motor Cycle" Day." Brooklands was overwhelmed. At 4 p.m.—two hours after the meeting started—the queue of those still yearning to get in was such that the only thing was to throw open the gates. The following Thursday we published a letter of apology to all from A. Percy Bradley. There was no further question of him or anyone else waving Bemsee "Goodbye."

Thanks to the publicity, thanks to the coupon and thanks, I believe, in very large degree to the nature of the programme, Bemsee was comfortably placed again. Whether from (now) "Motor Cycle" you can borrow and publish pictures showing those thousands of legs dangling over the lip of the Members' Banking or some other of the scenes I do not know.



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Today, up at the R.A.C. for a meeting of the R.A.C. Motor Cycle Committee, I had the report of the meeting turned up in the R.A.C. Motoring Library. What I yearned to check, in view of your comments, was what sort of events we mutually agreed; I wondered whether there was perhaps something to be learnt from the plight Bemsee was in then.

I knew that the maxim was that there should be as many events as possible—all short—and everyone keyed up to put them on one after another with never a dull moment in between. The timetable, I found, was:—2.15, one-lap sprint 250; 2.30, one-lap sprint 350; 2.45, one-lap sprint 500; 3.0, three-lap up to 350 handicap; 3.25, motor cycle v. car race; 3.50, three-lap up to 1,000 handicap; 4.10, match race; 4.40, relay race; 5.0, three-lap passenger handicap; 5.20, attempt on Track record, invitation race between three riders.

You will note from the date that the meeting opened the season. You will note the bang, cram-full programme: many events, many runners, much crowd, a very desirable influx of money.

While at the R.A.C. this afternoon I had not time to turn up details of the later annual "Motor Cycle" meetings to see what developments there were as regards the actual programme of races and the details of the "window-dressing" spectator-wise, but I remember that one very successful and interesting innovation was an open-to-Clubmen event which gave the lads the opportunity of having a crack at the Flying Kilometre, complete with Official Certificate, for something like half-a-guinea instead of the usual Brooklands five guineas.

One realises that what can be laid on in the way of a programme depends upon the individual circuit, also we are now in a very different era, but it is just possible that these glimpses from the past can bestir a useful thought or two—perhaps even at a tangent. I shan't be the slightest bit hurt if you think otherwise.

With every good wish to the dear old Club,

Yours, etc., ARTHUR BOURNE, Fordingbridge, Hants.
"Torrens," alias Arthur Bourne, one of those the Club kindly made an Honorary Member back in 1949.

P.S. If any one cares to do any research on possible ideas from the past, the Royal Automobile Club's Librarian, Mr. David A. Howarth, A.L.A., The Royal Automobile Club, 89-91 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1, (tel. 01-930 2345) would be very pleased to help by appointment. And if Bemsee members can themselves help to add to this already magnificent R.A.C. Motoring Library—books, manuals, catalogues (motor cycles and motoring in general)—will they please send them in to or drop them in on Mr. Howarth? Need I add that a special plate, giving the donor's name, goes in each?

DEAR EDITOR,—I was most interested to read the article on the interpretation of the Production Racing regulations in the September magazine. Although I have followed racing from the spectators' side of the fence for some time, when it comes to Production regulations I feel like a Martian trying to comprehend a cricket match.

Where do those fairings come from? They can't all be a part of the original specifications or a catalogued extra. And petrol tanks! There was a widely reported grumble of a well known rider because he could not have a much needed pit stop and because his "large capacity fibreglass tank" wasn't ready in time for his Honda. Surely the regulations state no alteration to the capacity or material of petrol tanks. And the extra large carburettor we read about on someone's Ducati for the Brands 500 miler? I could go on.

Anyway. How about an article on the intricacies and subtle innuendos of these regulations for us poor baffled and bewildered spectators. I know that I, for one, have been deterred from the active side of production racing by these apparent anomalies, for the time being at least, and to have the hidden secrets revealed would be very welcome.

Yours, etc., PAUL FRANKLIN, Liverpool 18.

COLOUR — and more on the way

OUR OLD friend "Motor Cycle" gets better and better. Since it turned over to a newspaper format and was printed by a different process than the traditional letterpress the quality of photographs has been much improved. Now Editor Harry Louis has gone a stage further by introducing colour illustrations on the front page.

The method of printing is lithography with the paper fed on a web. It is ideal for print runs of around the 100,000 copies, especially when there are many publications in the group which are printed in this manner. Colour first appeared on September 4th, followed a week later with a superb colour shot taken at The Hutchinson 100 of Mick Andrew astride the Gus Kuhn entered Norton Commando.

The Hutch in colour featured in a big way in the current issue of Castrol's Achievement Book for 1968. Sidney Pemberton who takes many of the subjects for Castrol sent a team to last year's Hutch to get the pictures he wanted. This year, too, there was a lot of camera work during the meeting with the possibility of the Hutch in colour in next season's edition.

MAN IN BLUE — (1)

CONSIDERING HOW much we have in common with the police forces it is surprising how little of their activities appear in the motor cycle magazines. Probably one feature which would arouse considerable interest would be a road test report on the current Triumph Saints which equip some police forces, notably the Metropolitan Force.

Yet many policeman are ardent motor cyclists. Graham Bailey of Croydon is a Mobile during the week and a road racer at weekends, and he is not alone. Half way through this season Sgt. Brian Ashton of Sydenham transferred from course marshalling to become our Number 3 Travelling Marshal, and of course for years 'Met' men have formed a vital part of our Bemsee Marshals' Corps.

Early in September "Motor Cycle" published a picture of a trio of policemen who had just returned from the Circuit des Pyrenees International Rally. One of the faces was familiar, that of Ron Hawkins who for many years has been a Senior Marshal. In partnership with Sgt. Bomber Harris of The Police Driving School and Inspector Alec Smith of Barnes, Sgt. Hawkins took part in this tough event in Southern France centred on Pau. Triumphs prepared and supplied the machines—two 650s and a 500, the latter going to Harris who collected the 500 c.c. award.

The Rally attracts an overwhelmingly large entry from the police forces of Europe—a sort of uniformed mobility! The French rode in leathers and body belts (part of their official uniform), were paid for the seven days and were liberally escorted and aided by the local gendarmerie. Equipment was also lavish; one Frenchman having a special map of the route driven by an electric motor which unwound at a speed relative to the average set for the Rally of 60 k.p.h. Poor Ron bit the dust on the winding roads on which the Triumph's silencers persistently grounded, but was whisked by 'copter' to the nearest hospital for checking. Inspector Smith took 14th place in the over 250 c.c. and police classes.

It appears that not only was the event splendidly competitive and well organised but for policemen from at least 5 European countries it was a marvellous opportunity for a great copper's get-together. (Imagine meeting foreign mobiles in such strength in this country, all averaging 38 m.p.h. on a Rally!)

The trio have already a third place to their credit in this year's A.C-U. National Rally, and are now competing against other British Forces in police club events.

A particularly good effort this, for all of them financed the trip themselves, and gave up 7 days annual leave to compete as representatives of this country.

MEN IN BLUE — (2)

HORSE GUARDS Parade in London in September saw a fine display of preserved aircraft of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force, to commemorate 50 years of the R.A.F. and the Battle of Britain. Road racers who aim for the peel-off point on the left hander into bottom straight at Brands, or the Esses at Snetterton pass close to Dave Britt a regular marshal for the Club. Dave, who is a Corporal in the R.A.F., was marshalling in a different form at Horse Guards tending the flying veterans in the display. He was kind enough to give ex-R.A.F. man Chief Marshal Dennis Bates a first hand look at the aircraft which included an SE5, Sopwith Camel, Gladiator, Lysander, Tempest, Meteor, Hunter and Lightning and an aircraft known to many and one Bemsee member in particular. It was our President Sir Geoffrey Tuttle who is associated with the marque, for he formed the first Mosquito Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron at R.A.F. Benson in 1942.

BEMSEE 200 COMPETITION

THE BEMSEE 200 Competition is for 200 members only who shall be the first 200 who apply, and who undertake to contribute 5s. weekly, either by monthly or quarterly payments, in advance, and preferably by Bankers Order.

The Competition covers a year of 52 weeks. Every week a draw will be made for a £5 prize, except every 26th week when a draw will be made for an Austin or Morris Mini de luxe, fitted with heater, serviced with oil and petrol, and taxed for one year; or £500 in cash. At the same time a draw will take place for a consolation prize of £20. By drawing and giving a prize every week the 200 members will share:

- 2 cars
- 2 £20 consolation prizes
- 50 £5 prizes.

All 200 members are entitled to attend the draw for the car every 26th week of the competition.

Rules of the Bemsee 200 Competition, promoted on behalf of British Motor Cycle Racing Club Limited, by J. H. Swift, are given on the next page. Also included in this edition of the Magazine are combined Bemsee 200 Competition application forms and Bankers Order slip.

Profits from the Competition will be placed with the funds of B.M.C.R.C. Ltd. for the benefit of all.

If you wish to join make your application immediately by completing the application form and Bankers Order. The Competition will commence immediately after 200 people have made application. If you do not have a Bank Account complete the form just the same as special arrangements will be made.

Rules of the Bemsee 200 Competition

1. The name of the Competition shall be 'The Bemsee 200 Competition' and it shall be organised and managed as a function of The British Motor Cycle Racing Club Limited (hereinafter called 'the Club') exclusively for members—ordinary, Life and Honorary—of the Club.
2. Application for participation in the Competition shall be made to J. H. Swift or to any member of the Board of Directors of the Club.
3. Not more than 200 persons, each of whom must and shall be a member, life member or honorary member of the Club, shall participate in the Competition.
4. The Subscription to the Competition shall be five shillings per week which shall be paid in advance either monthly, quarterly or annually.

5. The responsibility for payment of subscriptions rests with each participant, and any participant who falls more than fourteen days in arrear with such payment shall thereupon forfeit all interest (including any gain) in the Competition and shall thereupon forfeit membership of the Competition though not of British Motor Cycle Racing Club.
6. A draw for a £5 prize will be held every week except every 26th week when the Prize will be an AUSTIN or MORRIS MINI DE LUXE SALOON, fitted with heater and licensed for one year, or £500 in cash if preferred. A consolation prize of £20 is included in the Draw on the 26th week.
7. Each participant shall on entry into the Competition be allocated the same number as their membership. The draw will be made every week or once every four weeks at the Registered Offices of B.M.C.R.C. Ltd., 33a London Road, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey, or wherever in the future the Registered Offices may be located. The Draw shall be conducted in the presence of not less than four members of the Board of Directors of the Club. The Draw every 26th week will be in accordance with the arrangements which shall from time to time be sent to all participants in the Competition and all such participants shall be entitled to attend. The arrangements for each 26th week draw shall be notified to each participant, not less than 7 days' notice being given by post.
8. Every eight weeks each participant will be notified of the previous 8 weeks results of the weekly draws.
9.
 - a) The Board of Directors of the Club acting as a body and not as individuals shall have power to suspend the Competition if in their absolute discretion it appears necessary in the interests of the Club so to do. But in such event each participant in the Competition shall be refunded his or her subscription relating to the period for which the Competition is suspended.
 - b) Save as provided in the last preceding sub-clause no participant shall be entitled to recover any subscription.
10.
 - a) The decision of the Board of Directors of the Club shall be final and binding in any matter requiring adjudication.
 - b) The Board of Directors shall have power to amend or revoke these Rules at their absolute discretion without prior notice save that each participant shall be informed of such amendment or revocation within reasonable time after the same have been passed by the Board.

11. The expression Board of Directors in these Rules shall mean the members of British Motor Cycle Racing Club Ltd., who have been elected as Directors of the Club for the time being.
12. The Competition and the foregoing Rules shall not be deemed to be operative until a minimum of 200 paid up participants have entered the competition. In the event of there being no such minimum of 200 participants entering the Competition then such number of intending participants who have paid their subscriptions in accordance with these Rules shall be refunded their subscriptions (without interest) and the Competition shall be void.

1st October, 1968

By Order of the Board of Directors
J. H. Swift
Secretary and Hon. Promoter.

★ See Penultimate Page for Application

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(Open Letter to Dennis Bates)

I WAS very interested in your experience at Thetford, where you almost saw the Club car being 'milked' of fuel, and unfortunately you seemed to get no help from the Police, let us try to see why.

The Larceny Act 1916 states, 'A person steals who without the consent of the owner, fraudulently and without a claim of right made in good faith, takes and carries away anything capable of being stolen with the intent at the time of such taking permanently to deprive the owner thereof'. If the age of the Act gets you, I regularly instruct on the 'Sale of Goods Act 1893'.

To break the Larceny Act down evidence must be supplied as follows:—

1. Was the petrol taken without the owner's consent? In your case this would present no difficulty.

2. Was anything in fact stolen? In your write up there is no evidence to this effect at all, there should be evidence that when the vehicle was left, there was x gallons of petrol in the tank, and afterwards there was minus x gallons in the tank. The criminal does not always tell the truth even under oath, and he could have gone to Court and stated he was putting petrol into the Club car. Now you and I know this would not happen, but in England unlike most Continental countries a person is innocent until proved guilty, and the prosecution must produce sufficient evidence to show petrol was in fact stolen. If an offender can put a doubt in the mind of the Court they will throw the case out.

(Ed.—the fact that petrol was missing was testified to.)

3. Did the person taking the petrol take it with the intent at the time of taking to permanently deprive the owner thereof? If a person takes your car for a joy ride and then dumps it, he cannot be charged for stealing the car, stealing the petrol used, yes, even so I have known of cases where the car has been recovered with more petrol in it than when it was stolen. Because of this in 1930 the offence of 'Taking and driving away' started under the Road Traffic Acts. So you have to prove the petrol was not borrowed.

I do feel that perhaps there was a little more in your experience than meets the eye, but obviously I cannot comment on my opinion in a publication.

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247 N.S.U.—£80. 125 Puch—£10.

J. D. L. Denny, Rowardennans, Hedgerley Hill, Hedgerley, Bucks.

Greeves Silverstone 21s. front wheel with improved brake—£12 Also special l/w featherbed type frame which takes above wheel and would make basis for special. C/w seat and tanks—£20. (Ed.—I presume that forks are included!) Also various seats and tyres.

D. Foxley, 1 Mafeking Road, Wraysbury, Nr. Staines, Middx.

Everything must go! Long stroke 7R motor and spares—£20.

Greeves/Anzani 250 Disc valve 2/s twin—£5.

Royal Enfield Bullet—£1 for spares.

1958 Jaguar automatic, power steering, power brakes, discs, good mechanically, light towbar and trailer—offers.

Dunstall twin disc brake c/w fork legs—£35.

J2 engine, gearboxes, tyres, very cheap. All types of spares FREE.

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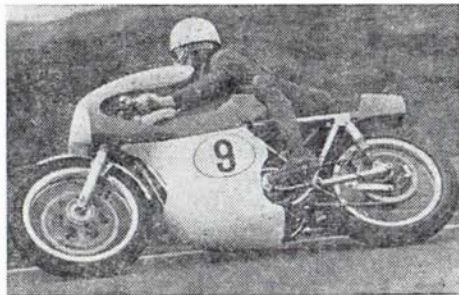
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Application Form

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NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

MEMBERSHIP No.....

I wish to make application to join the above competition and undertake to make regular payments as specified in the rules and regulations which I have read and understood.

*I would like to receive a form for Order upon my Bank for **Weekly / Monthly / Quarterly / Annual** payment(s).

*I would like to receive a book of Credit Transfer Slips so that I may pay through a Bank.

** Please complete whichever applicable*

Signature.....

Parents/Guardian's Signature (if under 21)

.....

Date.....

CLUTCH STARTS

NOW THAT we have experimented with Clutch starts for two meetings I think the time has now come for the riders to chose for themselves the system they prefer.

From an organisers point of view they were an outstanding success. Not only was no-one left on the start line but the racing certainly benefited from closer competition.

So do please hurry and complete the form on the following page returning it just as soon as you possibly can. The first set of regulations should be circulated on November 1st for the 1969 season to spread the cost of the heavy burden to riders.

A decision will be based upon the outcome although we readily accept that we can't please everyone.

CLUTCH STARTS

Please complete the following and tear out. Having torn it out please send it in a stamped 4d. envelope to:

'Clutch Starts', B.M.C.R.C. Ltd.,
P.O. Box 75, Kingston upon Thames,
Surrey.

Name

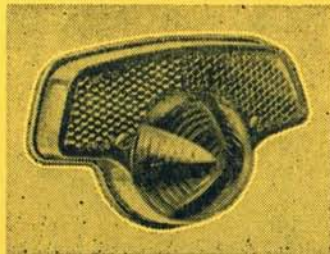
Membership No.

Address

.....

1. I HAVE/HAVE NOT taken part in your Club meetings at which Clutch starts were used.
2. STATE the number of meetings you took part in
(1 or 2)
3. I APPROVE/DISAPPROVE of the system.
4. STATE your reasons for either.
5. SHOULD the grid ballot be employed or not employed?
..... YES/NO.

N.B.—Only competing members should complete the above. Other opinions are not relevant.



Lucas have always got the motor-cycling enthusiast at heart and are constantly designing improvements which can be introduced into existing electrical systems. Here are the latest additions to their range:—

Clipper Diode: For direct lighting machines

End bulb blowing by fitting a Clipper Diode into the lighting circuit. The diode absorbs excessive voltage after it reaches safe maximum value and continues to do so as the voltage rises. Easily fitted.
Price 20/-

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The coils are encased in a tough resin capsule to eliminate the effect of vibration. Will give trouble free charging for the life of the machine. Exchange your existing alternator for the latest encapsulated design. Write for details.

L.679 Stoptail lamp:

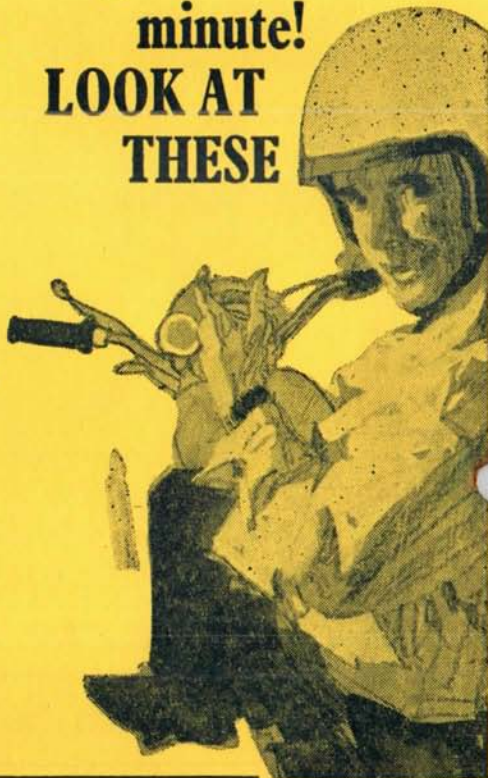
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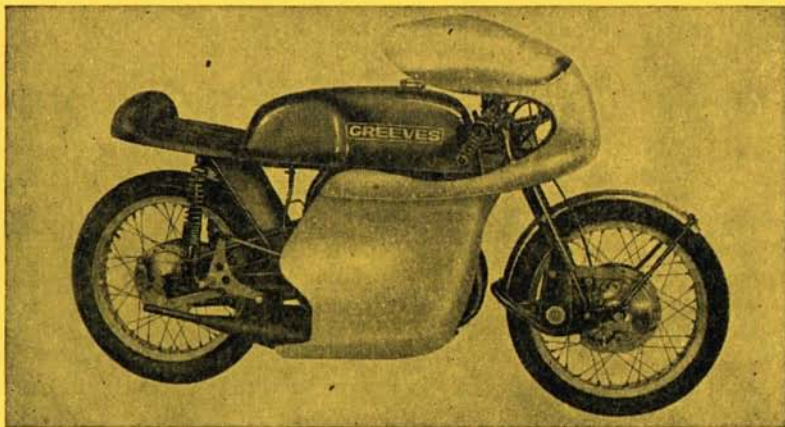


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