

Editorial

Just made it while it is still September !

I had to resort to a fair amount of large text and plenty of photographs again, but my job was made much easier by some excellent contributions. The 90th Anniversary is looming on the horizon so how about some ideas for celebrating it - send in your proposals for publication in the next issue.

You will notice that the GeN cover now features a 'Runner'. I thought it was about time we included the new scooter revival officially, particularly as Dick Stapley now has a 125 and enquiries have been received from potential members with 180's.

David's item on silencer and spares availability provides food for thought. Things don't seem to be too bad at the moment but we probably need to think about setting up the kind of spares scheme that the owners clubs for long out-of-production marques like AJS/Matchless and Vincent have made so successful. The problem is that with such a small number of members, and a diverse model range, choosing the first parts to make and financing their manufacture would not be easy. Will members be prepared to invest in some kind of 'bond' in order to get a scheme up and running ? Your thoughts please.

The rumour mill seems to have gone quiet lately with no news of the 'millenium models'. There are still no firm details concerning the 'Gileras powered' Guzzis so it seems unlikely that we will have a chance to examine one closely at the NEC in November.

I've just put an advert in Motorcycle Sport for a sidecar outfit, so if you know of a nice Guzzi 1000 and Palma rig going let me know !



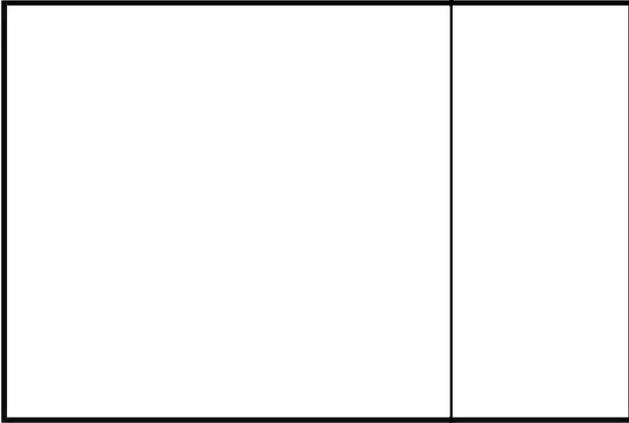
Now read on ...

Rendezvous at the Ring

Fired up by another excellent Gilera/Morini trackday a Cadwell in 1997, we were chatting after the Network AGM, and it seemed like a year would be a long time before giving the Gileras another team outing. Pete Fisher suggested that the "road race team" join the "hillclimb team" at the Isle of Man Hillclimb, and with Nigel Lee game to go with his Nordy, and myself fancying a family holiday on the Island this was duly pencilled in. It was unfortunately pencilled out later when the whole event was cancelled - shame. Nigel and I subsequently managed to get to Lydden (Forza Italia 97), Silverstone (The MCC race) and Oulton (trackday) during the year so all was not lost - but I digress. As usual at the AGM Andy ("Ringmeister") Wallington continued to rave about the Nurburgring as being the ultimate track challenge and so eventually a Saturno raid was planned for later in the year.

Later during the Summer my Saturno was being fettled at Italia Classics in Lincoln (including forks being rechromed) when Phil Worth (the proprietor) pointed out that the front disc was badly cracked. A new disc was duly ordered, and Phil was confident that an after market item could be sourced. This (as Andy had found out a couple of years ago) is not the case: the Saturno carrier is basically unique and a genuine Brembo unit was ordered, but just too late to be ready in time for our four day visit to the Ring starting on 27th August. I therefore had to go on my other bike which was a new (4 months old) Laverda 650 Formula. This was not ideal since the Laverda had only just been run in and was rather untested, but it did mean I didn't have to worry about the Saturno's fuel tank which is prone to rubbing through on the frame at the front, leaking at the back seal and has an internal spot welded baffle that snaps off and rattles horribly following a crash: my bike had all three of these problems at the time (now all fixed with "pet-seal") !

Since Andy was in central Europe on a visit we arranged to meet at the ring entrance ("T13") at 5pm on Thursday 28th August. I went with a



Fire freshly out, Andy contemplates the damage while Tony

parachute and my tank bag, so good on the Saturno, keeps getting dragged sideways off the Laverda and causing brain rattling turbulence. Not a good start, I thought while grimly hanging on to the bars, fighting my luggage and peering through the spray on the lovely M20. At 8.30 we arrive at the Chunnel and catch the Shuttle which costs ú50 return.

Things looked up a bit in France as we managed to get out of our waterproofs and set off on the motorways.

friend from work, Tony, who has a VFR750F. A group of about six more Brits from the Nurburgring Riders Club would also be "practicing" at the ring that weekend including one of Andy's friends, Kim, who was getting some time in before instructing the fast group on a forthcoming NRC course. Kim, apparently, was a bit fast on his ex-Mark Farmer OWO1. Looked like there were going to be plenty of people there to show us the way round. The trip became a bit of an epic. Here's what happened.

Frustrated by Tony's slow riding (caused by his optimistic speedo) I lead across France at 140 kph - not realising that my speedo was pessimistic and that this was about 95 mph! France therefore didn't take long and we stopped at Havelange in Belgium for a luxury picnic lunch. Excellent planning meant that we had no Belgian money ("its only a small country isn't it, we'll be across it in no time..") and so we had to queue at a bank to change enough money to buy some salami, cheese and bread which was eaten sitting by the bikes on some waste ground with the ambience of a building site. We had to laugh - what a pair of prats!

Wednesday 27th August.

Tony rides down from York and meets me in a car park in Newark after work and we set off down the A1 at a steady 65mph on my speedo (85mph on Tony's Honda). An overnight stay at Tony's (most southerly) relative's house gave us a nice southern start point in Chelmsford.

Following Andy's approved route, the roads gradually became more and more interesting (despite being wet) and we were swinging along nicely when I realised that one of the Laverda's engine mounting bolts had broken. This had happened once before a few weeks earlier and so a repeat was more of a disappointment than a surprise. The spacer had fallen out, and I had no spare bolt (they need torquing up rather accurately anyway which was the cause of the problem in the first place) so there was nothing to do except ride on and hope that the rest don't go all at once - which seemed unlikely. A bit off putting though!

Thursday 28th August

At the ungodly hour of 6am a swift cup of coffee gets us on our way and we set off to catch the Shuttle. Ten minute later a spectacular electric storm forces us to don waterproofs and torrential rain lashes down. My previously excellent stretch waterproofs decide to balloon up into a mini

We arrived two and a half hours late at T13 at 7.30pm and telephoned my wife on Tony's handy GSM mobile 'phone and left a message for Andy that we would leave T13 at 8pm. Ten minutes later Andy also 'phoned my wife and just before we were about to give up and check into the very expensive Dorint hotel, Andy rumbled down the road in the half light on his Saturno and led us back to his £15 a night B+B (with ensuite shower) only 2ks up the road - much relief. The guest house was not actually open at the time but Andy just knocked anyway and the Frau, who remembered him from years earlier was happy to put us up. The B+B was Zimmervermietung Hedwig Merten Burgstrasse 20, 53520 Nurburg recommended.

Friday 29th August

We got up at 9am for a late breakfast - the Ring was only open on the evening that day, so I had plenty of time to mend my bike. I telephoned the RAC Eurocover helpline to get me the address of the nearest Laverda dealer. The RAC told me that it is in Bonn and we all decided to ride out to Bonn to get my replacement bolt. As we set off Andy comments that his Saturno has a coolant leak. Once we find the recommended bike shop in Bonn city centre, it turns out to be a Yamaha dealer (Schmitz - whose other branch is at the Nurburgring !), and they could not help. I was not happy. My sense of humour was further tested as while crawling under my bike in hot sunshine in full leathers on the city pavement I managed to get covered in dog s**t. Tony and Andy had to put their helmets on so that I would not be upset to see them laughing so much.

Eventually I got the address of the former Laverda dealer Uwe Witt and we rode off there only to find that Witt now only sells Harleys. Again much chortling from Tony and Andy. The day was saved by Witt's cool Australian mechanic, himself an owner of eight Laverdas, who machined a spacer from bar and made a bolt from screwed

rod. Sorted !

We set off back to the Ring for our first laps. It costs about seven pounds a lap: we each purchased a twelve lap card. A season ticket costs less than 3 of these. We met up with the other Brits including Kim and Robin, who is the organiser of the Nurburgring Riders Club, a British group which organises a five day course in ringcraft. Five days is about the minimum for you to actually learn your way round the track, let alone attempt to go fast.

We stuck right behind Andy as we pootled round on the damp greasy track. It was very nerve wracking. During our second lap Andy's rear light vibrated off, and I managed to describe to him where it happened (harder than you might think: the track is 20.832km long, has zillions of corners and rises and falls 1000ft per lap!) Andy went back round to get it, and then rode back at speed, by himself for a change. This meant that he used full throttle in anger for the first time. Andy was using a spare standard RC600 engine but had not re-jetted his carbs, which were set up for his tuned NordWest engine: this had caused his motor to run rich, particularly on the main jets. As Andy rounded the corner (from the main straight) into the waiting area we all stared at the plume of flame and smoke pouring off the back of



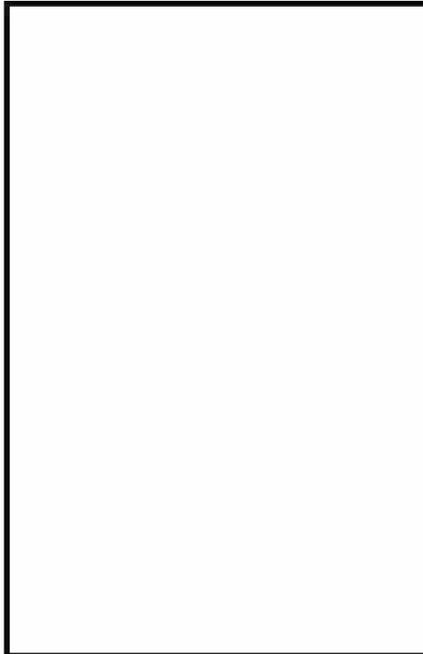
Andy explains to Kim how his rear light failure caused a hole

his Saturno. Blissfully unaware of his hug silencer fire, Andy trundled up to us whereupon a quick thinking and generous German biker extinguished the blaze with a litre and a half of lemonade. We retreated back to Kim's B+B, with me being mesmerised as a seemingly endless piece of wadding gradually disgorged itself from Andy's holed carbon fibre silencer as we rode along. The silence was then reconstructed using laminated beer can and duct tape reinforced with lockwire - who needs carbon fibre anyway? We rounded the day off with another excellent meal at the local restaurant, the strong pound making prices quite reasonable.

Saturday 30th August

We got up early at 7am in the hope of doing some "quick" laps. This is relative: Andy was using neither full throttle or his brake and it was still fast for me and Tony. It was a bit damp and starting to get busy when we started a new lap and quickly came across a big bike crash. As we rode through Andy looked back at me and I nodded to him in confirmation: it was indeed Kim's OWO1 that was being dragged up to the unforgiving Armco which is a feature of the whole circuit. Kim had been doing 8 minute laps (fast) and had been caught out by a piece of overbanding which he normally missed by 6 inches. He considered this a big error and was relieved not to have broken any bones from such a big crash. The OWO1 was a write-off.

A bit saddened by this we set off to the nearby cafe FahrtWind (yes really) which is a mecca for local motorcyclists and Gilera owners in particular. The cafe is plastered in Gilera posters and memorabilia. The lady (Daniella) that runs the shop has a Saturno and a Pioma and raced a Pioma/Saturno hybrid to good effect in international supermono races. Andy had spent some time with Daniella in 1994 when they had swapped bikes on a ride out and even gone round the Ring together. Andy was really pleased when Daniella turned up at the cafe on a black RC600 and was stunned when Daniella couldn't remember any of their ride. Tragically she had



Repair complete. Bucket of dirty water and beer can finished with, Andy pats his refreshed steed. Note stylish gaffer tape

suffered brain damage at a singles race in Hungary just after Andy's visit in 1994. This accident caused her to suffer amnesia and slight tunnel vision and ended her racing career.

Daniella's Gilera has Pioma running gear but a Saturno frame and a well tuned engine, which was good for about 60bhp. She showed us the problem that had caused the accident, her 600cc barrel had split at its base, causing a coolant leak onto the rear tyre. Just a week before we turned up Daniella had hosted the German Gilera get together, with 70 Gileras turning up at the cafe. Its a shame that we missed this event: it was reviewed afterwards on the Internet, but had not been publicised on the net in advance. It sounded like a good do.

After thanking Daniella for some great hospitality - a visit is recommended - we returned to the ring

since the rain had stopped. The track was just re-opening after a 30 minute closure. Apparently a German rider on a 748 had got out of shape going through Breidscheid and had hit the Armco and died. Going through that corner straight afterwards it took a lot of teeth clenching not to be distracted by the scrape marks. Grim.

Tony and I were starting to get a bit overwhelmed and took some time out to watch at a couple of corners. As well as being entertaining, this is a good way to learn about the track and I wished I'd done it earlier. The traffic is a bizarre mix of family cars, touring bikes, racing cars, scratchers and even tour buses ! Full marks to the Citroen XM turbo diesel estate driver who had it well out of line (his wife and children may not agree).

We popped back to see Kim, who had not been detained in hospital, but who had horrendous bruising on his hip. I cringed when I saw this bruising and heard that the affected hip was in fact artificial, having been replaced following a near fatal crash at (you've guessed it) the Nurburgring a few years earlier. They recognised him at the hospital. Kim had booked a week off work and did not want to lose all the potential Ring time, so he was talking about going home that night to pick up his other bike (an EXUP) and bring it over in a van. Keen or mad? And what was he going to tell his wife when he "popped" home? How could he do it when he couldn't even walk. We decided that Kim had banged his head and left him to daydream in peace.

We returned to the ring in the evening and eventually strung together a decent lap. Mentally overloaded by the bizarre, demanding, and dangerous world we seemed to have entered we retired for the day.

Sunday 31st August

We got up early again for our last few laps and a go in the "Ring Taxi". The weather was perfect: blazing sun. Frau Hedwi tried to tell us that Princess Diana had been killed in a car crash but we didn't understand. At the track, a bit of team indecision in booking the Taxi meant that the first slot we could get was 11.30. We decide to wait since the Taxi looks awesome: it consists of

professional racing drivers taking you round in a BMW M5 at terrific speed - they promise a 9 minute lap, wet or dry. At £40 its not cheap, but takes 3 people and judging by the looks on the (pale customers faces afterwards it looked like another challenge. We managed to do some good laps before it got busy and Tony and I finally managed to crack 130 mph (145 on Tony's speedo) through the kink at Antoniusbuche - eek.

Andy comments again that his bike is losing coolant. We called it a day while on a high and Tony asked me how my engine bolts were. To my dismay I found a different bolt had now failed. The broken bolt was gaffer taped in to stop the engine falling out on the way home and then we went to catch the taxi.

The traffic was getting really heavy and to cap it all a huge four axle tourbus lurched round the circuit causing chaos. Our Taxi driver was a rather attractive young blonde lady and after screeching to a halt, tyres gently smoking, she stretched back her arm - and her dazed rear seat passenger slammed the car door, trapping her little finger. Andy responded quickly to her screams of agony and opened the door. The driver's finger was clearly broken and the Taxi was finished for the day. Andy could not believe that we had waited three hours for this and felt that the lady should take us despite having a broken finger since it was he who had gallantly rescued her. She was not convinced, and apologetically (very professional!) turned down his request.

We eventually left the ring at 1pm and had a quite superb ride along the twisty but well surfaced roads near the ring. A few miles from the ring we passed Kim coming the opposite way from England in his van! Apparently he had managed to pay an adventurous German biker to drive his van the 1000 miles to his home and back overnight. He rode his EXUP around for the rest of the week.....

While cruising through Belgium, Andy gradually slowed down and stopped: "My temperature gauge won't come out of the red". A high powered

technical discussion ensued and it was decided that this could be related to having a completely empty cooling system and perhaps needed sorting. Andy's air cooled Saturno limped to a nearby deserted petrol station and the radiator was refilled using dirty water and a used beer can.

- well that's my excuse anyway!) - a less dramatic trip out to Assen WSB is currently planned.....

 Ian Calvert

Once more at one with his machine, Andy proceeded to ride rather swiftly through France, doing stoppies at all the traffic lights. The pace encouraged me at the back of the group to, er, squeeze through a traffic light as it was, er, red. The two French police motorcyclists who were tailing us for speeding thought that enough was enough and administered some corrective advice. We carried on at a more sober pace.

Back on the luxurious shuttle (see photo), bikers returning from the WSB round at Assen told us the big news of the day: Fogarty had finally been beaten by Kocinski and Princess Diana had died. We were sad because Fogarty had had a terrific run of six straight wins in Holland.

Ian samples really comfortable seating provided on le Shuttle !

We kept alert on the way home due to the threat of Gatsos on the A14: we miss them thanks to our previous knowledge but a 916 which stormed past at exactly the wrong moment wasn't so lucky. As Tony sees me caught in the same flash as the Ducati, he worries again that his ludicrously inaccurate speedo might have been right after all and slows down to 55mph for a while. Eventually we arrive home at midnight, after doing over 500 miles on the day including four laps of the Ring. A ride to remember.

Fancy a go? The contact at the NRC is Robin Helby on (01483 893159). I won't be going this year (draconian new noise restrictions at the Ring

OBITUARIES

Franco Passoni

Born in 1926 and educated at the Monza Technical Institute, Franco Passoni was the factory's chief designer for a decade from the early '50s, being responsible for the updating of the works multis, and the design of the 125 cc and 175 cc twin cylinder racers - plus the roadsters. His father had been one of the earliest workers at the Arcore factory, and after the War Franco was employed as assistant to Piero Remor and then Sandro Colombo, before taking charge in 1954 and working thereafter with Piero Taruffi who was race team manager. He also designed a four cylinder 250 cc race engine but the project was abandoned after Ferruccio Gilera's death at the end of 1956.



The 1956 125 twin racer

However, by 1963 Passoni could see little future for the Italian motorcycle industry and so, with Giuseppe Gilera's blessing, he left to work for IBM, on condition that he would not work for another bike manufacturer. Passoni continued to live in Arcore, only a mile or so from the factory premises.



Massimo Masserini

Another link with the past was lost in February when Massimo Masserini died in his home town of Bergamo. He had been a test rider of the Saturno prototypes, which were racers, and gave the model its first victory in Palermo's targa Florio in 1940. After the War, he was retained as one of the works team together with Carlo Bandirola and Nello Pagani, and he gave Remor's new four cylinder racer its debut victory at



Bergamo's Massimo Masserini at speed

Bergamo's Circuit of the Walls in 1948. However, he then retired from racing in order to take over his family's business, which I think was textile based.

His son, Tullio, was a noted rider of the '60s and rode the 125 cc twin on a couple of occasions. I am not sure whether it is coincidence, but the magazine Legend Bike recently advertised Masserini's Sanremo for sale - a beautiful looking bike.

Raymond Ainscoe

The photos on this page are from Raymond's excellent book *Gilera Racers - Singles and Twins*

'Classics Corner'

TOURING LIGHTWEIGHT GILERAS

A bit of a 'period' piece, may be; but I've every confidence 'old' little Gillies, perhaps more than 'new' ones, fit an extended-tour role. I've seen a few touring classic machines well laden in recent years, and readers might like to know how sixties Gilera 125 - 175 singles coped. I'm using one again now, plus a Morini 125 single - which might make an interesting comparison for a future article. Here I'm speaking of a trip in the early seventies.

I was having ignition troubles with a Ducati 350 Sebring at the time, and the Gilera was willing. The original plan included taking a passenger, the poet Basil Bunking, to see another innovative poet Ezra Pound in Italy - which would have been more difficult on the little Gillie, but Mr. Bunking expected other overseas invitations and regretfully had to withdraw - later he was to travel pillion on the same Ducati. This machine's load of tent and sleeping bag and cooking gear, naturalist's gear - I was to explore some of the wild life of the Italian Alps and Northern Appenines - just fitted on the Gilera pillion area - I don't like carriers on short-wheelbase bikes especially where the rear axle is ahead of the middle of the pillion and in those days also carried some gear in a light rucsac on my back - something I wouldn't recommend.

Those days, there were advantages for very small bikes on ferries; especially in convenient loading. Through much of France, Switzerland, Austria, southern Germany and Italy, of course, spares were not too difficult - all I needed in several thousand miles were inner tubes, contact points, a (remotely mounted) air lever which vibrated off - and I won't say there was no vibration, though these designs give little internal vibration those roads would shake the best tooth-fillings loose ! Nevertheless, there was a carefree atmosphere, and the little bike met plenty of cheerful responses ! Although the 'efficiency' of these

sixties-designed small four-strokes is less in some ways than we have or could have today, their overall very low weight and gearing clearly designed for the average Italian back roads mean they are good for even fair distances in a day, say on those routes you can take through France by avoiding the main roads - clipping along at 60 mph is good for seeing the country and heavy traffic doesn't have to be feared if maps are used.

Overall, the little bike gave well over 100 mpg despite quite a bit of steep roads; rather as my present 125 gives over 110 and up to 130 mpg even in the high Pennine country I live in. But here, the roads are nothing like as rough as 1971/72 north Italian country roads, though our authorities are doing their best, it seems, to make them so !

✍ Colin Simms

The stand is booked and with a bit of luck we should have four or five bikes on show. Rob Pearce is hoping to borrow some stands which allow a machine to be lifted up so that it can be displayed off

Classic Mechanics Show Stafford 17/18 October

the ground. All I need now are some poles and rope (or plastic chain) and a set of display boards. If you can help get in touch !

PSF

GFR Notes

Well, this summer I spent a couple of solid weeks riding the GFR around while the Ducati was being serviced. As with any endeavor, experience leads to insight. I gathered several tidbits together on this page for my fellow GFRers benefit. Hope these help.

Regular maintenance is essential for a performance machine. To wit, some items are more difficult to find than others. For example, the recommended spark plug (la candela) is the Champion C55C, which I could not discover anywhere on the North American continent. Some riders use a NGK B8ES racing plug. I found the electrode to be too fragile and short lived for me. An excellent replacement is the NGK R567A10. It has a nice fat electrode that seems to resist fouling. The only note on these plugs is the wire contact is the nut shape (like autos) and does not unscrew. I had to fit a different plug boot to use them.

Since I have one of only two GFRs in North America, as far as I know, I always expect to have to hunt for interchangeable bits. When the time came to replace the front brake pads, I was a tad worried. My neighborhood dealer had a nice picture book from EBC that helped greatly. This allowed me to find a match with the EBC FA126 pads. These are the same as used on the Moto Guzzi Quota and some ATK bikes.

Another useful substitution comes from another Italian moto, Ducati. The GFR and the 750SS share the Marzocchi 40mm inverted fork. This made replacing the oil seals much simpler than I had initially expected.

It is a sad fact that my GFR often will go months unriden. San Francisco is a harsh urban jungle for a small, high speed bike. I admit I am too often neglectful of my battery in these times. That is why I appreciate the battery access port on the right-hand side, especially considering the difficulty in reaching the battery itself. This lets me add a quick charge to get going again. At some point I will purchase an automatic battery tender and fit a plug so I can keep the battery fresh through this plug. It should be noted though that

for city driving, I occasionally disconnect the power valve control box. I have found that with this box unplugged, the battery will not charge. I am not a master electrician, so I cannot explain this phenomenon.

During one ride I acquired a large piece of glass in my rear tyre. Replacement proved a slight challenge as to how to lift the bike to remove the rear wheel. I found that my standard two-sided swingarm stand would work if placed far enough forward to catch the mono-arm on one side and the exhaust silencer on the other. This appeared stable enough for a machine this light when removing the wheel for the short time needed

With most maintenance complete, I had only to ride and ride. Watch for screws vibrating out! After several tanks of petrol I calculated usage at about 12km/l. This is far less than suggested in the owner's manual, even for urban consumption. This concerns me a bit and I am seeking suggestions from other 125 owners as to the cause.

✍ Chris Bare

APOLOGY

In 'Gen' #17 I said that I thought Sally Kelly's Pioma had been for sale at the Classic Bike Show at Stafford in April. Well, checking back to a message I posted on the Euro-Moto Internet mailing list I see I was mistaken. That machine was number 16 which is **not** Sally's
Sorry Sally !
PSF

G-Mail

☰ M G Taylor

In 1985 I purchased a Gilera 125cc GR1 Trail, after riding it for a few days I found out the main bearings were shot, so I stripped it down and boxed it. I have now fetched it back out, and was about to rebuild it, but have found over the years pieces have gone missing owing to me selling all my other bits out of the shed. The bike is still in excellent condition, it is missing one front fork leg, wiring loom, & big ends & piston. I have just written to Bob Wright in Weston-super-Mare to see if he has any of the said parts in stock as I wish to sell the bike complete, or as a restoration project. I came across the Gilera club in Motor Cycle Sport and wondered if you knew the whereabouts of any bits or of some one interested in rebuilding the bike.

[If you can help or fancy taking it on as a rebuild I can put you in touch with the owner - Ed.]

☰ Jeroen Baack

After about 1 year my 550 Saturno is running again, but with a different engine at the time. After a bolt in the gearbox loosened after returning from the SuperBikes last year at Assen I decided to build her up one more time but this time with a 'bullit proof' engine. It now has a nearly brand new factory RC600 engine in it, a shorter fifth gear, Piuma head with Paris-Dakar camshafts, 34/31 mm valves and a slightly lower valve spring pre-load. Problems with the closer fifth gear set now seem to be solved (had to take the whole bike/engine apart about 2 months ago because of a non correct made close fifth gear set).

The bike even starts fine on the kickstarter !
I had some problems getting the orginal frontlight bulb of the Saturno which is a standard 40/45 Watt version at car and motorcycle shops. This type bulb is often used in todays Italian and Japanese scooters. It is available in 25/25, 35/35, 40/45 standard version and even in 35/35 halogen.

[I just fitted a 35/35 halogen bulb to the 'Norturno'. M&P have them in their catalogue. Too early to be sure yet but I think it might survive the vibration better than the standard bulb (the Norturno's headlight is mounted on brackets direct from the fork legs) - Ed.]

☰ Carsten Hemmersbach

I had to replace the mirrors of my Saturno this spring (unfortunately) and as mentioned in THE GEN I received the gloss black ones. They're supposed to be GFR mirrors but that's ok for me.

The problem is that at a higher constant speed she "lays her ears back" (she doesn't stretch herself and she doesn't want to go faster either). It's too difficult for me to drive with one hand all the time while the other is adjusting a mirror.

I already tried to use some glue to make the connection stickier but that didn't work. And it doesn't seem to be very useful if you can't adjust them at all.

So, please, has anybody made the same experience or/and has some advice to fix the mirrors?

Tanti saluti

☰ Raymond Ainscoe

...Talking of bikes, is the Piuma shown on page 4 of the June GeN, and described as a prototype, actually the works racer ? It had frame number 50, and an engine of 620cc and was in the Velate reception when I was last there 4 years ago. There are two photos of it on page 85 of my book; does anyone know ? If it is the works racer, and it looks like it, it would be fascinating to see it in the UK. Incidentally, although I only saw one works bike in Velate, I believe that there was another somewhere - which perhaps explains why Frigerio describes his wares as including 2 Piuma prototypes.

☰ Stephen Hourd

Having just completed my first year of Northwest ownership I thought I would put pen to paper for a couple of reasons, the first being to at least contribute some sort of input - good or bad.

The Northwest was aquired as part of a trade in deal against a 79 Jota 180^o, orange and silver job as I remember. Most of the locals in my village who know the odd detail on all things with two wheels gave me much stick. Personally I never doubted the decision. I knew the Northwest would be more fun, easier to live with and not as common round these parts. The Reason ? Lots of narrow, winding, dry stone wall lined roads leading every which way. In short the ideal bike for 1 - 2 hour outings with nowhere in particular to head. And if a bit of speed is required the bike has adequate wind protection to cover reasonable distances in comfort. To date no breakdowns or failures of note. Looks good, and now the locals have seen it in the flesh and in action they "always knew it would be a sound buy".

Anyway on to some details which I would like some advice on please.

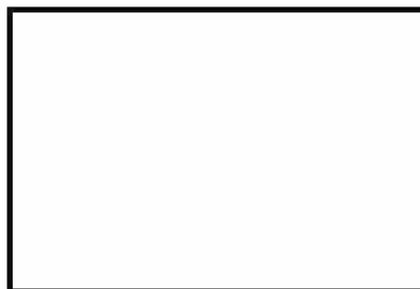
1) Who is the gentleman who is offering handlebar mounted chokes - David Champion ? [Yes - but I am not sure if he can still get all the necessary parts. Best give him a ring - Ed.]

2) The fork tops protrude through the top yokes by about 15 mm, has someone moved them up ? [Out-of-the-crate Nordies had the fork legs through the yokes, but I would say it was only around 5 - 10 mm as standard. Reducing the amount will slow the steering down. I actually run my hill climber with the top of the forks flush with the yoke - but I am a boring old fart ! - Ed.]

3) Tyres, difficult question I know but is there any single winner emerging from the new specifications/types that are on the market nowadays ? [Many people still use Hi-Sports and a good compromise between grip and wear is a Dragon Corsa on the front with a standard Dragon on the rear - Ed.]

Lastly whilst on holiday in France I/we spotted a peculiar looking Gilera, sort of "blood runners"

styling (if you remember the cartoon in Superbike). It appeared to have single sided front and rear ends. Front appeared to be a sort of Bimota hub type, all enclosed fairing with maybe a 125-250 2 stroke single. Not an altogether unattractive bike, coloured blue/orange. Point is what was it ?? [Sounds like a CX125 see photo below - Ed.]



For Sale

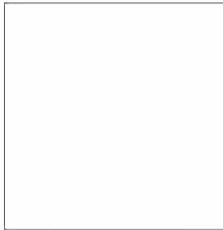
SATURNO PARTS

Graham Winch has the following for sale:

- Owners Manual £10
- New Cambelt £15
- Cambelt Tool £15
- Oil Filters(2) £8
- New Hugger £7
- Fender Extender £5
- Complete Set GeN Magazines in Binders £10
- Gilera Singles Book £5

-The Lot £65

Press Cuttings



GILERA RUNNER TROPHY



The July/August issue of Piaggornale has an article on the one-make scooter races for Runners being held over 6 rounds in Italy. There is a 'promotional' class for 70cc machines and the 180's run in the 'sport' class. After the first three rounds Simone Lolini leads the 70 field and Vincenzo De Marco heads the 180's.

The series ends with the final 180 round at the Autodromo del Levante on 25 October.

Quick Queries - The Answers!

Joachim Heller can answer a query from GeN#17:

"Peter Cheetham asked for a 2 in 2 exhaust system for Saturnos.

You both mentioned that you have seen one on a Japanese bike.

I would like to say, that you both have seen another one. Where?

Have a look at Daniela's race Saturno in GeN#16.

This exhaust system was sold some years ago by Mr. Heim. Price was around 1500 DM. It's not road legal, although he wrote in his catalog that he was able to get this jet-noisy thing through TUEV test.

Don't ask me how he would manage this.

BTW Heim wasn't the manufacturer. The system was build by Mr. Baldes.

He's the German specialist for handmade stainless exhausts (at least for 4stokers). If Peter (not you, the other one) is still interested

you may give him the address below."

Bernd Baldes
Leopoldstrasse 10
D- 92224 Amberg
GERMANY
Phone +49 (0)9621 / 760058
Fax +49 (0)9621 / 760059

Reminder

Les Wassall can still supply 'Top Shot' Cordura Gilera jackets. Phone him on 0973 696742 (Orange).

Chairman's Chat

There do not seem to be any rumours about new bikes at the moment and I do not have any interesting bits and pieces, so it's all a bit boring really.

The Runner and SKP scooters are selling very well so the Gilera name is becoming well known. Before the next GeN arrives on your doormat the Motorcycle Show will take place at the NEC. Piaggio will be there and that means I will be there. If you are going I will be pleased to see you on the Piaggio stand. I will not be there every day but do ask. If I am there you will be very welcome to a cuppa. It is on from Thursday 12th till Sunday 22rd of November.

I have no idea what Piaggio will have on show yet but I do not think there will be anything revolutionary. The only possible thing is the Gilera Eaglet 125. That's a custom bike that is being considered. If it will go into production and if it will come to Britain is still being debated.

CASTROL GPS A WARNING

A warning for Nordwest, RC600, Saturno etc. Bruce Mackie changed his engine oil. The next thing you know is the starter clutch is slipping! GPS taken out and the clutch returns to normal.

So whatever anyone may tell you I think it must be worth staying away from GPS just in case.

Now this brings me nicely onto the following, which is the result of some research into engine oils. I hope you find it enlightening.

MODERN FOUR STROKE ENGINE OIL.



Engine oil often seems to become a topic of conversation so I thought I would try and get a bit more information from the people who should know. They were very helpful and honest. As I got pretty much the same story from more than one source I think the following must be fairly reliable advice.

The constituent parts of oil that are intended for the same use can be very different. These differences can be very important. Every bottle of oil you can buy will state that it conforms to some test standard or another. The numbers are important. Some oils are not necessarily what they seem. Read on.

Some modern synthetic or semi-synthetic engine oils are good for 4 stroke bike engines and some are not.

Good

1. Ester Base oils
2. Limited range. 10w40 or 20w50 for example.
3. API rating SG.

Bad

1. API ratings SH or SJ should be avoided.
2. Oils intended for car engines are not usually intended to cope with gearbox high shear loads. Disregard any oil that does not say it is intended for modern motorcycles. Just because an oil claims to be for 4 stroke motorcycles it may not be ideal. Some companies re-label their car oils.
3. Wide range. Do not use anything as low as 5 weight, ie 5w50. Wide latitude oils and oils as thin as 5 weight do not have such good stability.
4. Avoid oils from petrol companies. They are unlikely to be Ester based. Petrol companies will tend to use by-products of petrol manufacture for the base of their oils rather than buy in special materials.

Recommendation

Read the label is my main advice. Use an oil specifically designed and developed for motorcycles from a reputable specialist oil manufacture. Look for an Ester based oil with a narrow range (10w40 or 20w50) and API rating SG.

RC600 PROJECT BIKE.

I finally got my act together and made a start on the more major changes to my RC. Well nearly. My cunning plan has come up against one or two snags. At first it seemed like small things but it is getting silly now.

First: Making spacers to fit 41mm stantions in 43mm yokes is proving far more difficult than I expected. The problem is that the fit has to be so precise. The leg will either not clamp up tight enough or I can't get it in the yoke. It's driving me nuts! This one I can overcome but there are others that don't look so easy.

Second: The back brake on the Nordwest is excellent so I thought that would be a good thing to do. It will obviously be easy. I took a ruler to a passing Nordwest one day. There is no way that the Calliper can be used in conjunction with the RC600 hub! To make the spoked wheel as rigid as possible they have made the hub as wide as possible. This has left very little space for the rear calliper. The RC calliper has two pistons on the out side only. The Nordwest has opposed pistons. There is no room between the disk and the spokes for the rear pistons! I can not move the disk outward because the swinging arm is in the way. The answer probably lies at the other end of the hose. I will have to look at other master cylinders to improve the power of the rear brake.

Now if I am going to get some fork spacers machined I may as well get the guy to make a front calliper mount for the Brembo four piston calliper.

Third: You can probably see this one coming. There is not enough space between the disk and the spokes for the rear pistons! I can not move the disk out because the fork leg is in the way! Oh bloody hell. I am starting to get angry now.

There is not much point putting a big disc on if I can't use a good calliper. I have got some dimensions of other callipers and the Brembo seems fairly typical. I am now taking very accurate measurements and calculating the difference that a 17 inch rim will make to the angle of the spokes. It is close and just maybe it will fit (if I have a big enough disc). Yes. I could get some ally wheels but that rather defeats the object.

In the meantime I need to replace the head races. A fairly straight forward job, nearly. I spent all the afternoon trying to get the bottom inner race off. I have tried warming it up but it is solid. I don't want to get it too hot because the stem is attached to an alloy bottom yoke. OK so I will take it to work and attack it with an angle grinder. It's Monday morning, I can't go on the RC600 so I get the Triumph out. At this moment the Spyball chooses to protect the bike from everyone, including me! It won't respond to either of the remote keys and insists on making one hell of a row what ever I try to do. Oh well I will have to use the Saturno. I set off late to work, when I get to Catford there is a bang and then silence, I pulled the clutch in instinctively and as I coast silently up the road I wonder, why bang and silence. Oh no, the cam belt must have broken! I stop, I gently push the kick starter expecting the worst. The engine turns, there is compression, strange, I kick it a few times and it feels fine. Ignition on, it starts. Now what else could have stopped the engine? I glance down toward the rear left side, yes there is a length of chain lying on the ground, the other end is firmly wrapped round the engine sprocket !

24 hours ago I had three perfectly serviceable bikes now I have none but I am still very lucky. The chain has done no damage! Oh yes and it's not raining. The third bit of luck is that Watling tyres are in Catford. An hour later I have a new chain and the two new tyres that I needed anyway.

When I finally get to work, five minutes with the angle grinder has the bearing off and the Spyball? I have found out how to reprogram it, but I have to wait for the back-up battery to go flat first, then I will be able to find out if it is faulty or not. At least the Gileras are working.

And then there is that Renegade silencer I mentioned in the last GeN. I have had it for a few

hundred miles now and it is still ridiculously loud. I have done a few experiments to see if I can make it quieter. You may be interested.

It is loud all the time but it is much, much louder when the throttle is opened for hard acceleration and when the engine is on the over-run. I tried restricting the outlet but all that does is increase the pitch of the noise so it goes from a deep thump to a sharp crack that is far more anti-social. I tried several different baffles but nothing improved the noise.

Next I tried the other end. I used a bit of an old smaller exhaust pipe to make a restrictor that fits in the inlet end of the silencer. This has had a very good effect, the loud over-run is much more tolerable and there is not such a pronounced leap in the noise when accelerating hard. This brings me nicely on to my next topic.

SILENCER AVAILABILITY FOR NORTHWEST AND RC600

The Northwests and RC 600s are now old enough that they are starting to need new silencers. Not a problem at the moment, you can get an original silencer for about £195 or a Gazelle stainless steel one for a bit more. These are the only legal options we have and it is unlikely that anyone else is going to come up with an approved silencer for our small number of bikes. I have just discovered that Piaggio in Italy do not have any stock of silencers and they have now discontinued the part so they will not be getting any.

When I made enquiries I was told that they had only sold a few so there was obviously not a demand for them! There is not likely to much demand for replacement silencers on new bikes is there, but what about after five years? They did not seem to have thought of that. I am going to pursue this issue. They did say that maybe the silencer should be re-instated. I will keep you informed. At the moment Fowlers (the spares distributor) have two silencers in stock and Bob Wright has a couple. Bob can also supply the

Gazelle silencer. I hope Gazelle keep making them. Saturno owners only have one option, the original, you will be pleased to know that they are still available. This brings me nicely on to my next topic.

GILERA SPARES AVAILABILITY

Firstly, you may have heard that Piaggio has sold all the spares to a dealer in Italy. This is apparently untrue and Piaggio are certainly still supplying spares, so I think we can ignore that one.

Secondly I was recently told by someone at Piaggio in Italy, that they believed they only have to support a product for five years after they stopped production. Oh great! This is unofficial and I am seeking an official statement about the future supply of Gilera spares.

If they are only required to supply parts for five years this will not mean that spares will suddenly disappear tomorrow. It means that once stock of a part is exhausted it may become unavailable. They may choose to get new stock but this may not be possible or it may be uneconomical. A lot of spares are still available for older bikes so don't panic.

RC600 / NORTHWEST TEIKI CARBURETTOR

ITEM	SIZE/TYPE
PART NUMBER/NOTES	
Carburettor assy.	E27PV2A
RC600 '89	
Carburettor assy.	E30PV2A
N.W.	
Carburettor assy.	E30PV2B
RC600R	
Main Jet	135
341856	
Main Jet	140
341750	RC600 '89 std.
Main Jet	145
341857	
Main Jet	150

346355			
Main Jet	155	346314	N.W. std.
Main Jet	160	346353	
Main Jet	165	346347	RC600R std.
Main Jet	170	346354	
Needle assy.	5C58	346363	N.W. 3rd notch
Needle assy.	5C60	346360	RC600R 3rd notch
Needle assy.	5C55	341873	RC600 '89. 3rd notch
Slide	5.5	341763	RC600 '89
Slide	4	346349	N.W. & RC600R
Atomiser	2.6 (VOO)	341748	All
Slow running Jet	48	346346	N.W. & RC600R
Slow running Jet	46	341747	RC600 '89
2nd carb Jet	140	341810	
2nd carb Jet	145	341861	N.W. std.
2nd carb Jet	150	346356	
2nd carb Jet	155	346357	
2nd carb Jet	160	346351	RC600R std.
2nd carb Jet		165	346358
2nd carb Needle assy. 5X7A	341876		N.W. & RC600 '89. 3rd
2nd carb Needle assy. 5X74	346362		RC600R std. 3rd notch
2nd carb Atomiser	2.6 (OO)	341809	All
2nd carb Slide assy.		341802	All
Float Valve	2.5	341754	All

This list should help identify which parts fit which bikes etc. A good range of jets are available if you are tuning.

Notes:

N.W. refers to all Northwest's and RC600 '91>

RC600 '89 refers to '89 & '90 versions (not Northwest body work)

These Teikei carbs are used on some Yamaha big singles so Yamaha dealers should be another source of parts.

 David Champion

WANTED

Rob Pearce is on the look out for a spare RC600/Nordwest seat base to modify for use with his special large capacity fuel tank. Contact him on: 01384 374920

G-net

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

Not much development of the G_Net pages lately I am afraid, but Jeroen Baack has devised pages listing literature on Gileras which can be found at his site at - <http://www.inter.nl.net/users/J.Baack/index.htm>

Jeroen also recently sent me some interesting photos which are reproduced on this page.

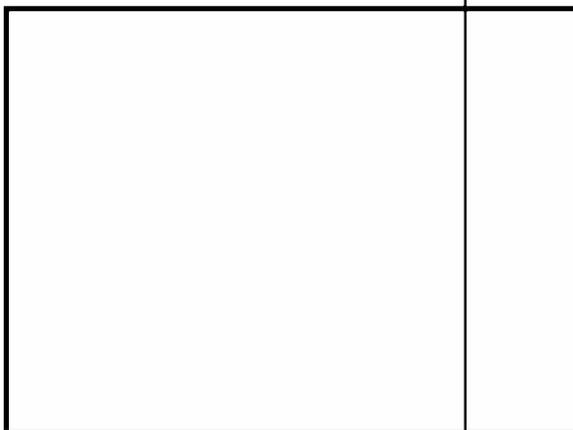
Below: Jeroen's Saturno in truly super-mono (wheel) mode !



Above: The RC/NW balance shaft as mentioned in Jeroen's G_Mail in GeN#17



Above: The 'Bialbero' (RC/NW/Saturno) oil pump - as Jeroen says "a work of art !".



NORTHWEST FRONTIER

The good start to the hill climb season has tended to fade a little as it draws to a close. Track conditions at Barbon and Curborough were pretty near perfect although the grip off the start line at Barbon was not brilliant. A 30.87 run was a personal Northwest best, but I once managed to get the old SWM up within a few hundredths of the magic 30 seconds, so still room for improvement there.

I have always had mixed feelings about the Curborough twisty sprint course. Although it is more natural than the show ground at Wadebridge it is still flat. No complaints about the amount of traction available since it was resurfaced a couple of years ago. It must be the grippiest tarmac we compete on these days. As a change I tried gearing down using the 13 tooth sprocket I acquired from Frigerio. This gave a very nice ratio in second for Curborough's version of Gerrard's, but meant that bottom was a bit low for really good

starts. With so much grip on the line the Dragon Corsa on the back was hard to spin even though it is looking pretty worn lately, so wheelies were the order of the day. Second was a wee bit too high, but my best time was put in by using it off the line, probably because what you lose on acceleration you gain by not having to change up a gear. Anyway, the best I could do was a 40.21 which once again was a Northwest record, but nearly a second off my personal best set on the Husky before the re-surfacing.

The next venue I visited was Ger in France, only this time just in the car whilst on holiday as there was no event organised this year. It was amazing how little evidence there was of last year's competition. If you hadn't known exactly where to look for the start and finish lines painted on the road you would have no idea that the event had ever taken place. I took the Vectra gently up the hill to show Alison and Duncan what it was like and soon realised that it was just as bumpy as I remembered it. Not wishing to meet the ubiquitous French farmer's tractor and trailer head

on at the hairpin I made no attempt to see what time I could do it in on four wheels. After chatting to the owner of the cottage we were staying in, who didn't know about the Ger course, I suspect that he was pretty soon going to try himself in his 7 litre AC 428 along with his mate in a Colin Macrae replica Subaru !

By the time I got to Loton Park I was a bit rusty not having ridden a bike for over a month. I hadn't ridden at Loton at all in '97, and this is a hill which takes a lot of (re)learning. A sub 69 second third run was fairly satisfactory, but on my last attempt I messed up my gear changing into the first corner and went into it in 3rd instead of second. The 604 has grunt enough to pull reasonably well from low revs but too much time was lost resulting in a slower time. Still, I felt that I had gone quicker up the rest of the track so given a warm, dry, meeting next year (it was rather cool and drizzling at times) I may be able to get in to the 67's.

The weather for Wiscombe the

next day was perfect. The problem here is that the course runs through a wood with steep earth banks. Unless it has been dry for several days previously water oozes out of the banks on to the road and the trees keep it shaded so that it does not dry out. The straight from Sawbench to Martini was particularly greasy with the riders of the more potent machines finding them sliding all over the place under power. The fact that a classic car had dumped the entire contents of its sump right on my line through the Esses did not inspire confidence either. To cap it all I felt fairly ropey due to some kind of flu type bug and the best I could manage was a 51.20 compared to getting well within a second of the 50 barrier last year.

The 604 cooling sytem problem has not cured itself and so I have been changing the oil (using Halfords Premium 10-40) every other meeting. On chatting to a former nuclear particle accelerator operator and Velocette pilot at Wiscombe about the problem he suggested 'Radweld' might be worth a try,

if only to confirm my suspicions that barrel porosity might be the culprit. Pin holes allowing coolant from the water jacket to escape into the cylinder below the piston should be blocked (if only temporarily) by a suitable sealant in the system. I must get my finger out before Hartland and try it as it might just allow another season next year without having to strip the motor with the prospect of replacing the FPM barrel.

On a completely different subject Duncan's favourite word from his limited 20 month old vocabulary is 'bike'. Here is a photo of the most recent signing to the Gilera works racing team on their still top secret latest machine. You will see that the frame is made from environmentally conscious material (i..e. wood) and I can report that the rider is able to wheelie it with ease despite the lack of an engine (or even pedals !)

✍ Pete Fisher



***Gilera Racing
Team's latest signing ?***