

Editorial

I had to resort to waiting for the Cadwell/AGM weekend and plenty of large print to fill this issue. That is why it has not appeared until July. Unless I get more copy for GeN#18 I may be forced to reduce the number of pages or fill it up with even more and larger photographs. You have been warned !

Just what the deal with Moto Guzzi will mean for the supply of parts for the 'Bialbero' motor is uncertain. It seems hard to imagine that any development will result in fundamental changes (although Alan Cathcart reckons it will be a 635cc unit - see page 8), but the Weber Marelli engine management fuel injection and ignition system as featured in MCN probably cannot be 'retro-fitted'. We will have to wait and see.

Despite MCN's 'scoop' there is very little more hard news concerning the possibility of large capacity four-stroke machines bearing the Gilera logo. The V-twin project seems to have gone to Moto Guzzi with Danilo Majoli and the prospect of an Aprilia style operation in which the heart of the machine is bought in from an outside supplier appears ever more likely. I think this would be a big mistake. By all means do a Triumph and look very closely at the best the opposition has to offer and then 'copy' it. A Honda powered four is never going to have the charisma of the new MV.

My warmest thanks to everyone who assisted in making the Cadwell track day such a success again. A pity the AGM was so poorly attended. Perhaps the time has come to try a different venue and date (not the British GP !). Your thoughts please.

Anyway, sorry for the late arrival of GeN#17 - you know how to avoid it happening with the next issue !



Now read on ...

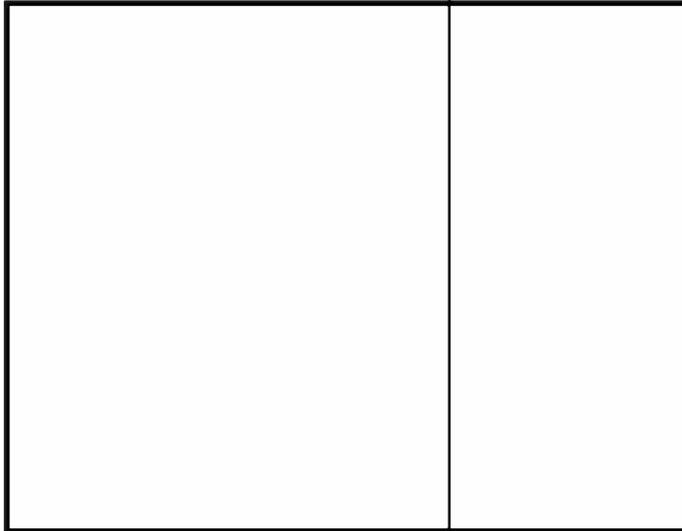
NORDWEST FRONTIER

Well - "the best laid plans of mice and men". When I came to prepare the 604 for the new hill climb season I found the oil sight glass very milky. Sure enough on draining the oil I discovered that the Comp 4 had become rather emulsified. It had been necessary to top the radiator up a couple of times towards the end of last year and it appears coolant may have been finding its way into the motor somehow. The strange thing is there was no sign of anything in the combustion chamber and no problem at all in starting the bike.

I just couldn't face another top-end strip so I confess that I am simply changing the oil after every other meeting (using a less expensive 10-40 semi-synthetic) and keeping a close eye on coolant loss. Only very small amounts seem to be involved and the bike is going as well if not better than ever. Could the FPM barrel be porous or even split somewhere around the base so allowing coolant to get straight into the crankcase ?

The good news is that my first ever sub-39 second climb of Gurston on the Nordie was achieved at the May meeting when I turned in a run of 38.85. This is very close to a personal best at this hill with my best Husky time only a few tenths in front now. At Prescott the following week a final run of 56.20 was most certainly a personal best and nearly 4 tenths quicker than last year. It makes me wonder what sort of time I could do on Robin Sim's Husky now. I generally reckoned to be around 5% slower on the 604 than when I owned the Husqvarna as a 510. Now it is up to 577cc and has a decent front brake. Into the 36's at Gurston and under 54 at Prescott ? Still along way to go to match Robin's 34's and sub-50 second times !

I have to admit to being soundly beaten by a road-legal CB500 Honda ridden by a newcomer to hill-climbing on his first ever visit to Prescott - but then he was only just over a second slower than Robin: probably a future hill climb champion in the making. Prescott is very 'technical' and doesn't 'flow' like Gurston or Loton - well that's my excuse anyway ! Ettore's bend is a particularly awkward one to get round quickly as

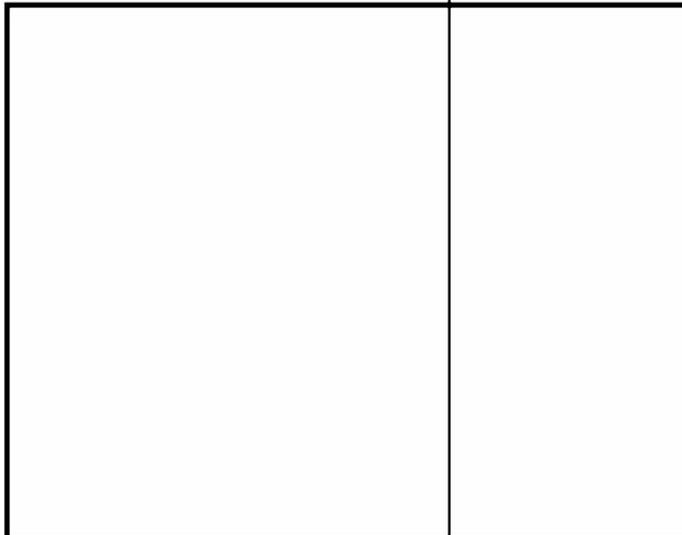


it is very tight right and comes round almost to meet itself.

Time for a warning. In case you did not already know, the Nordwest rear wheel spindle is very prone to corrosion. Used only for hill-climbing the wheel does not come out very often for tyre changes. I 'copper-slipped' it last time it came out but it still ended up well and truly rusted in place.

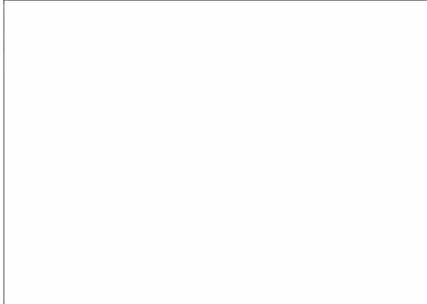
604 at Gurston Down (Ashes)

So much so that I had trouble moving it just to adjust the chain after changing the gearing. So - well worth removing the spindle and greasing it as part of your 'winterising' routine each year.



 **Pete Fisher**





NEWS FROM FPM

Thanks to the assistance of long-standing Morini Riders Club member and Italian-speaking Jonathan Kaufman I have exchanged correspondence recently with Luigi Frigerio. It seems that he has acquired a lot of spares and special parts from the race shop at Usmate Velate and is keen to sell them to Gilera enthusiasts in the UK. You will need access to a translator if you want to communicate with him as he speaks no English, and payment may be difficult as he does not take credit cards (I am looking forward eagerly to the possibility of opening a 'EURO' bank account to ease such transactions). Anyway this is what he has available:

“125 - 350 - 500 - 600 cc engines, new, rebuilt, or incomplete
Special 102 mm cylinders, and production 125 - 350 - 600 cylinders
Crankshafts, heads, pistons, complete gearbox internals
Petrol tanks for 125 - Saturno - Piuma
Saddles, forks, shocks, various rev counters and speedos, 600 starter clutch
Ignition rotors 125-600
Radiators, wheels
Five incomplete Saturno frames, and bodywork sets

The following machines for sale (see photos) and:
One new GFR, two ex-race GFRs, one ex-race 125 Crono
Two Piuma 500 prototypes
One RC125
One RC600 Paris-Dakar (incomplete)
One RC600
Two RC600s for breaking

One 250 NGR
Two 1969 competition 175s
Two 1970 competition 125s
and the 1965 125 Velocita featured in Motosprint in 1987.

If anyone is interested I can send photos and prices of any machine he might want and prices for parts.”

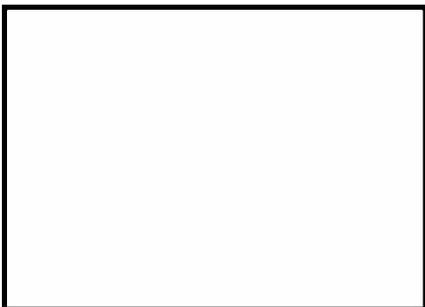
PIAGGIO/MOTO GUZZI



A prototype 500 Piuma ?



The 1965 125 Velocita



A 250 NGR



A '69 175 or a '70 125 ?



A '69 175 or a '70 125 ?

AGREEMENT

The latest issue of the Piaggio house magazine 'Piaggiornale' includes an article on the agreement with Guzzi to supply "know-how and technology to develop a 600 four-stroke motor to power a new Moto Guzzi bike for urban transport". Medium capacity scooter engines will also be supplied until 2004. Much emphasis is placed on the 'all-Italian' nature of the venture. It is still not entirely clear to me whether this means that Piaggio (Gilera) will never produce the 'Bialbero' motor again for their own use. [See page 12]

GILERA SUPER SPORTS BIKES

A Motor Cycle News 'World Exclusive' (3 June) tends to support the rumours published in the last 'GeN' of a new range of sports machines from Gilera ready for the millennium. According to MCN no decision has been reached on the capacity or number of cylinders of the engine to be used, but they hint at the possibility of Honda motors being used. My guess is a 'nouvo quattro' featuring a fuel-injected CBR600 unit announced in 1999 to celebrate the 90th anniversary. I can see the logic of cashing in on the history of the 'four', but personally I would prefer a bike based on Piaggio's own prototype V-twin even though such an engine configuration would be a first for Gilera. Make it handle better than a 916, more flexible than a Firestorm, faster than a TL1000R and grunter than a Buell and I would take on a second mortgage to be first in the queue !



The shape of things to come ?

G-Mail

Roger Chilton

I made a rash statement in The GeN... and now I wish I'd kept my big mouth shut. Since claiming my Nordy is almost trouble-free, it has been just the opposite.

Water pump failure. Sprag clutch failure. Clutch basket failure (on my driveway after returning from a 20 mile ride - lucky or what?). Sense of humour failure- me not the bike.

A certain Mr Nigel Windys has kept me just about sane through all this. Nigel now knows the way to my house very well indeed ! When he arrived to find the Nordy lying on settee cushions in my dining room I think he was a little surprised. First things first. My girlfriend Lily was eating a steak pie for her tea. Half a steak pie and a cup of tea later and Nige was raring to go. He works best when properly fed and watered !

After some investigation, the three bolts holding the clutch basket to the backplate were found to have sheared off. There were some very minor superficial scratches on the casing but the three offending bolts were just lying there ready to be removed. NO FURTHER DAMAGE ! Yee Haa !

I spoke to Adrian at Bob Wright's Weston-Super-Spares Emporium and he contacted Piaggio. They told him that the bolts were no longer available as the clutch basket and backplate are now one complete item (sounds expensive) [see David's article in the last Gen - Ed.] Adrian found some for me and posted them off in his usual efficient manner. My thanks go to Adrian and Bob (I WANT COMMISSION OFF YOU BOB).

Major thanks to Nige for all his help and knowledge. Just remember, feed him well and he will work wonders.

Despite all this hassle my Nordy is here to stay. I have even called my new business NorthWest (Handmade Silver Jewellery anyone ?)

P.S. 10 out of 10 to Pete Fisher who diagnosed the clutch bolt failure over the phone with clues such as "it makes a loud sort of metally clanging noise" Clever bugger [thank Mark Gracey for so graphically describing his similar clutch failure in his last letter - and apologies for not publishing Rogers's letter before - it was still in the returned puller package when I sent it to Robin Sims ! - Ed.]

Jurgen Weber

In the current issue of the German magazine 'Scooter Sport' I have read a short article, where they say that Piaggio will sign a contract with Honda about the delivery of Honda motors for Piaggio.

Now what will be interesting for the Gilera enthusiasts, is the fact that Honda will deliver the motor of the CBR600 for a new sportbike that will come with the Gilera badge on the tank, so they say the people of 'Scooter Sport'.

I haven't read that news in another bike mag so I don't know if it's true but maybe it is. Have you heard anything about it ? [Well Honda are definitely supplying the motor for the new 250 4-stroke Hexagon scooter so who know ? - see page 5 Ed. !]

Chris Bare

Unstored the GFR last Sunday, pulled the carb and thoroughly cleaned it, charged the battery and topped off the fluids. Rode around for most of the afternoon with a big ol' grin on my chin.

Thinking about pulling the airbox and jetting higher than the stock. Working on the two stroke single is so much easier than on my four stroke twin (Ducat).

Ciao, tutti

Trevor Henderson

I have a useful tip and an offer of service.

Those dreadful cracks in the body work. I use my Nordwest for daily commuting and the bodywork just can't stand the pace, I have plenty of cracks all over. I purchased a Three Bond Repair Kit at a phenomenal £20+. Useless, it creates a hard brittle repair made from glass-fibre and glue. I repaired the crack where the bodywork fixes to the rear of the fuel tank three times and each time it lasted only a few days.

Here is my excellent and cheap bodywork repair. In the best traditions of Blue Peter, you will need;

* A sheet of "Flexi Plastic", purchased from you local model shop (mine cost me 89p) it comes in A4 sheets of varying thickness, can be cut with a good pair of scissors or trimmed with a Stanley knife, is flexible and can be pushed around bends, and can be moulded with gentle heat for complicated bends (e.g. slight heat from a paint stripper gun).

* Araldite Rapid epoxy.

* Superglue.

* Rubbing paper.

Follow these instructions.

1. Superglue the crack or broken bits together to get a nice join and make the repair easy to handle.
2. Cut some Flexi Plastic to suit the inside of your repair, be generous with the overlap.
3. Roughen the surfaces of the Flexi Plastic and repair area with rubbing paper.
4. Mix the Araldite and apply to the inside repair area.
5. Place Flexi Plastic over Araldite and hold firmly for 5 minute.
6. Leave to set in a warm room for at least 24 hours. If the Super Glue gives and the bodywork cracks (as one of my repairs has), the Flexi Plastic will hold it and not split, it will simply stretch and return to its original shape. This repair has lasted a month so far.

Silkolene Chaintec oiler. What a dreadful piece of manufacturing. This repair is a little bit more complicated. So, if like me you found the plastic grey box that pumps the oil to the chain didn't last and split, and YOU STILL HAVE ALL THE BITS, send them to me with £20 to cover parts and postage & packing with your name and address and I will return a nice copper tubular repair that will be virtually bullet proof. Note: I will only fix the grey box and replace that awful plastic pipe with rubber pipe. [Contact the Secretary for Trevor's address - Ed.]

Jereon Baack

The following could be interesting for any Saturno owner who converted or considers to convert his 500cc Saturno with a 98mm bore to 565 cc. While building up an engine I found that the gear which drives the balance shaft of a RC600 engine has some extra mass on it to compensate the higher piston weight. Therefore, if a Saturno engine which has been converted to 565cc vibrates too much it could be a good and not very expensive solution to use the drive gear of a RC 600 or NordWest engine to get rid of the vibrations.

This gear can be installed with the engine in the frame. One has to remove the right engine cover and the clutch and oil pump, but this is less work then it sounds. Job can be done within an hour completely. The timing spot for the heavier gear is different from that of the Saturno. The Saturno one has no balance mass on it at all and has a spot for marking while the RC 600 gear has a trapezium marker. The balance shaft drive gear not only has more mass but it is a kind of balance shaft itself, so the mass is on one side !



The
ultimate
balance
shaft !

FOR SALE

NORDWEST

1994 L Reg. 3000 dry miles. New battery, cambelt, 15t sprocket, nickel plated exhaust, scottoiler.

£2600 o.n.o.

Ken Smith 0141 942 0906 (Glasgow)

SATURNO

500, red, 1993 'K' reg, 6000 km, as new condition, complete with workshop manual, tools and consumable spares.

£2850 ono.

Graham Winch 01375 380733 (Essex)

XR2 Marathon

Full power 125 2 stroke Paris dakar replica Trailbike. Twin headlamp fairing, U/D forks, discs, stainless exhaust etc. Very big looking - more like a 650. 1989 Italian import but with UK documentation

£1200

KK125

Full power 125 race replica. 1988. English documentation.

£800

Peter Cheetham 01298 871387 (Derbyshire)

NORDWEST

Black and Pink. Garaged, 12,000 kilometres, Jack Lilley serviced. New Cam belt, Starter motor, Battery, Data tagged.

£2,400

Anthony after 6.00pm 0181 741 0048. Possible deliver.

SATURNO

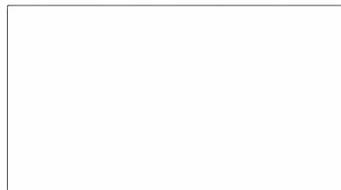
'92, 6000 Kms, Taxed & Tested. Part exchange considered. Could deliver.

£2,900

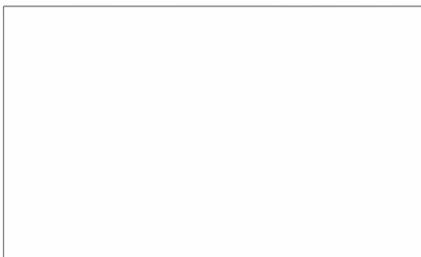
Russel Hartley 01767 650049 (Cambridge)

Press Cuttings

The July issue of 'Motorcycle Sport' has an item on the Piaggio/Guzzi deal. According to Alan Cathcart Guzzi plans to comprehensively re-develop the Gilera DOHC single motor into 635 cc guise in order to power a range of road and enduro models - perhaps including a born-again Falcone sports bike similar to the Saturno. This prototype Paris-Dakar motor was apparently that borrowed by Bimota for the GB1 which eventually became the BMW F650 powered supermono.



WANTED



*The so and so who pinched
Pip Taylor's Nordwest. Look
out for a white/pink Nordie
L364 FBO.*

Datalog Y1D0015011.

VIN 228070371.

Eng. No. 2270033507.

Quick Queries

Peter Cheetham asks:

*Has anyone got (or knows where to obtain)
stainless or chrome 2 into 2 high level exhaust
system for a Saturno ? (I saw one once on a 350
Saturno). [So did I, on a black Japanese import. -
Ed.]*

Nick Brewster enquires:

*I am wondering if you know, or know anybody
that might know why my Nordwest blows its 7.5
amp fuse the instant the ignition is turned on.*

*So far I have ascertained that it is caused by an
earth occurring somewhere in the loom. What I
am wondering is if anybody knows a likely site for
this earth occurring. Bob Wright reckoned that it
has occurred in the past at the back of the carbs,
but I can see no evidence of chafing there.*

G-net

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

*The world wide web pages have not
been developed much since they found
their new home, but I have found time
to add a site search engine and an
area accessible only by network mem-
bers. The members on-line services
pages can only be reached by entering
your name and membership number.
They feature the various fact sheets
and other articles from back issues of
'The GeN'.*

*As a taster for prospective members
the three latest 'Chairman's Chat'
items can be read by anyone visiting
the site.*

*The site search engine allows people
to find key words in documents (for
example anything to do with "cam-
belt"). Members may search the
whole site, but non-members cannot
find documents in the members only
area.*

*There is a new page for 'News and
Rumours' which features the Moto
Guzzi story and Honda speculations.*

*The mailing list is running at a greatly
reduced scale now and is made up
mainly of network members. I no
longer have it being checked auto-
matically, so messages may take
longer to get through. PSF*



A POTTED HISTORY OF PIAGGIO

Part 2 (Continued from GeN#13 because I am so short of articles !)

*With acknowledgments to the
www.piaggio.com web site*

In April 1945, D'Ascanio was called to Biella and put in the picture by Enrico Piaggio himself after which he got straight down to work on the new scooter project. The salient features of the concept were perfectly clear. The Piaggio scooter had to be as comfortable to ride for women as for men which meant that the rider would not bestraddle the machine as on a motorbike. It had to protect riders from splashes if they rode through puddles and not dirty their clothes with leaking oil or fuel. It had to provide room for a spare wheel. Finally, it had to be light, easy to handle and very easy to ride.

D'Ascanio found a simple, highly effective technical solution to all these ideal specifications. The pressed steel body acted simultaneously as a frame, as a container for the engine and the spare wheel, and as a "passenger compartment" for the rider that offered protection for legs and clothes. The overhung wheels were interchangeable, as easy to remove as a car's, thanks to a single-arm front suspension system similar to the type used on aircraft undercarriages, and the way the engine was set: beside the wheel to which it was directly linked. Gear speeds were changed by rotating the left handlebar, an exclusive D'Ascanio invention that reflected his dislike of the traditional motorbike pedal change. It took less than five months from the drawing board to the manufacture of the first few units which had a

Sachs-derived engine subsequently replaced by D'Ascanio's own two-stroke model. In April 1946, the Piaggio scooter was presented to the press. It was called the Vespa (Italian for "Wasp"), reflecting the buzz of the engine and the rear-end swellings behind its wasp-like waist. At that point, the Pontedera factory's giant presses, lathes, milling machines and assembly lines, rebuilt in record time by Enrico Piaggio, became fully operational once more, making their own contribution to the success of a great idea.

From the Vespa 98 in 1946 to the 125 in 1948, a year that also saw the debut of the Ape (Italian for "Bee"), the three-wheel transporter version of the Vespa and the 150 Gran Sport in 1955, the life of the Piaggio scooter was a story of triumph after triumph. In the first ten years, the Pontedera workers built one million Vespas, a figure none of the major motorcycle manufacturers ever came near to matching. The scooter boom attained international dimensions and the Vespa acquired the status of a social phenomenon. You could do anything on a Vespa: work, holiday, race, even break records. And the Vespa was never out of the papers. The news reports and the gossip columns often printed photographs of Show Business celebrities on their Vespas. The Vespa Club of Italy was followed by a European and then a World Club. There were 4,000 sales outlets selling Vespas in Italy, 8,000 in Europe and another 2,000 in the rest of the world. The Vespa was the best-selling scooter in 114 countries and was built under licence in Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Britain and Spain. In 1956, Piaggio rather hesitantly played a completely new card: the small, cheap car. Corradino D'Ascanio designed a small booted saloon with a 2-stroke 400 cc engine and called it the Vespa 400. At about the same time Fiat launched the 600 and Piaggio threw in the towel, content to rest on the laurels of its successful scooter that celebrated its two millionth unit in 1960.

The last joint project of Corradino D'Ascanio and Enrico Piaggio was the Vespa 50 launched in 1963 and an instant hit with its new audience of 14-year-olds. Two years later, the company founded in 1884 underwent its first structural revolution. In the Sestri Ponente and Finale Ligure factory aeronautical engineering had been

revived in 1947, albeit confined to small amphibious planes, single or twin-engined training planes and private "executive" aircraft. Now these two companies were merged into the new Rinaldo Piaggio that had been hived off from Piaggio and Co which continued to manage the operations of the Pisa and Pontedera factories. Enrico Piaggio was just sixty and at the height of his powers at the time of his sudden death on October 16 1965. He was succeeded as Chairman by his son-in-law, Umberto Agnelli. The first major manufacturing event under new Chairman Umberto Agnelli was the launch of the Ciao moped in 1967. The Ciao became Italy's best-selling moped in just a few months and a social and market phenomenon to match the Vespa. The secret of this success was the pared down, sensible, plain line that housed more than usually reliable mechanicals and much more than adequate performance. Manufactured in an exemplary fashion that cut production costs to the bone without detriment to quality, the Ciao, like the Vespa before it, set the standard for its class and was the most imitated light moped in the world for many years.

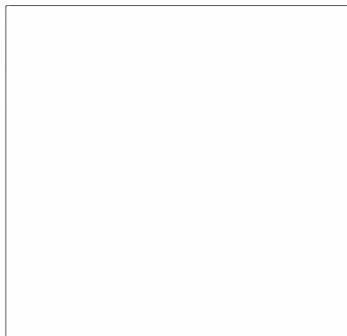
Having taken this first step into the world of the "big wheels", Piaggio took a second only two years later when it bought out one of the world's oldest and most famous motorcycle manufacturers, Gilera. Piaggio immediately relaunched production in the Gilera factory at Arcore, concentrating on a new range of mopeds and light two-stroke bikes with a distinctly sporting character. In 1973, the mopeds in the Piaggio catalogue (the Ciao had been flanked by the Boxer and then the Bravo) were joined by a range of water jet-driven marine engines for powerboats. Years earlier, in 1949, Piaggio had already had some success in this field with the Moscone out-board motor. The Eighties began with a whole host of innovations in a variety of areas. Umberto Agnelli had opted for diversification and in 1981, Piaggio acquired a holding in Bianchi, leader in Italy and one of the world leaders in bicycle production, as well as becoming the majority shareholders in the Spanish MotoVespa company. In the same year, Piaggio Adriatica, a subsidiary of Piaggio and C., opened for business in its newly built factory at Atessa.

The revival of Gilera was assisted by a new range

of light motorbikes and above all by the launch of a modern medium-sized 4-stroke motor that was to do particularly well in the highly competitive endurance bike segment. The reopened Gilera Racing Division also captured the attention of the sports world by winning the World Motocross Championship in the 125 and 250 cc classes after defeating the official entries of the Japanese manufacturers. By this time, on the other hand, the Vespa, squeezed between the unstoppable advance of the car and the boom in medium and big racing motorbikes, saw its market contract, despite the introduction of exciting new technical modifications and face-lifts. This was less of a tragedy than it might have been, since Piaggio had become a major industrial group with wide ranging manufacturing and marketing interests that ran from scooters to mopeds to bicycles, (in 1987, the Bianchi firm also took control over the Chiorda and Legnano brands) not to mention car components and the Ape range of light commercial vehicles, which had been rounded out in 1986 with the world's smallest diesel engine, a 421 cc air-cooled, indirect injection model. In 1987, the Piaggio Group also took over the Austrian firm Puch that had been famous for its bicycles and motorbikes since the end of the 19th century. The scale and diversity of the Group's interests led to a radical overhaul of its company structure. The first steps in this direction came in 1988 within the parent company Piaggio & Co., when all light motorised vehicle operations were transferred to a new sub-holding company Piaggio Veicoli Europei. As if to underline the scale of the transformation under way, Piaggio said good-bye to Genoa on January 1 1989, transferring its head office and administrative division to Pontedera.

That was the past. For Piaggio the present began in 1990 on new strategic, manufacturing and technical foundations. The company set up by Rinaldo Piaggio in 1884 is rather more than a century old but today, more than ever before, it has its sights set on an ambitious future. Already ranking third in the world first in Europe in the production of motorised two and three-wheelers, Piaggio aims to rise even higher. It has reached an agreement with the Daihatsu Motor Company for the production in Pontedera and the European marketing of the Piaggio Porter range of mini-vans and mini pick-ups equipped with Japanese engines. Another major agreement was

signed with LML of New Delhi, India's second biggest scooter producer. The aim here was to lay the foundations for faster, more extensive penetration of S.E. Asia and particularly China. The new products have names like Sfera, Quartz, Zip, Free, Typhoon, Storm, Skipper and Hexagon with cylinder capacities ranging from 50 to 150 cc. They are modern, reliable and custom-tailored for the European user of the Nineties. Technically, they represent a decisive break with the past. The Vespa is still in production and still much in demand worldwide. But on the new models, the Vespa's side-mounted engine, handlebar rotation gear changes, stress-bearing body in pressed steel has given way to a central engine, an automatic gearbox and a plastic body on a steel frame. For Piaggio Veicoli Europei, the company that generates 75% of the Group's total sales, the die is cast.



90 years in 1999 !

Midlands and Marches Meet

Beautiful weather, an excellent pub and an enjoyable ride out on interesting roads. A pity only two of us turned up !

Just as well for me as it turned out. As no one else had turned up by nearly 2 pm. I decided to rendezvous with my wife at my father's house and rang to let her know. So instead of returning home by another even more interesting B road route I made for Kidderminster by the 'A' road. The Norturno started to steer vaguely as I approached Bewdley and just after crossing the bridge over the Severn I realised the back tyre had gone nearly completely flat. Fortunately I was just 100 yards from a filling station. I soon found the offending piece of metal swarf and luckily by pumping up the tyre to 40 psi with the free air was able to make the sanctuary of my dad's place about two miles away. Nipped home in Alison's Ka and returned with my car and trailer to recover the bike. If I had stayed longer at Ludlow and gone home by the route I had planned I would have been stranded in the middle of nowhere !

Many thanks to Rob Pearce for doing the research for this event. Perhaps we will try it again next year only not to clash with both the Banbury Run and Father's Day ! PSF

Thanks to offers of bikes to

Classic Mechanics Show Stafford 17/18 October

display from Les Wassall and Rob Pearce we will have a stand at this event.

Chairman's Chat

Yes, we went to the BMF rally again and well worth the effort it was too.

Piaggio agreed to help us with our costs again so that meant I arrived in a van! Because I had two Gilera scooters to display and obviously bought my Saturno as well. I had hoped that I would be able to bring the RC600 along as well but there was no way I was going to get it in the van. Having a van did mean I was able to bring loads of stuff to help fill the marquee. Pete also came in a van and that meant he brought his Norturno and the 604 hill climb Northwest, not to mention more stuff.

The marquee looked pretty good with a good display of photos, posters and merchandise. OK so we did not win the best club display but we did have a good display of bikes that actually looked as if they were used and enjoyed.

Saturday was the usual steady flow of people. Sunday on the other hand was something else. The whole place was jammed. We had ten bikes on display plus the two scooters. The weather was perfect and I think a good time was had by all. Robin Sims was tempted by the test rides being offered by Buell who were quite near us. His returning comment says it all: "I won't be getting rid of my Northwest". we generated a lot of interest with several people asking where they could buy Northwests and GFRs. I think Dave Riley could have sold his immaculate GFR several times.

The MZ club had the new "Mastiff" on show. I think it is the first bike that has realised what the Northwest was all about. Mastiff is absolutely the right name for it. It's ugly but you can't help liking it. The "in your face" aggressive styling has the look of a very good special rather than the slick blandness of most production bikes. The Italians could never have made a bike that looked like that. When they do "in your face" it must still have class. When Gilera built the Northwest they were responding to what owners were doing to their bikes across Europe and now MZ are doing the same thing. I wish them luck just for daring to be original. Sadly for Gilera, public awareness

came just too late to allow the Northwest to become a cult. Far less exciting bikes like the Yamaha SR500 still have a huge following in Northern Europe.

HANDLEBAR CHOKE

In the last issue I said I could supply a reasonably priced handlebar choke conversion for the Northwest and RC600. It seemed so easy, I knew all the part numbers and where to get the bits at good prices. Several cheques arrived so I ordered the parts. Levers and cables arrived after a while but now the choke plungers were out of stock. Wait, wait, wait. At last they arrived. The levers and cables are cheap so I decided to order some more to save time in the future. The levers arrived but the cable "Is discontinued and is no longer available". Great! I must have got the last ones. If I buy the bits and make up cables they will cost a lot more, about six times as much in fact! and it will mean a lot more work (I don't really have the time). At the moment I can still do the kit so if you want one get in touch with me. I will explore other avenues but I doubt if they will ever be as cheap.

RUMOURS

And now for Rumor Control. There are a lot of stories about a new Gilera super bike. I can not find out any more about these at the moment. I have found out that a 125cc version of the Eaglet is planned. The Eaglet is a custom cruiser that has been around for some time with a 50cc two stroke engine with manual or automatic transmission. The 125 will use the Honda CG 125 four stroke engine. No decision has been made yet as to whether it will come to Britain.

500 / 600 WATER PUMPS

Did you know that the water pumps fitted to the 500cc engines and the 600cc engines are slightly different? I don't know why they bothered, but they did.

*All the 350's and 500's use part number 328172
All the 600's use part number 328584
Some editions of the parts book suggests that the Northwest uses the 500 pump. It does not.*

If you are trying to identify them, these are the dimensions:

BITS WE IGNORE #3 STEERING HEAD BEARINGS



front wheel off the ground and turning the bars. If there is a definite click position at straight ahead then the races are damaged. If the bearings are over tight you will notice the bike tends to roll from side to side and it seems difficult to keep in a straight line. Loose bearings give the steering a vague feeling and possibly you will notice a slight judder when breaking.

It is blissfully easy to completely forget that steering head bearings even exist. They go on working, probably for years before anything goes wrong with them. Then you change them and forget them again. Most manufactures tell you to clean and re-grease the bearings every couple of years but I bet no one ever does.

The bearings can be ball or taper roller races. Taper rollers are much better because the bearing surface they offer is far greater, so the load is spread over the bearing track more evenly. Taper rollers should last for ever if looked after. The things that can damage either type of bearings are:
Cracking down pot holes.
The bearings being over tight.
The bearings being loose.
The bearings being poorly lubricated and getting corroded.

If the bearings or tracks have become damaged you will notice that the steering has become "notchy". When you are riding you will notice a tendency to feel as if the road is ridged or maybe the tyres are soft. It is easy to check the bearings by lifting the

If you need to change the bearings and you are not sure how to do it I would suggest that you let a shop do it for you. It is one of those jobs that is very easy if you have the right tools (a bit like changing tyres). If you want to clean and grease the bearings, you need to support the front of the bike so the wheel is off the ground.

The plan is to remove the forks together, still attached to the bottom yoke. Remove the front wheel, brake callipers, speedo drive. Release the pinch bolts on the top yoke. Remove the large top, centre nut. You should now be able to pull up the top yoke / handlebars enough to get a "C" spanner under to undo the adjusting collar (you can tap it round with a hammer and small drift, if you must), it will not be very tight. As you undo the collar the forks should start to drop down. Be ready to support them when the collar comes off.

The forks can now be removed complete with the bottom bearings and inner track. the upper race will stay in the head stock, the bearings and inner track can be lifted out. The outer tracks stay firmly in the head stock. Wipe the tracks clean with some suitable solvent* on a rag. Soak the bearings in

solvent and clean them with an old tooth brush or similar. Inspect the tracks for any signs of damage. You will probably be able to see differences in the surface finish where the rollers rest but no indentations or corrosion should be detectable. If they are OK: Grease the rollers carefully and thoroughly. Normal high melting point grease is fine, Castrol LM, Shell Retinax etc. Now reassemble everything, but do not tighten the pinch bolts in the top yoke.

Getting the correct adjustment needs some care. You need to end up with the races just tight enough to remove all the slack. It is very easy to over tighten roller races and they will still feel fine (for a while). Tighten the adjusting collar until you begin to feel some resistance. with the front wheel off the ground the steering should just be able to fall to either side. The cables etc. may make this difficult to judge. Now slacken it very slightly. Tighten the top nut. Tightening this tends to remove any slack and so you need to start with the adjuster a little loose. Check the adjustment. Do not be tempted to leave it a little tight because you will ruin the bearings very quickly. When the adjustment is correct tighten the top yoke pinch bolts. Recheck the adjustment after fifty miles or so in case anything has "settled".

* Petrol is a good cleaner but be careful not to get it on your skin, particularly unleaded which is carcinogenic.

SILENCER NEWS

While I was at the BMF Rally I took the opportunity to talk to some of the silencer manufacturers who were there. I asked Renegade if they would make up special adapter pieces so there standard "cans" could be used on less common bikes. Their reply was "We have probably already done one for your bike, what is it?" "I doubt it" says I, "It's a Gilera Nordwest". "Oh yes we have done two for them recently". So if you want a Carbon, Stainless or aluminium round can, Renegade can supply one in about a week.

The can is packed with the usual glass wool wadding, Renegade say this lasts about 7000

miles in a big single and then it slowly starts to get blown out, starting from the engine end. If you allow this to happen with a carbon can the carbon will begin to get burned. Metal cans are OK but the lack of wadding does mean that they get louder and louder. The cans can be dismantled and re-packed fairly easily. Replacement wadding costs £20 + vat. The advise from Renegade is, order their "long can" because big singles need plenty of silencing and the short can is getting a bit anti social.

They seem very keen and confident and their product looks well made. Like all silencers that are not made specifically for one model of bike these cans are not stamped or B.S. approved. "Intended for competition use only" as they say. No, the "Box Hill Climb", "Cat & Fiddle Time Trial" and "Ring Road Grand Prix" are not generally accepted as reasonable exemptions to that quaint old thing they call "The Law". You do not have to have an approved silencer for the MOT but it can fail if it is excessively noisy. My RC600 silencer is starting to rust through around the outlet so I have ordered a stainless steel unit. I will report on it in the next GeN. Prices are reasonable for a ready to fit unit. I can not give you any definite prices because they will vary slightly depending on what you order. Give Renegade a call.

Renegade Products.
Unit 2, Clearways Business Centre, West Kingsdown, Kent, TN15 6ES
Tel: 01474-852255.

SEAT RECOVERING

I have had a Saturno seat re-covered by Ellenelle of 277 Brighton Road South Croydon. They did a good quick job and charged me £30. Call Lee on 0181-686-3042

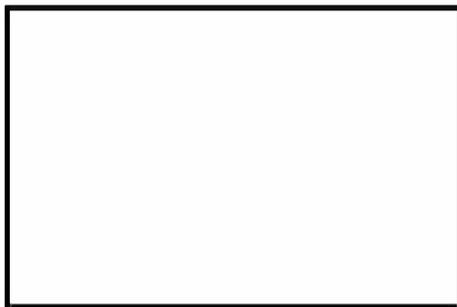
I took the opportunity to have a bit of extra padding put in. This has made the seat a lot more comfortable. It looks like the padding on the prototype Saturno that I have seen photos of and certainly does not look out of place.

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Do not forget that we have superb hard binders for

your copies of the GeN magazine.
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Cheque made payable to D.Champion for these please.

 David Champion



Caption competition ! (photo by Ian Robinson)

AGM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 5 July 1998 at the Blue Bell Belchford Lincs.

The meeting opened at 11.30 with a discussion as to whether there was a quorum. Following much discussion it was decided that in view of the fact that all memberships were due for renewal but that reminders had not gone out that the the default position of 10 members should apply. Fortunately Dick Stapley arrived in the nick of time to swell the number present to 10. The rules for a quorum were discussed and Pete Fisher proposed that the requirement should be changed to 10 members including at least two committee members. This proposal was seconded by Dick Stapley and carried unanimously.

Apologies for absence

Ian Calvert
Robin Sims
Mike Riley
Graham Austin
Nigel Windys

Minutes of the Annual General

Meeting held on 17 August 1997

The minutes having been published in 'GeN' #14, David Riley proposed and Ian Robinson seconded that they be accepted as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

David Champion reported that things had carried on much as before. Bikes seemed to be changing hands less but the trend was for fewer bikes and people owning more than one bike which tended to restrict the rate of growth in membership. Only one Runner owner was a member (Dick Stapley). The latest GeN had yet to be published due to lack of copy and the Secretary was waiting to be able to fill it up with the AGM minutes.

There is a rumour that all the four-stroke spares have been sold to someone, but David was unable to get confirmation. Some parts (particularly Saturno body parts) were getting difficult to obtain. David is compiling a cross-reference of parts that are common to different models. Fowlers still hold large stocks of spares. There are problems with the supply of Piaggio spares generally. The whole system is owned and run by TNT for Piaggio.

The 600 motor manufacturing rights have been sold to Moto Guzzi. The nature of any proposed engine development work is not yet known. There is already a Honda/Piaggio link. A 125cc Eaglet using a CG125 Honda

unit will soon be announced. An agreement to supply Honda motors to Gilera was signed before the factory closed. David asked anyone who had problem obtaining spares to contact him.

The Gilera Scooter Racing series has proved a great success and Runner 180 racing will soon be happening soon. The Gilera name was receiving publicity as a result of this.

Treasurer's report

Andy Wallington reported that there was a healthy balance in the bank account thanks in part to the financial success of last year's Cadwell track day. The Editor will publish a balance sheet in 'The GeN'.

There was a discussion about how to make use of the accumulated surplus. Members were of the opinion that priority should be given to the problem of getting parts made when they become impossible to find. Most things can be adapted from other machines or made as one-offs if necessary including body panels and exhaust systems. Cam belts should not be a problem although they are a protected design.

Geoff Lord asked about carburettor parts. David Champion explained that he has produced a list of jetting specifications for the various models. Geoff enquired about stainless exhaust header pipes. David confirmed that there is a different part number for stainless and mild steel systems.

Pete Fisher suggested that the Saturno and early NW/RC CDI ignition units might become unobtainable and be very difficult to replace with anything else. David said that he would do some research on whether any machine used the same unit and the possibility of getting the original manufacturer to make more if necessary. Standard Saturno silencers may be in short supply and the legal situation makes it a problem to use an alternative. Bob Wright may be able to identify those parts which are needed the most but are becoming difficult to get. It was decided that an appropriate amount of surplus cash should be invested at a higher rate of interest until it became clear how best it could be spent to provide impossible to replace parts.

Membership Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported on behalf of Pete Myers that membership had peaked at 146 prior to renewal plus several new members signed up for 98/99.

Secretary/Editor's Report

Pete Fisher explained that 'The GeN' was late because he had nothing to put in it until these minutes were written ! Geoff Lord suggested that it might be better to get the June issue out by the end of May before subscriptions expired. The editor said this was a good idea so long as no-one objected to fewer pages or very large print. The Chairman called for more contributions.

The Secretary explained that there had been no committee meetings and asked if members were happy about the situation. It was agreed that so far as possible making decisions at the AGM with as many members involved as possible was to be preferred.

PRO's Report

Pete Fisher explained that he continued to maintain the World Wide Web pages and that Ian Calvert had little to publicise during the last year. This might change with the approach of the 90th Anniversary in 1999. Geoff Lord suggested that the WWW pages should be translated into Italian. Pete agreed that a first 'bi-lingual' page would be a good idea with perhaps some of the most important pages linked to that in Italian versions. However, only English speaking people were likely to join the Gilera Network, which was the main object of the web site.

Election of Officers

The Secretary suggested that as all the present committee were willing to continue in office that they could be re-elected en-bloc unless anyone wanted to volunteer to take on a committee post. Ian Robinson proposed and David Riley seconded that the present committee be re-elected and this was carried unanimously.

Items submitted by members

None.

Any Other Business

Dick Stapley enquired how the BMF Rally had gone. The Secretary reported that we had come 15th in the One Make Club best stand competition (out of about 30) and that three new members had been signed up. The Chairman confirmed that £60 worth of promotional material supplied free of charge by Piaggio had been sold to go towards club funds and that Piaggio will again pay for the cost of the marquee. Pete Fisher pointed out that we must put on an equally impressive display to mark the 90th anniversary of Gilera next year.

Geoff Lord asked about the role of the BMF as a pressure group in fighting anti-bike legislation. Dick Stapley explained the advantages of affiliation to MAG and undertook to send details to the Secretary and write an article for 'The GeN' with a view to the matter being discussed at the next AGM.

The possibility of discount insurance schemes for club members was raised. The Secretary to make enquiries of insurers such as Carole Nash.

Dave Riley raised the matter of the legality for MoT purposes of KPH speedos and right-dipping head lamps. The Chairman explained that there was an official modification advised by



turning the bulb after flattening one tag which was applicable to the NW, RC and GFR. He would investigate the availability of transparent overlays for the speedo. MoT testers reaction to the (very) floating front brake disk on Saturnos was mentioned but generally they did not fail the bike.

A vote of thanks was made to the Morini Riders Club for organising the track day weekend. Beth Davidson suggested that the availability of showers and loos at the Blue Bell camp site be publicised for next year. The Secretary explained that the track day fee included an insurance element and confirmed that this year looked like achieving a similar profit to 97. He expressed his thanks to the members who had helped with scrutineering and sighting laps i.e. Nigel Lee, Ian Calvert, Andy Wallington, Robin Sims and Nigel Windys (plus Jim Rolt of the NHCA).

The meeting closed at 1.47.

Once again the Morini Riders Club

somehow managed to get the weather to co-operate in securing a successful event. Although the week had started overcast and damp especially on the east coast, by lunch time on Friday the sun had broken through and conditions were perfect.

The day started with Nigel Lee assisting Benjy Straw with the scrutineering with



the help of Jim Rolt from the National Hill Climb Association. The Gilera Network provided the travelling marshalls to give riders' sighting laps before the proper sessions started. This year the aim was to have no more than 5 riders behind a marshall who was familiar with the circuit. All either held or had held road race licences and had many laps of Cadwell under their belt. Nigel Lee, Ian Calvert, Andy Wallington, Robin Sims and Nigel 'Stoppie' Windys performed the task excellently thanks to their course knowledge (although it has to be reported that Robin became rather too familiar with one particular part of the tarmac at the Gooseneck later in the day !)

Sally Kelly made everyone green with envy by turning up with Piuma number 14. I am fairly sure this was the same machine I saw for sale at the Stafford Classic show in April, but sporting a replacement exhaust system and fairings. It certainly looked and sounded wonderful as it was ridden round with great gusto.

This year was marked by more spills than usual, though thankfully with only injuries to rider's wallets and egos. A Yamaha R1 was the first to be binned in fairly spectacular and costly fashion during the opening 'fast' session. Unusually Morinis started to bite the dust together with a couple of Nordwests. Fortunately Robin was able to ride home after borrowing a gear lever from Nigel Lee and Bruce Mackie was able to acquire a new set of handlebars and ditch a very battered side panel so that his Nordie was rideable. His problems were not helped by having starter clutch failure seemingly brought on by a change to Castrol synthetic oil.

The rear-tyre-eating silencer syndrome struck the Norturno again despite much time spent fitting the standard silencer after bending the mounting bracket and making sure the silencer clamp was ultra tight. After two sessions the silencer twisted into the rear tyre and melted away the edge. I spent the rest of the day riding just the 2C/375 Morini which I found very entertaining. Nigel Windys had a brief go on the Norturno in the last session being careful not to press too hard on the silencer which had been pulled away from the tyre again.

He pronounced the motor to be well set up and going very well but was not impressed by the front brake. He also managed to get over far enough to scuff the shiny melted bit right on the edge of the rear tyre ! **PSF**

SPRING GATHERING

This year the weather was even worse than usual for our mid May meeting. A few hardy stalwarts still braved the elements . A torrential rain shower thoroughly wet the Norturno whilst parked at the National Motorcycle Museum but I managed to ride there and back on dry roads !

With only one committee member present we couldn't really have an open committee meeting but it made a good chance for one or two rumours about plans at Pontedera to be discussed including confirmation by Nigel Lee of the story that the four-stroke engine tooling had been sold to Moto Guzzi. Les Wassall brought news of the jackets he was getting made.

After handing out passes for the BMF Rally I amused everyone by getting Nigel Lee to assist me in wrenching my silencer away from the rear tyre which it had melted (see caption competition on

page 16). It seems Ian Robinson's Saturno had suffered from the same problem simply by miss-placing one washer on the mounting bracket. The clearance certainly leaves little margin for error. **PSF**

GILERA NETWORK ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD 24/7/97 - 04/07/98

INCOME		£	EXPENDITURE		£
Subscriptions/back issues	1482.94		Photocopying/collation	272.92	
Advert (Bob Wright)	40.00		Postage	206.18	
BMF Rally expenses (Piaggio)	100.00		Donation to MRC (98 AGM)	200.00	
Cadwell Profit (from MRC)	307.29		BMF affiliation	129.00	
Sale of T-Shirts (Mike Riley)	25.40		Insurance	112.00	
Bank Interest	12.87		BMF Rally Stand	98.00	
			Binders	179.69	
			Stationery	17.61	
Total	1968.50		Total	1215.40	
<u>Surplus</u>	<u>753.10</u>				
Cash in bank 22/5/98	1063.68				