



Newsletter

March 2018

Pop quiz, hotshot..

An asteroid is heading straight for your shed and you have time to save one, but only one, bike. Which is it going to be? Have you ever played that game? Its the opposite of the lottery winner fantasy shed (and possibly more likely to happen). My chain of thought runs something like this... "I've had the Monster longest and it has me smiling like a cracked tattie within the first mile. But the Commando takes me to a different zone when I'm riding it. And it's worth the most. The Guzzi? Ach, it can probably survive an extinction level event. Damn, Anns Scrambler? It's worth more than the Commando and it's a great ride. But we could buy another one of them. I could buy another Commando, but it wouldn't be the same. But then, neither would a replacement Monster. I love the Monster. I love the Commando. Oh, too late."

If you could only have one 'bike, which would it be? One you already own, or one you always wanted but never had? Is the fantasy better than the reality?

Until quite recently, I was a serial bike owner - I don't mean I had them for breakfast, I mean I owned them one after the other, but only one at a time. If I wanted a change, I had to sell/swap/trade the 'bike I had for a different one.

Sometimes the notion of "trading up" was easy, sometimes not. Was the change from a Trident to a Ducati Pantah a move up? It seemed so at the time. The odd thing is, at the time it was great, like joining the modern world. But a couple of years later...Commando time. Again.

Anyway, I've had a lot of time to ponder lately, mainly because the weather has been stopping me from getting out on any of the bikes.

And, once again, I find myself thinking about "better" versus "preference".



I've come to realise that I ride the 'bikes I enjoy, well, just because I enjoy them! There is no measurement for why that is, there is no table or matrix that can help visualise it.



I think we all ride the 'bikes we like, and if necessary, find justification for it.

One can look back through a list of bikes, jobs, homes, relationships and imagine a straight line from start-point to current point, stretching a taut line between them. It seems obvious in retrospect that there was an easy straight path, but would you really discard every twist and turn in between?

Think about where the "false starts" took you, think about the time the piece of junk you were riding left you stranded but you met up with X, Y and Z and that was the time that... Would you trade that memory for anything?

And, taking these thoughts to their obvious conclusion, is there anything that you wouldn't ride, under any circumstances?

As an impoverished youth, and with my own pile lying in bits (as it all too often was), I was allowed the use of a horrible eastern bloc two stroke called a Neval Minsk (occasionally known as the "navel mange"). It was my only form of motorised transport and I was absolutely delighted to have it. Not only because it was transport, but because I could ride it - the machine may not have been great, but the experience it provided was. Do I dream of owning one? Certainly not, but I would rather ride a Minsk than "collect" Manx Nortons, 961s or Gold Stars. Works of art they may be, but I'd rather ride than view.

Borders Camping Weekend

Bit of a change to the Yetholm weekend this year. It was always a joint "three branches" endeavour shared between Tay Valley, Edinburgh and Northumberland and for 2018 the site is going to be organised by Robert Tym of the Northumberland branch. Robert will release details in due course, but keep your eye on the events pages in the Roadholder. I'm sorry to be missing it this time.

Awake from thy slumber

I was last out on the Commando before Christmas. I washed and hosed it down before dousing it liberally with WD40 and pushing it to the back of the shed. My plan

over the winter was to strip the timing side, check and adjust the cam chain and possibly replace the oil pump to try and reduce the wet-sumping. Unfortunately, there were no new pumps available and I don't want to go in there twice if I don't need to, so I just let it fester, occasionally turning it over on the kickstart.

I had bought a set of Daytona touring handlebars - quite wide with a small rise - to fit on the Guzzi, but they really didn't feel right on the bike. Instead I swapped them for the T120 export bars that were on the Commando. It really improved the posture on the Guzzi plus I liked the lower position on the Norton and decided right then I really wanted back out on it. Twenty minutes is all it takes to drain the sump into a clean container and pour the oil back into the tank. Free off the clutch, a couple of priming kicks with the choke on to get some petrol into the motor, ignition on, a proper swing on the lever and off it went!

After a couple of hundred miles I'm still not convinced about the lower bars although I'm getting used to them. They are better at main road speeds but feel like I'm bent double on the back roads sort of craning my neck back. Time will tell.

Forthcoming Events

April 01
TVNOC Huntigowks lunch meeting
Tullybanocher café, Comrie

April 07
Grampian Classic Large Lunch Run
Oldmeldrum to Huntly

April 08
VMCC Forfar Autojumble
Forfar Mart

April 22
SCMCC Spring Classic Gathering
The Inn at Muckhart

April 29h
Autojumble and Auction
The Institute, Bridge of Earn