

# Editorial

Made it before Christmas (and the new Millenium) !

Well at last Piaggio have given the 90th Anniversary recognition. Piaggiornale used the launch of the 'DNA' (no we won't be organising a silliest acronym contest) to celebrate. Even better there is news of a huge rally next to the old factory in Arcore next year [see Chairman's Chat and page 7].

The sale finally went through, and despite TPG only holding 10% of the stock I still think they will be very much in the driving seat (or should that be gripping the handlebars?). The future, though uncertain, can be nothing but exciting as we wait to see what plans are in store for Gilera. All kinds of rumours are around including one that a very well known former British GP rider will be piloting a replica Gilera four cylinder machine in competition against 'Team Obsolete' next year.

It was certainly great to see a display of Gilera 'heritage' on the stand at the NEC show, and Dick and Kay's Nightshayde celebration Runner featuring images of the Gilera glory years was a knockout [see cover and page 22 for pictures].

*'Heritage' display on the Gilera Stand at the Bike Show*

Lots of opportunities for get-togethers in 2000, including two track days, BMF Show, AGM and Classic Mechanics Show, and a new range of Gilera Network clothing to be seen in [see page 21].

You will see from the finalised accounts for 1999 that we are in a strong financial position so we enter the third millenium with great expectations.

**Wishing you all a marvellous MM !**



*Now read on ...*

## GILERA NETWORK ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD 04/07/98 - 01/08/99

| <i>INCOME</i>                    | £       | <i>EXPENDITURE</i>            | £       |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Subscriptions/back issues</i> | 1686.45 | <i>Photocopying/collation</i> | 245.61  |
| <i>Morini Club (98 Cadwell)</i>  | 302.00  | <i>Postage</i>                | 271.17  |
| <i>Stafford Show Expenses</i>    | 25.00   | <i>BMF affiliation</i>        | 129.00  |
| <i>Bank Interest</i>             | 16.77   | <i>Insurance</i>              | 112.00  |
| <i>Bob Wright Advert</i>         | 40.00   | <i>BMF Rally Stand</i>        | 112.81  |
|                                  |         | <i>Stationery</i>             | 138.86  |
|                                  |         | <i>Morini Club (98 AGM)</i>   | 200.00  |
|                                  |         | <i>Display equipment</i>      | 46.01   |
|                                  |         | <i>Stafford Show Expenses</i> | 25.00   |
| <i>Total</i>                     | 2070.22 | <i>Total</i>                  | 1280.46 |
| <i>Surplus</i>                   | 789.76  |                               |         |
| <i>Cash in bank 23/7/99</i>      |         | 1688.02                       |         |

### NORDWEST FRONTIER

Even though I avoided the torrential rain that affected the end of the September Loton park meeting (in fact the meeting was running so late the bikes didn't get a second timed run anyway) my bronchitis developed into a touch of pneumonia. I must have guessed this was going to happen as didn't even enter for Hartland. So no more opportunities to test the clutch until next year. I had thought I might have the engine out to replace the original barrel and piston so that I could use the NW on the road again. As, however, no-one seems interested in the Norturno I will probably try and coax another season out of it.

A pleasant day towards the end of October provided an opportunity to get the Mille MoT'd and blow the cobwebs out of the GFR and Norturno. In fact, the Norturno went so well I now have very mixed feelings

about selling it (particularly as I fancy taking it down to Arcore next May - see page 7). The Isle of Man problems now seem to have been definitely the result of a knackered battery, as even an old unit which will barely take a charge did not result in any blown fuses.

PSF

604 at Ashes corner  
Gurston Down May 99

## Chairman's Chat

My contribution this time is rather brief I'm afraid. Sorry there is no technical stuff but I have just not had time, I have been at the Motor Show and then the Bike Show and now I am going away for two months so the last eight weeks or so have been rather hectic.

The Motorcycle Show proved that Piaggio are serious about developing the Gilera brand. Apart from Runners and the SKP the Piaggio stand featured the 125cc Coguar custom, the 50cc H@K trail bike, the GSM mini super motard and on press day the new 50cc Compact bike.

The Coguar, H@K and GSM may not be about to set the world alight but I think the Compact is going to carry on a great reputation for originality and innovation. The Compact we saw was a mock up with a 50cc water cooled two stroke engine as used in the Runner 50. The finished item is scheduled for the shops in July 2000. A name has not yet been settled but some fairly awful ones have been suggested. First it was going to be Raptor but Cagiva beat them to it (thanks Cagiva) since then I have heard a couple of beauties: Virus!!!! and DNA, oh please! I am sure there must be a law against it. They just may do it, don't forget this is the company that recently named a scooter "Stalker" (we call it SKP) and an electric bicycle "Albatross". A few people have suggested sensible names and I will be passing these on to Piaggio. If you feel strongly and want to give them your ideas please write to Costantino Sambui at Piaggio Ltd. Unit 8 Ravensquay, Cray Avenue, Orpington, BR5 4BQ.

Also on the Piaggio stand was a partly sectioned four stroke engine, this is the new LEADER engine that will appear in many of the scooters. The engine is designed to be suitable for a range of vehicles, and can be 125cc or 180, water or air cooled, two valve or four, drum brake or

disc. By the end of 2000 the Compact will be available with a 180cc, four valve, water cooled engine giving 20 bhp. This should be exciting! The Compact is a twist and go automatic motorcycle, or is it a non-step-through scooter with large wheels? Scootering magazine has agonised long and hard about this bike and decided it has no place in their magazine, I hope the bike magazines don't do the same! I think it has more in common with a motorcycle than a scooter. So here we have a naked sports bike that weighs a little over 100kg with a seat height the same as a Monster (770mm), 14 inch wheels and discs front and rear. The tank is a dummy with space for your helmet, the real tank is lower down above the horizontal engine. I can't wait.

Because Piaggio could only have the Compact for two days they needed a centre piece to replace it for the rest of the show. Enter top custom paint / graphics team, Kay Shuttleworth and club member Dick Stapley. A month before the show they were commissioned to do a custom paint job on a Runner, their idea was to show some of the important moments of Gilera's ninety year history. First Dick gave the Runner a rich graduated spray job, deep red at the back fading to a strong orange / yellow at the front. Then Kay airbrushed a series of intricately detailed scenes along each side starting with a portrait of Giuseppe Gilera sitting on one of his first racing bikes and then moving through to the desert racers of the early 90's. The front

panel is dedicated to "the shape of things to come" with the Runner's headlight doubling as the headlight for a front view of someone on a Compact. The finished scooter is a real work of art with fantastic attention to detail making you want to spend hours studying each scene. The scooter was on a turntable at the show and was admired and photographed by everyone who passed by. A great advert for Gilera. Well done Kay and Dick.

## SPRING GATHERING.....IN ITALY!

I have just found out that a Gilera rally is being planned to take place in Arcore next to the old factory. It will be over the weekend of 13 -14 May 2000. Arcore is a small town so accommodation will be very limited, camping is probably the best option.

Piaggio are involved in organising it so it should be a big event, they say they hope to get 800 Gileras there. I will let you know as soon as I have more details.

Arcore is North of Milan. If you are going by bike I think you should allow at least two days (one overnight stop) to get there. If you had two nights then you could have a leisurely ride and enjoy the scenery.

I hope I will be able to go. If I can do it, I will go on the Saturno, go Dover - Calais, leave mid week and camp. I don't enjoy motorways so I will go the scenic route and take my time. If you are interested in going drop me a line, but don't expect a reply until February.

## HELP, PLEASE

If you have a multi meter I would really appreciate it if you could check the values of electrical components on your bike and let me know. This sort of data is really useful and real values are a good

confirmation of the figures quoted in manuals.

The things to check are HT coils resistances and Stator winding resistances. It is not possible to get meaningful readings from electronic components like the CDI but you can check which combination of wires give you resistance or open circuit.

Don't worry about identifying which wires do what, if you can give me a list something like; "positive probe on red, negative on white = ??? ohms" etc etc. That would be great. Thanks.

## HANDLEBAR CHOKE

Several of you still want choke conversions for your Nordwests, I should be able to do them but I have been waiting for parts that have not turned up yet. I am going to New Zealand for two months so I can not do anything now until the end of January. Please be patient and I will be in touch with you when I get back.

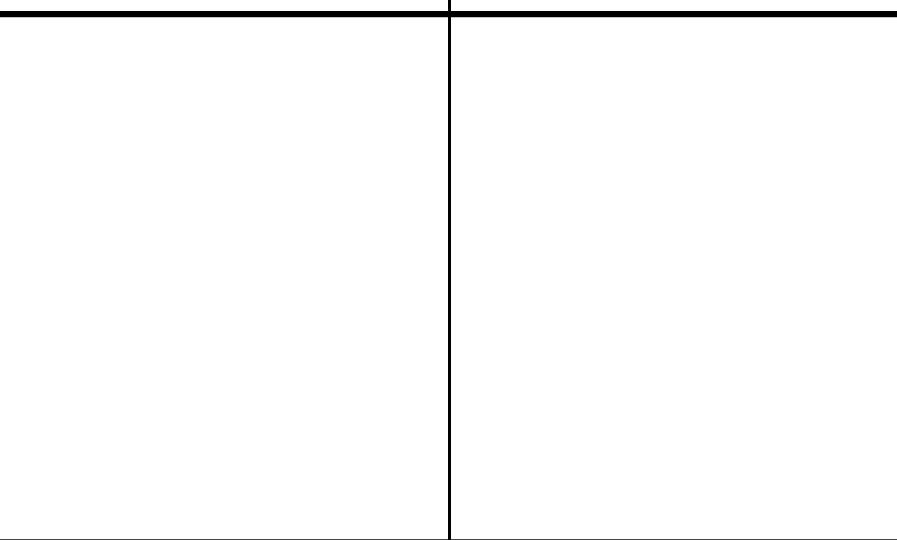
## NEW BOOKS

A couple of new Gilera books are on the way. Firstly, the Italian bike magazine "Motociclismo" is about to release a book (in English) telling the history of Gilera with items taken from their amazing archive. I have seen a preview of it and it looks really interesting. It is due any time now and will be distributed by Haynes so it should be in a book shop near you soon. The other book is Mick Walker's history that has been waiting to get published for over a year now. Mick tells me that he has now got a new publisher and they expect to get it out around the middle of 2000.

*David Champion*

**Classic Mechanics  
Show  
Stafford 16/17  
October**

William Rollo's 150 Sport was strictly too old for this show and the GFR and two RCs were too new - but who cares ! Anyway, the show organiser said how pleased he was to see us there again so I think we will be attending regularly from now on. The 1909 GILERA 1999 banner could be seen from ground level on the other side of the hall even though our



If it had not been for the assistance of Rob Pearce, Dave and Mike Riley, William Rollo and Les Wassall, our stand at the show would not have happened. At the start of the week leading up to the show I was just starting my third course of antibiotics after 3 weeks off work. Fortunately what my quack termed the medical equivalent of 'domestos' finally nailed the bug that had been plaguing me on and off since March. By Friday I was able to load up the car with display material but still was not up to getting a bike out of the garage and on to the trailer. Luckily Rob Pearce was able to co-ordinate the others so that we had four machines on display and everything set up ready for the Saturday morning opening.

stand was on the balcony. Not so many new members signed up this year, but that is not surprising as we caught most of the local Gilera enthusiasts last year. My apologies to anyone who came to have a chat and found me rattling away to the others. In future just butt in ! I am afraid I was revelling in being able to talk bikes after 3 weeks of being hardly able to talk at all.

There were more machines of the marque on sale this year than ever, including three CX125s, and a very tidy early Nordwest which was snapped up quickly. There were also a couple of Arcories, a Crono and a 50. As each year passes the late 80s/early 90s machines become more likely prospects for a Classic mechanics type 'rebuild', so I



*William Rollo's 150 Sport*

am sure interest in Nordies in particular will start to grow.

Thanks to all those members who came and said hello. I wish now I had got Gary Cooper to put his Runner FXR180 on the stand. That would have been perfectly valid in view of the 90th anniversary and would have created a stir amongst the cloth cap brigade. Dave Riley once again had to disappoint many lads who hoped they could still buy a new GFR and then could not persuade him to part with his. William Rollo's 150 Sport received a lot of attention and started me off on a fantasy of returning to short circuits in the 'classic' class - particularly after admiring a 125cc Arcore based championship winning Gilera on the IMOC stand. Les Wassall and Rob Pearce took the opportunity to talk to a supplier of embroidered regalia and we hope soon to be able to offer sweatshirts (see page 21).

Once again a really enjoyable event so see you all there next millennium !

## SPRING GATHERING IN ITALY !

As you will see in Chairman's Chat there is going to be a huge Gilera Rally next to the old factory at Arcore in Italy next year on 13/14 May. David will be riding his Saturno there and at least two other members have expressed an interest already.

I will definitely be going but don't fancy riding the Norturno, 604 or GFR all the way there and back unless I return the NW to road legal 558 trim. So, I will almost certainly be taking my newly acquired motor caravan with a bike either in the back or on the trailer. This will make a good Rally base and possibly even support tender for the UK contingent.

If anyone else is keen on making the trip the best plan is probably to travel in groups of not more than 3 or 4 riders with similar ideas of a comfortable pace and accommodation. Let me know if you are up for it and I will put people in touch with each other.

Having done the Milan return trip in October 94 I can confirm absolutely what David has to say about journey time. We did it in two full days from Calais using the autoroute, Mont Blanc tunnel and the autostrada. That was two up on a Nordie with gear for stopping in cheap hotels. We cruised at 85 when the weather allowed :( and range on a full tank dropped to 140 Kms at one point. Three days on non-motorway routes would have been more enjoyable if not much less strain on the bum !

So start making plans now in time for me to keep everyone up to date in GeN#24.

**PSF**

# *Classics Corner*

## **Life with an NGR250 - Gilly Gilera**

I bought my Gilera NGR250 at the beginning of spring 1990. It was E-reg with 900 miles on the clock. It was black and red and looked like a cross between a GPZ and an RG - well it did to me. It was in as new condition and for the price of £1250 I thought it was very reasonable. It is a 2-stroke water-cooled single with an anti-dive on the front forks and a hydraulic clutch. It was advertised in MCN at a dealer's in Reading. I live in Portsmouth so it was a nice long ride home on my new bike.

First impressions as I was riding home was that the bike was set up on the hard side with the back single shock, known as Monodrive, creaking, a little bit hard - but having owned Italian bikes before I was not surprised. It is quite a tall bike but very slim and with its 16" front wheel it takes a while to get used to the handling, also the clutch can be fierce and the throttle is quite heavy, making my wrist ache (which I should be used to) but it all operated well and I was very happy with it. As the weeks went by I fell more in love with the bike, naming her 'Gilly', and getting more used to her. I found the handling brilliant but the ride was hard, making it uncomfortable on bumpy roads so I played around trying to improve it.

The front forks have an anti-dive system which works very well. It has five settings, I keep mine on three, otherwise it seems much too hard or much too soft. The back shock was still noisy and it's almost impossible to adjust it; it is very hard to get in there with the ring spanner without taking half the back end apart, and after

adjusting it, it is not much better, so it is best left alone. Gilly has Phantom tyres as standard, which are great in the dry but skittish in the wet but that could be down to me because I don't like riding in the wet. The tyres have hardly worn in the 8000 miles I have done on the bike and are still looking like new. The brakes, twin discs out front, single disc rear, are fantastic but too good sometimes, a bit of overkill, but being Brembos they are the best.

The gearbox is chunky and it is almost impossible to find neutral at a standstill because you can't feel when neutral is selected. The light comes on, you let the clutch out and you find it is still in gear - but just make sure next time, even if the light does lie to you sometimes. The rest of the five speed gearbox feels very positive, needing a heavy boot sometimes. You can always tell when the engine oil is getting dirty because the gearbox gets notchy so I change it every 1500 miles, which is a two minute job.

Maintenance of Gilly is pretty simple. I changed the spark plug once, I adjust the chain now and again (it's still original with plenty of life left). I top things up when it needs it but if it works I leave well alone. The main importers are in Weston-Super-Mare where I would get most of my spares if I needed any which I haven't and hopefully won't for a long time.

The seat is hard and after fifty miles you have to stop. The fairing is quite useful up to 70 mph but only weather protection for your chest. The nice thing is the size of the petrol tank which holds 4.4 gallons and at 55-60 mpg that's quite a range. If your backside and throttle hand can take it the riding position is good if a bit cramped for my legs sometimes - but after saying that, it's a sportster not a tourer. Performance is good, on a good day it will do a genuine 105 mph with your head tucked in the fairing.

What is nice about Gilly is it is the first bike I have owned where the frame can handle anything the engine does. You can go into a



An RV250 on sale at FPM in Italy

corner full power in any gear and be confident the frame won't feel like it is flexing - this is a nice feeling. It is not a very revvy bike, being a single, it red lines at 8400rpm but the powerband starts at 5000rpm when it puts a big smile on your face but it is very controllable. By 7500rp there is no more power, so there is no real need to red-line it and it is best to change up quickly. Gilly has a power valve on the exhaust which you can adjust slightly to suit your riding. You can always feel the engine working away and it is fairly smooth and nice and quiet but when the power comes in it has a delightful 2-stroke howl at 4000rpm.

Gilly's doing about 55-60 mpg so it is not too bad for a bit of touring which is what I did when I went to Ireland for eight days with a friend who took his Suzuki GS550. The ride to Holyhead in Wales for the ferry was great, blue skies all the way. We were slightly behind schedule to catch the ferry at 2pm so for the last sixty miles we had to go like crazy with my friend leading. He was very surprised that I kept with him all the way but in the end we missed the ferry by two minutes.

Ireland is a great place, although I found I did not like the roads because of all the bumps which Gilly found hard going. I remember on the outskirts of Cork I hit a bump and me and Gilly left the road with about twelve inches of air between us and the ground. My friend never had the same problems, probably because his bike is heavier and the suspension coped a lot better than mine. Whatever, it is a recommended holiday by bike.

Gilly is normally garaged but if left out in the rain the disc brakes go red rusty and most of the stickers on the bike start bubbling up. The paint-work is very good but the stickers looked like they were put on at the last moment as an afterthought - but saying that I put Gilly back in the garage and after three days as if by magic the stickers settled back as if nothing had happened.

Two things Gilly should have which she hasn't. One is a kickstart. Starting is electric which is nice but I would like to have a kickstart to save the battery in winter. Also there is no side stand, just the centre stand. I suppose that's better than the other way around, but I have had a Gilera before and that was the same, so Gilera must know what they are doing....

Having had Italian bikes before, I was happy to see on mine that the switches are good and watertight but they take a while to get used to. Also the electrics are good and tidy, so maybe the Italians are listening after all these years. I do a lot of night time riding and the headlight is brilliant, making night riding just as fast as during the day.



All the electrics are good and the white faced clocks are most impressive. What I do love about the bike is all the detailed things that have gone into her, like the tinted mirrors, the indicators that bleep when switched on, the logos on it such as RTVS meaning rotary tuning valve system and also balance shaft concept and those detailed white clocks, also the very good pillion grab rail. The bike is better solo, with a pillion it kills the performance by 10 mph.

I have never seen another Gilera NGR250 which is a shame and I have never seen many Gileras on the road come to that. I think Gileras are very strongly made and reasonably priced so why they never caught on this country I don't know. Most of the plastic work and most of the bike has allen key screws which make getting things on and off nice and easy. I am going to have to take a look at that back shock soon because it's getting more and more noisy. I think the trip to Ireland didn't help it. What I do enjoy is going out for a ride with some friends, sometimes to Box Hill which is a good day out. My friends have bikes like RD350YPVS and GSX600, GPZ900, which in performance terms leaves mine miles behind but in everyday circumstances, mine is as much if not more fun and they are always asking if

they can have a go. It's the sort of bike that does most things well and being a single the performance can be used most of the time - riding the bike to its limits which is fun. Many times I had bikes where you cannot use all the power or they handle badly and on today's roads I don't see where you can do 160mph. I must be getting old.

So in all I am very happy with my bike. It is light, economical, handles

well and has good performance (for me). It has all the famous Italian items from the carb to the seat crammed into the bike and it is a good looking machine. I think it is the kind of bike which is good for short journeys which are more enjoyable and more fun because of the hard seat and the hard ride. Being a 2-stroke it is more suited to quick blasts and the odd long journey now and again. It does most things very well and better than most for the type of bike as long as you're not speed crazy. It is an easy bike to live with and it slowly but surely gets into your blood.

I suppose most people will never see an NGR250 let alone own one, but if you ever get the chance to buy one make sure it has been looked after. I would not recommend buying a thrashed one and they do need cleaning to keep them in tip top condition. I am keeping Gilly for a while yet, it is a rare bike and very pretty. You might see her at Box Hill sometime. I love her.

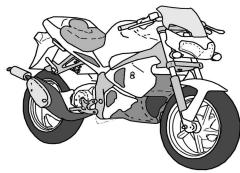
 *Mark Webb*

**Many thanks to Mark for sending in this article which was first published in Used Bike Guide October 1991. By the way he still owns Gilly !**



# GILERA

## Twist & Go



This is the second attempt at what may be a regular feature in THE GeN. There are a number of Gilera twist and go scooters owner members out there and this section is for them to contribute to.

*The first article of this section in issue 22 covered what is available for Runner engine tuning, this section will cover handling improvements.*

*Regarding Runner handling there is the lucky owner and the not so lucky owner. The lucky owner will have a recent Runner with the rear brake disk and the not so lucky the original Runner with a drum rear brake. As far as handling goes the later Runner is the superior due to its revised fork springing and damping and the new adjustable rear suspension unit. The suspension set-up on the later Runners is very comparable performance wise to the fancy complicated hub-centre affair found on the Italjet Dragster according to a side by side review in Scootering Magazine (issue 161).*

*Stiff springing and damping caused the biggest handling problem with the original Runner coupled with a budget led OEM tyre choice i.e.*

*Maxxis. The cheapest way to improve handling is to change the tyres for something better. The best at the moment are the Hutchinson Funzy but they are made of a soft sticky compound that visibly wears. Longer lasting but less sticky tyres such as Continental Zippy 1 or Bridgestone Hoop are worth trying. The problem appears to be caused by the stiffness of the tyre sidewall. The Maxxis has a hard wall thus transferring all shock to the stiff suspension. This gives an unstable ride most noticeable when trying to get around a corner with a less than smooth road surface. Tyres with a soft sidewall absorb this shock and give the suspension an easier task. The later Runners have softer more compliant springing and damping and largely solve this problem.*

*However a number of parts are available to fit the Runner and the most expensive item is a replacement fork set made by Paioli. They feature spring pre-load adjustment, damping adjustment and a larger disk brake and cost around £350. There are also numerous rear suspension units available from Paioli, Bitubo etc from £80 up to £200.*

*Possibly the most publicised handling problem possessed by the Runner is caused by the flexible engine mount bush being too flexible. This allows the rear wheel to move sideways by up to an inch either side of centre. This handling problem though is only highlighted by other non-Gilera / Piaggio scooter owner / dealers to try and justify their machines. Runners are raced in Italy with the factory engine mount without any problems, but a kit is available for £40 to reduce the movement.*

*I look forward to receiving any material concerning Gilera twist and go machines for inclusion in this section.*



*Paioli forks with larger disk.*

*✓ Gay Cooper*

## For Sale

### NORDWEST

1994 L reg., pink, good condition, 9,000 kms, serviced and new tyres

**£2,250**

Tel Raymond Ainscoe 01943 816775 (Ilkley)

### SOLIFER MOPED

1970 'H' reg. About 85%. Unfinished project.

**£50 o.n.o.**

Tel Mr. C.A. Blueman 01977 730510 (Castleford)

### NORDWEST

1995 M reg, excellent condition, 17000km, recent full service + full service History. New chain and sprockets (15T), battery and rear tyre (hi-sport) lots of stainless fasteners. Stainless steel arrow can (new) Professional paint - Ducati red/white highlights, seat recovered, original also included Workshop manual, timing belt puller, some spares + original exhaust. Stunning, eye-catching machine, genuine reason for reluctant sale.

**£2750 ovno**

**Colin Davies (Cleveland)**

Tel (01642) 647854 - Home

# For Sale

## SATURNO

S Registration/1998 Black with white wheels 1250 kms from new 45 bhp. dohc 4 valve single. Electric start Brembo brakes 115 mph and very very addictive to ride ask any other Saturno owner

**£3500 or offers**

**Tony Gadd**

Tel: 01323 833394 East Sussex

# G-Mail

Nothing in the mailbox this month other than adverts and gratefully received articles so see G-Net for some excerpts from the traffic on the **gilera@onelist.com** mailing list.



# G-Net

<http://www.gilera.co.uk/gilera>

I recently created the beginnings of a new web site at:

<http://www.gilera-network.freeuk.com>

This will be used mainly for graphics (when I can get round to it). Any help in setting up and maintaining the pages would be gratefully accepted.

Digital camera photos taken at the Birmingham show on press day appeared on the 'News and Rumours' page the same night. They featured the 'Compact', and the 90th Anniversary Celebration Runner painted by Nightshayde (a brilliant job Kay and Dick!).

The new [gilera@onelist.com](mailto:gilera@onelist.com) now has 32 subscribers. Some interesting correspondence has been generated and to give those of you without internet access a flavour of what goes on here are few 'threads':

Only a minor fault, but it's not obvious (it's in the GeN faq too), and could be significant:

For the Inductive Discharge Ignition System spec in the workshop manual (page 17-9), along with all the other mistakes for the pick-up coil (corrected in the faq) the resistance is wrong. It says the resistance value is 150 ohms +/- 10% in the English section. But if you cast your eyes left to the same section in the original Italian version, it mysteriously has a figure of 110 ohms in the text! Having measured the resistance across my pickup I got a figure of 113, so I assume 110 is the correct value.

I'd been trying to track down the source of the weak ignition on my Nordwest and the pickup coil was the only thing that didn't match the spec in the manual. I was going to replace it to try and sort out the ignition,

but luckily a replacement would have been so expensive that I double checked everything I'd done and noticed the error! Changing the spark plug to a platinum tipped equivalent sorted the problem in the end.

**Duncan Lees**

Thanks Duncan,

I have forwarded your message to David Champion who maintains the fact sheets.

You may also find that it is worth going a grade softer on the plug (8) in cold weather.

**Pete Fisher**

I joined the Network this month, and when browsing the member services I got a bit of a shock reading in the Nordwest fact sheet that I should have been running my bike on four star, is this right? I've had it for the last nine months, and been running it on unleaded without any problems.

While I'm writing, just thought I'd mention a couple of oddities I've noticed with my 'Nordie'. I recently changed the headlight bulb and discovered to my amazement a one ninety/sixty w bulb fitted, not knowing any different I replaced it with the same (its a car bulb), I know this isn't standard (having just read the fact sheet), and wondered if anyone else had tried this 'mod', and whether it could be the source of my battery going flat when its left standing for over a week. Having said that I did have problems with the old battery whilst travelling to the South of France, it boiled and without a hose attached the acid burned a hole through my left 'Alpinestars' race boot- could it be a rectifier/regulator problem, or just a battery well overdue for replacement?

And another thing I sprang an oil leak whilst in France, and only recently managed to trace it to the starter motor gasket. Phoning Bob Wright I was quoted about thirty odd pounds for a complete set

of gaskets, and decided to fabricate my own out of a cornflake pack, then coated it in oil, what a success, best of all it was free and only took me about thirty minutes to sort.

Lastly, I cheekily rang up the seller of a 'Nordie', in the most recent MCN, and asked him about the Arrow pipe he had fitted, finishing the conversation by asking if he'd sell the pipe separately. He rang me back the next day and I'm now one hundred and twenty pounds lighter, but with a big smile and a shiny Arrow pipe on my bike, I'll fill you all in on its performance and sound soon.

**Nick Brook**

Nordies generally seem to go better on four star (or super-unleaded if you can afford it) but the good news is that the 558 RC and NW motor is safe on unleaded. The Saturno 500 and 350 (plus Dakota) has valve seats which need lead.

Might be worth testing that the generator can balance the load at reasonable revs with the headlight on by checking the voltage across the battery. The battery is more likely to be going flat over a week because of a dodgy cell caused by the 'boil'. Voltage should not rise much beyond 14 volts the battery when revved with no lights on.

**Pete Fisher**

I've a Nordie as well and have been happily running it on unleaded for a year. From what I've read it's fine to run it on unleaded, but strictly the engine needs higher octane fuel, so 4\* is recommended. It should run fine on Super if you're feeling flush. Come to think of it, there will be no 4\* next year in the uk (and probably Europe also)... Unless you leave it with the lights on, then I don't see that it would cause your battery to go flat :) I'm not sure what the figures refer to, but I assume they are Wattage main and dipped. If you're using a bulb that is well above standard (it says 60/55 in the

workshop manual I've got) then you're probably putting too much current through the wiring. You don't want to melt your wiring !

I'd suspect that your regulator has gone kaput and is allowing the voltage going to the battery to climb too high. I had the regulator go on another bike and it fried the battery before I fixed it. Check the voltage across the battery with the engine idling. You should get around 14V if everything is okay. Much more and it would point to the regulator.

**Duncan Lees**

Can anyone help? My Nordie now refuses to start. About a month ago I serviced my bike, it had up until then started first and every time. I needed to change the cam belt, so decided to service it at the same time. I followed the 'Bob Wright' supplied manual to the letter, lining up the reference marks to obtain T.D.C. putting on the new belt and then checked the valve clearances. Finding the inlet valves gap too wide (about 0.1mm) I then adjusted the clearances as per the manual (0.05mm on the inlet valves and 0.1mm on the exhaust), and then cleaned the air filter. Initially the bike ran well, but since that time its been more and more difficult to start, and now won't start at all, it doesn't even fire. I checked the spark plug which is now covered in carbon, but I'm not sure whether this is due to my repeated attempts to start it or a sign that the choke may be stuck on, or that the bike is just running too rich (could it be the new exhaust). I've since cleaned the plug (yes, it is sparking), rechecked the valve clearances, fully charged the battery, bled the carb (yes, the petrol's getting to the plug), and still it refuses to start. The only thing I can think that's left is a blocked airway in the carb, or piping. (maybe I dislodged something when cleaning the filter) starving the engine of oxygen.

Has anyone got any ideas? I'm getting desperate (please don't suggest the starting

method on the G net fact sheet, I use it all the time anyway). Any suggestions would be gratefully received.

**Nick Brook**

.....

These problems are really frustrating.

I suggest two approaches:

1. Do the simple stuff first. Change the spark plug - even if it is new and sparking. Cheap and simple to do and it was the solution for me once after a similar battle. I wish I had done it first. Check the cut-out switch. Replace the HT lead and plug cap.

2. The problem has to be spark, fuel or timing. Instead of trying to fix the problem, try to eliminate all the possible causes.

Fuel: Even a rich mixture should at least fire when cold. If the plug is dry or doesn't smell strongly of fuel when you remove it after attempting to start the bike then that is the likely cause. Either a jet is blocked or the choke isn't working.

Timing: Use a degree disk to re-check valve and ignition timing. Is the cam belt tension correct?

Spark: A bad plug can be fine at atmospheric pressure but fail to spark under compression. Another problem I have seen is a loose centre electrode so that when held upside-down it looked fine but when upright it fell down and closed the gap. There could be problems with the coil, CDI unit or plug leads (eg shorting) which fail when the spark plug is under compression.

That's about all I can think of. I hope I have offered something you haven't checked before which sets you on a path to a solution.

**Bill Irwin**

.....

I had similar trouble when I had my Nordie serviced. It ran fine before the service, and then got rapidly harder to start until I ended up calling out the AA to get me home. Did you fit a new plug of the type specified in the manual when you serviced your bike? I did, and after the AA fun, putting the original plug back it started fine. The original plug was one of the platinum tip type, and after phoning Bob Wright to see if he had any advice, he said that the platinum variety was what he recommended. I went and got myself a new fancy plug, and sure enough the starting trouble went away.

#### Duncan Lees

You would be surprised how much difference the heat grade of the plug makes when the weather gets colder.

My 604 Nordie just will not start (without jump leads) even with a fully charged battery on a DPR9 (even EV) plug when the weather is cold. On a plain old cheap DPR8EA it starts without any fuss.

On the 9 you can crank it over for ages without any signs of life.

That is up to 11:1 CR though. Worth trying a new 8 plug?

#### Pete Fisher

The story of fitting a pair of early GSXR carbs to my Nordwest continues. I've been away for a month, and my partner in crime has now finished the new inlet manifold. Looks beautiful in polished aluminium.

This has been fitted to the bike and after some head scratching, a little force and some mild swearing, the GSXR carbs and the rubber stubs were all persuaded to mate up.

Good news. The carbs fit and clear everything. There is room to fit individual pod filters. The conversion to left hand end

Mickie Stevens and Bernie Harnettthrottle operation looks to be easy and will clear the fuel tank. It appears that there will be no need to hit, bend or otherwise modify any part or fitting on the bike.

In fact, the carbs fit so neatly, it is hard to pick they aren't standard fitment. It is, however, very, very tight in there.

Bad news. The battery position means there is little space behind the left carb, and only a short filter can be fitted into the space. Due to the lack of a kickstart, I am very reluctant to use a smaller battery. Relocation is definitely on the cards.

More bad news. There is no way the original inlet boot from the airbox will fit. So this is why pods will be fitted. The air box will probably be removed completely. This is where the battery may move to if necessary.

I'm told the new throttle cable retaining brackets are well underway and should be finished this week. Once this is done, we'll be in a position to install everything in its final position and see how much space we have and what sort of filters will fit. We may even be able to start it.

Updates to come.

Here's a brief recap on the story so far.

A BMW F650 riding friend and myself wanted more power from our singles. We priced the Keihin kits and found they were prohibitively expensive here in New Zealand. So we started looking for alternatives.

We found a set of 1985 GSXR 750 carbs for NZ\$80. So, \$40 poorer each, we set to work. Of course, they fitted right onto the F650, so all Mike has to do is to work out a throttle linkage.

They did not even get close to fitting the Nordwest.

So we now have a new inlet manifold with the inlets spaced 12mm further apart. A set of inlet rubbers were sourced from a wreckers that fit the carbs and the new manifold.

The four carbs were bored to 33mm from the original 29mm and split into two banks of two. Each bank has an accelerator pump and a choke assembly. Alloy blanks for the interconnecting fuel passages and choke passages are to be made.

Dyno time for the carb setup is to be booked after fitting is complete and the money comes available. Probably next year, now.

Apart from the desire for more power, this project is also a study into how much we can do ourselves without spending much. So far, my total outlay is NZ\$60 for the carbs and inlet rubbers. This is better than the \$1350 I was quoted for the Keihin setup, and I believe that still needs jetting for the Gilera. I figure I can spend a lot of time on the dyno for the remaining sum.

I do intend to photograph all the parts of this installation and make them available for anyone who wants to do this themselves.

Ah ! I forgot to mention that you need to swing the battery mounting round through 90 degrees to make best use of the Keihins.

Nigel (Stoppie) Windys did this for me. It also means rigging up a new fixing for the starter solenoid - but on the hill climber 'zip-ties' were considered acceptable.

#### Pete Fisher

Thanks for the advice. I did wonder what had been done before. Do I take it from this that the air box does have to come out?

Relocating the batter isn't such a big deal if it can be swung sideways. I expect I can fabricate some new brackets for the starter

solenoid, too. I may make bigger leads from the batter to the solenoid and from the solenoid to the starter while I'm at it.

We did this for my wife's big bore GPz 1100 and found it started better.

While I appreciate zip ties are a good thing, I may have to do something a bit nicer for street use. Mind you, we did use zip ties to hold one of the big Kawasaki's coils on for a few months after the mounting bracket broke..... They held and we forgot about them.

More when my throttle linkage for the left side of the carbs and the cable mounting brackets are finished. Photographs as well.  
**Mickie Stevens and Bernie Harnett**

Never really considered the option of retaining it - I just followed the received wisdom of Nigel Windys and junked the air box. I run the Keihins with velocity stacks only for hill climb use. One option might be to retain the 'Y' adapter and use one really big K&N or S&B type filter. On the 'Norturno' John Rushworth fitted two foam filters and the CR35s seem to breathe pretty well through them.

Frigerio used to do an extra-large airbox and modified battery carrier, but I think that was intended for use with the standard Teikei unit. He told me when I visited him that in Italy Nordies are often fitted with twin 38mm Dell'Orto pumpers !

#### Pete Fisher

I looked into this, but it isn't possible. With the GSXR carbs being about 12mm further apart, the Y adaptor won't stretch across them, and the carb mouths are much bigger than the Teikei unit.

I'm going to see my supplier of K & N filters soon, and see what he can supply. He is also my supplier of Gilera bits so I will be buying a cam belt and a few other things as well.

My belt is getting on a bit.

The Uni Filter foam filter is my second choice, and looked at them because of how close the frame tubes get to the outside of the inlets. The foam filter will fit around them. But that is plan B.

Gawd. How did they get them to fit? I had a loan of a pair of 34mm Dell'Orto pumpers, and I couldn't see how they would fit into the space. I spoke to my tuner, and he didn't recommend carbs bigger than about 33mm for street use, which my bike is supposed to be for. He agreed that 35's would be good to race on, but a bit "piggy" for general riding. Your comments on that would be appreciated.

I've take the carbs back off the bike for the final fitting of the cable retaining assembly, the fitting of plugs for all the extra fuel passages and a general tidy up. Then its the photo session, then back on the bike, fill the carbs up and see if it will run on the stock Suzuki jetting. And if yes, just how well.

I expect not very well at all.

**Mickie Stevens and Bernie Harnett**

Might have been exaggeration on his part or my poor translation !

The 35s can be inclined to bog the motor down if you crack the throttle too wide at low revs.

The 33s on the NW also suffered from this quite a lot despite fiddling with needles and pilot jets. In the end I pulled out the last bit of baffle from the end of the FPM silencer (as hinted at by Frigerio) and this cured it almost 100%. The silencer back pressure does seem to be critical as regards a clean pick up.

**Pete Fisher**

Thanks for that.

I don't have a restrictive muffler on my Nordwest. I replaced the standard one with one I build myself. The muffler incorporates a megaphone followed by an absorption muffler with a 2" bore. You can't quite roll a golf ball down it, but it's close.

I did run the bike on a dyno both before and after fitting the new muffler, and the one I made is significantly better than stock. Its also a lot louder than stock, especially when all the fibreglass has blown out.

Best part is that it is still road legal here.

One of the reasons I am fitting the bigger carbs is the power curve of the bike didn't drop off at the top end. It just went flat. I was told this is symptomatic of not being able to get enough air into the motor. I was told more power was there, it just needed bigger carbs.

I hope what we do works. It'll be very cost effective if it does.

More later when we've got something else finished. I've been working away from home and need to catch up to see if Mike has finished the cable mounts.

**Mickie Stevens and Bernie Harnett**

Hi Gileristi

Due to some stress at work I didn't find the way to answer to your emails in the last few weeks. But I'm still reading on, now with my private account.

Yesterday I've seen a notice in German bike mag 'MOTORRAD' Maybe it's also out of interest for you: (raw translation)

Morgan Grenfell, daughter of Deutsche Bank has got the ok to buy Piaggio from the European Union. 80% will be owned by Morgan Grenfell, 10% will be owned by the Texas Pacific Group. (I suppose the rest is still owned by the Piaggio/Agnelli family, but didn't know) Let's wait what future will show to us.

All this Wall Street Brokers and bankers ....  
But on Ducati it has worked well. So there  
is still hope :)

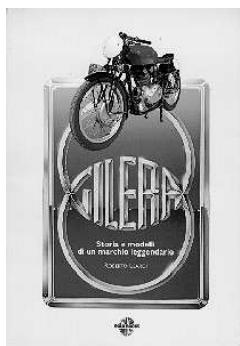
Ciao Joachim

PS Merry Xmas and a happy New  
Millenium without any Y2K Problems.  
BTW did anybody know if ignition  
microcontrollers did have real time  
clocks :))

**Joachim Heller**

**gilera@onelist.com**

## New Books



Gilera Network member Roberto Leardi's book was published last march. GILERÀ "History and models of a legendary marque" is in Italian. An excellent

concise account of the firm and the most famous machines with some wonderful photographs including Carlos Lavado on the 250GP and Piero Taruffi, Geoff Duke and Giuseppe Gilera in the paddock at Monza in the spring of 1953.

David mentioned the new book from 'Motociclismo'. Here is a sneak preview of the cover. A truly comprehensive examination of the amazing range of models bearing the Gilera badge right up to the 'compact'. The only possible

shortcoming I can see from the draft first chapter and summary I have seen is no mention of the Nordwest in the summary, despite other machines like the GFR, Saturno and RC being mentioned as "the motorcycles which made history". Never mind, I can hardly wait for it to be available.

Alan Cathcart's 'Eurofile' in January's

## Press cuttings

MCS&L mused on the future for Gilera following news that Piaggio had definitely been sold. The role of TPG is less clear given that they hold only 10% of the stock, however, it is unlikely that they will not be a major influence in determining the direction for the marque.

A 600 four still seems to be the favourite for returning to the large capacity bike market. It still begs the question whether yet another 120 bhp four cylinder sports bike, even one bearing such an illustrious name, will attract buyers. Personally I would be far more likely to go for a 60 bhp single, and I suspect most other Gilera Network members would feel the same.

# Gilera Network Census 2000

At the AGM, Alan Jeffery offered to organise a membership census. Inside this issue you will find the Gilera Network - Census 2000. As you will see, it is very wide-ranging enquiry into all aspects of members and their machines. It will provide an invaluable resource which Alan has undertaken to maintain and analyse.

Please support his enthusiasm and efforts by completing and returning the census.

Alan also submitted the following suggestions for consideration:

Place an advert in MCN in the Gilera for sale section, asking all owners not currently affiliated in the club to register their machine with the club. The reasoning behind the register would be to provide a dial up service for the history of the machines (i.e. Stolen bike purchase protection etc.) [The Morini Riders Club have just started a machine register - Ed.]

Get the club P.R.O. to contact Piaggio regards access to the

drawing archive of cycle parts that have been discontinued, so that we can cost up having parts manufactured for the club by a UK based company.

Ditto Moto Guzzi and the engine drawing archive.

Get the club P.R.O. to establish contact and a dialogue with other clubs in Europe for owners mutual benefit, regards problems, advice, parts supplies etc. And possible meetings. [See page 7 - Ed.]

The whole question of some kind of spares scheme for the future was discussed at the AGM and was part of the reason for the increase in subscription. We have members with experience of this kind of undertaking in other one-make clubs and we hope to be able to explore the possibilities. All being well we should at the very least be able to invest some of our current healthy bank balance at higher interest with a view to building a fund for pump-priming such an operation.

We are also going to start offering a range of regalia starting with clothing (see page 21). The profits from these sales will also help towards a 'fighting fund'.

**So make a new millennium resolution to return Alan's Census A.S.A.P.**

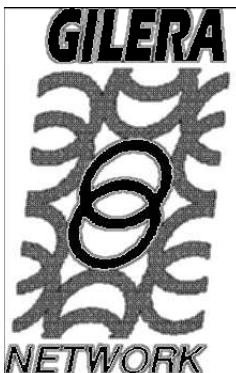
# DAYCANDWELL TRACK Plus Three Sisters !

The date for the Morini Riders Club Track Day for 2000 has been booked for **16 June**. Not sure yet whether we will hold the AGM over the same weekend or have a separate meeting later in the year as in 1999. I tend to favour a separate AGM because it provides another opportunity for a gathering. **Let me know your preference.**

*An additional track day has been booked at Three Sisters circuit near Wigan for 18 August. We will be supporting this MRC event along with the Benelli/Motobi Owners. Three Sisters is a really tight riders' circuit. Having raced there ten years ago on the 'Rotarini' I am really looking forward to taking the 604 round. More news in GeN#24.*

*Put both of these dates in your diary now !*

## Network Clothing



At the Classic Mechanics show in October we were approached by a firm doing embroidered logos on clothing. They really liked the Gilera Network logo and said that it would make a very interesting design which could be in three colours.

Les Wassall and Rob Pearce arranged for quotes from suppliers and Les has now had an excellent sample made which I have seen.

With this issue you will find an order form. If I manage to get 'The GeN' as soon as I hope, you might even be able to get delivery for Xmas.

Each garment purchased will help swell the 'spares fighting fund' and the bigger the initial order the sooner the set-up fee will be offset. So get those cheque books out !