



Newsletter

April 2017

Behold, the Golden Rivet

As some people like to point out, I don't invest a lot of time or money in the cosmetics of my bikes. While I can appreciate a beautifully polished and presented machine, it's just that it seems very easy to find something else to do. Some owners seem to be able to ride their bikes and keep them looking fresh and in some cases, better than showroom condition. I'm not one of them, nor am I particularly fussed about originality.

The whole custom scene seems to be booming at the moment with individuals and businesses modifying (some would say vandalising!) bikes in everything from budget shed builds to mega-money, TV show inspired works of art. I like that, but there are parts of a bike's appearance and style that I think are so distinctive as to be worth preserving. Often small components that if you were to see a picture of them on or off the bike you would be able to identify the model.

The art deco chrome styling strips on a pre-unit Triumph Thunderbird tank, the rocker inspection cover of an AJS or Matchless single or the bullet shape clock backs of a Z1 all add to the overall "bikeness" of the whole. The Commando range has more than its share (naturally!) - from the S model headlamp ring to the alloy clock mounts and the so identifiable Z-plates. And, for the early '70s range 750 models, the narrow front mudguard.

Now, bearing in mind my aversion to cleaning, you might think that fitting huge mudguards of the Interpol "roman helmet" style and mud flaps would be the way to go. But I choose to fit the narrower 90/90 front tyre because I think it improves the steering and, in my opinion, it just doesn't look right with the wider stainless guards which are all that have been available. Over the

past year the original chrome guard has been getting more and more rusty, with chrome peeling off in strips but with no alternative available to buy. I was really interested when I saw Andover advertising a stainless steel version in the original shape.

It wasn't cheap, but when I finally put my hand in my pocket to buy one, I was really pleased at how well it fitted. Everything lined up and gave a nice

constant gap round the tyre. I didn't want to be drilling holes, so bought the assembly with the bridge pre-fitted and re-used my existing stay.

That was March last year, so I was surprised to notice when going for an MOT this month, one of the rivets fixing the guard to the bridge was missing and at least one of the others was loose. Luckily it didn't affect the test, but less than a hundred miles later, another one had gone. When I checked, all the rivets were loose or had

pulled out of place. On closer inspection I realised they were soft aluminium drive rivets, so soft that to replace the ones which had pulled up, I just snipped the heads off with wire cutters.

Clearly these fixings don't have an easy life - the antics of a Commando front wheel at idle can cause bystanders great hilarity - and between the twisting of the forks under braking and being constantly doused in salty water, I suppose it was only a matter of time before they gave up the ghost.



I replaced them one at a time (so as not to upset the alignment of the guard) with a set of cross head screws from RGM which were on the old guard. I'm much happier with this arrangement as the screws held the old guard rigidly for years, cleaned up easily with some WD40 and UltraFine Scotchbrite, and have even eliminated a rattle which I was blaming on the brake pads.

Worth it just to keep the original style? I would say so, but then such is the cost of being a slave to the aesthetic.

Huntigowks Meeting

A good turnout for the season opening meeting on the first Sunday in April. Some familiar faces and one or two unexpected arrivals. Thanks to all who made it.



Forthcoming Events

April 23rd
SCMCC Spring Classic Gathering
The Inn at Muckhart

April 30th
Autojumble and Auction
The Institute, Bridge of Earn

Correction:

The events list sent out last month has the incorrect date for the VMCC Assembly at Blairgowrie, this has been moved forward by 2 weeks due to a rugby event on the 11/12 August.