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POLE POSITION



#motogusto

COMMENT & CONTENTS



A FEW WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

Change is good. This edition comes with new contributors and staff. This led to reflection of some of the changes in the motorcycling world in recent years. More women are taking up riding which doubled the customer base for manufacturers. Imagine what that extra cash can do for R&D and new model releases?

It seems only yesterday that many would gawk at the 170bhp Hayabusa. Now we have the Kawasaki H2 (228 bhp). Bikes come festooned with gizmos boasting selectable power-delivery profiles and traction control. The increased interest in off road riding was very clear from the numbers attending the Adventure Bike Rider Festival.

Learner bikes are getting better. Gone are the likes of the 250 Superdream to the Yamaha MT07, Royal Enfield 650 twins, Triumph Street Triple and the Ducati Monster 659. So, with these things in mind let's all look forward to a better, and brighter motorcycling future. Women are taking up motorcycling which effectively doubled the customer base and, the increased interest in off road was made very clear from the numbers attending the Adventure Bike Festival.

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BOBBING ALONG...

Tony Donnelly talks

The 'Bobber' has its origins in prewar racing in the USA. Bikes were stripped back to help reduce weight and boost performance.



The 'Bobber' has its origins in prewar racing in the USA. Bikes were stripped back to help reduce weight and boost performance.

It included cutting back the rear mudguard, a process called Bobbing the tail. Hence the bikes became known as 'Bobbers'. In the immediate post World War 2 years the customisation of demobbed military Harley Davidsons and Indians took off. The look became popular on road bikes ridden by young veterans looking for the excitement that many struggled to find in day to day life following their wartime experiences. In more recent years firstly the custom world and latterly the big manufacturers have embraced this look.

Not only the American manufacturers have caught on but the Europeans have joined in too. Moto Guzzi joined the fray a couple of years ago with their well received V9 Bobber. This bike adheres well to the Bobber genre; 'balloon' style front tyres, simple clocks, jet black paint and anything extraneous simply isn't there. The Guzzi is a great looking bike and it's V twin layout lends itself to the look well

Guzzi have always had strong links with American culture and their bikes were even used by the famous California Highway Patrol. The Bobber is an attractive machine and I hopped on board and immediately revelled in the low seat height. Having kicked back the side stand I thumbed the starter button.

The 850cc V twin bursts into life and gives the bike a little 'shimmey' as the torque reaction kicks in. I snicked the bike into first and it engaged with a healthy clunk... Guzzis are a mechanical experience, and pulled away. I set off with an aim to check out the roads that twist and turn around the Worcestershire/Herefordshire border countryside.

A BALLSY DELIVERY

I must admit to a degree of surprise at just how well the V9 goes...55bhp and 62Nm isn't a huge amount of power and torque, but the ballsy delivery of the Euro 4 compliant V twin pushes the bike along at a pace that is a little surprising. However it does need some fruity pipes to prove a proper soundtrack...the European

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noise regulations have seen to that and my progress went with a more muted soundtrack. I wasn't sure I would like the way the bike cornered, but again the Guzzi was very capable and fun to throw about. The brakes could cope with the performance on offer and the ride was better than I expected too. Function had

are there! Fit and finish was good too, especially the suede look seat and mean black paint. The bike has a quality, solid feel.

SO, HOW MUCH IS THIS GOING TO COST ME?

The Guzzi comes in at around £9k depending on how barmy you go in the accessories catalogue. Can an Italian bike bring home that American feel? I think it can, yes. It's a cool bike, looks great and performs well....I can see a brooding Al Pacino type character riding

one in a film, cutting through the mean streets and rocking up outside a diner...the V9 is the real deal....

“”
Moto Guzzi joined the fray a couple of years ago with their well received V9 Bobber.

not been completely sacrificed for form, thank goodness. The riding position is upright and the controls are all logical and easy to use. A simple speedometer (no rev counter) gets over the required info well. The bike hides all the modern tech well, it has traction control and ABS, but they are unobtrusive and the Guzzi isn't the type of bike to call them into action often, but it's good to know they



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We've all had long days in the saddle and felt the discomfort of saddle soreness. **DOM HUMBY** has tried a few things in his time things to combat this including stretching out each leg when riding, standing up and then just pulling over altogether.

Our editor John swears by specific motorcycle padded shorts, he does love Lycra. Personally, I've opted to try out the latest from ComfortAir Seat Cushions in the form of their tourer model.

Created using a combination of a multi-cell inflatable bladder (this inserts into the outer cover), meshed material for the air intake and exhaust (this helps prevent hotspots), waterproof (hydrophobic) and stretchy materials for durability on the outer cover. This is an easy to install - essential for this type of kit - and maintain bit of kit and it doesn't disappoint. After covering nearly 1500 miles with the seat cushion installed and not so much a hint of numbness in my derriere I have been very impressed with its performance. I'll not be removing it anytime soon if I don't have to as it provides such comfort when riding, it's also great to add a little extra height to your riding position if you desire.

So let's break it down...

The inflatable bladder is multi-channelled to allow airflow for cooling, this helps prevent hotspots that lead to numbness and pain when riding on the pressure points in your bum (no I didn't know I had them there either). We all know that can be a distraction and one not needed when in the saddle for long hours! So with the multi-cell bladder, the pressure from sitting is distributed across the motorcycle seat to prevent the aforementioned numbness and pain in the backside. Unless it's the bike that's broken down, nothing stops that being a pain in the rear end. Installing the bladder is simple and easy as it just slips in and inflation is done



by way of blowing (no not like that) into a twist valve. Adjustment is easy, simply fully inflate and release air from the bladder until you can feel a small amount of pressure on the motorcycle seat when sitting on it.

The outer cover is constructed from mesh material on the sides to allow for airflow that dissipates heat and a waterproof (hydrophobic) material on top.

Yes, this means water could breach through the mesh sides but with airflow and gravity this isn't an issue. On the underside of the outer cover, you will find two very stretchy but tough adjustable straps to give you the perfect fit, a side note to this is that if like my bike (a BMW R1150RS) you have an adjustable seat by way of height blocks then you may have to fettle a fraction longer to get the perfect fit.

All in all, this gets a 9 out of 10 from me!

It only lost one point because of the fettleing it took to get it perfect for me. It wasn't timely and I am known to be a fussy so and so, but it still took a little longer than I would have wanted and a few rides to settle properly. Now it's fine-tuned to how I like it, it's perfect!

Price: £79.99

<https://comfortair-moto.co.uk/>

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BOBBING ALONG...

What's up Doc?

Our very own Biker Kaz spends a weekend in the pits with Chris Beeson and Doc Racer.

I had the pleasure of shadowing Chris Beeson of Beeson Motorcycles Ltd who, besides owning his own motorcycle repair and servicing company, is also a race mechanic for Doc Racer. (Previously featured in Motogusto). I spent the weekend in the pits with these guys at Castle Combe race circuit to learn more about the role Chris plays.

Saturday's schedule was practice and qualifying sessions followed by the race itself.

Doc himself has been racing for 4 years. At the tender age of 57 years young he decided to take up the sport and cites his motivation as being 'the pure fun of it'. In the past Doc was a motorcycle instructor and was 'sick of owning a 180 mph bike and only being able to go 70 mph on it'. From this sense of frustration was born his passion for club racing.

One of the key attractions for Doc is the camaraderie that exists in the club racing pits. If something breaks on the bike and he doesn't have a spare, there is always someone willing to give whatever's needed to get the bike back out on track.

Doc- 'Bike racing is an addiction'

As he spends every penny he has on racing and the fact that he and Chris both closed their respective businesses for 4 days to come racing, I felt he might be right there. Also, with the knowledge that Doc is waiting to have an operation to have his hamstring stapled

back but is still racing hard I become even more convinced. Apparently when he's racing on the bike, it's okay!

How did Chris become Doc's mechanic? Chris has his own business fixing and servicing motorbikes and is studying for a degree in motorsport. He was finding it 'very boring' as he already had a lot of mechanical knowledge. Doc offered him

Practice gets under way. I can feel myself grinning when I hear the sound of the bikes setting off

the chance to spanner for him. This offer was sold as 'you'll learn more in one race weekend than a whole year doing the degree'. Chris jumped at the chance and has deferred his uni place for a year.

Who sets up the bike for each race? Chris will get the bike race ready with Doc's input on set up. This is reevaluated when he comes back in from practice or a race. Using this feedback Chris will make any necessary adjustments. A lot of setting up the bike is 'trial and error, tweaks and adjustments here and there and trying new or different parts to see if they make the difference'.

And so, we're off!

Doc gets ready to go out for his first practice session – the tyre warmers come off, Doc is on the bike and riding up to the paddock. Chris has said to me that riders never do as they say they will – Doc has said he will do two laps and come in.

Practice gets under way and I can feel myself grinning when I hear the sound of the bikes setting off. I have missed being able to watch bike racing at a circuit this last year and am so happy to be able to be a part of the experience again.

Lap 1 sees Doc put in a time of 1.32; lap 2 1.31; lap 3 1.34 and lap 4 1.34. He's either tiring, there is something wrong with the bike or someone has cut him up. In the end Doc did 4 laps. Once a racer is out on the track, they can't help but stay out because they love it so much. Back in the pits, the tyre warmers go back on and Chris starts looking over the bike making sure nothing has come off or is loose. Doc's not happy with the suspension set up leaving Chris to decide whether to make it harder or softer.

In the end Chris advises keeping the settings and they adjust the tyre pressures instead by 1 psi. He also adjusts the quick action throttle as he thinks this will suit his riding better. The tyre warmers come off and Doc heads off to the paddock.

After qualifying it feels like the bike is down on power. The throttle linkage is opened up. Off come the fairings, seat and

tank! Chris decides to do a compression test – the rear cylinder is 235 psi and the front 215 psi so compression is not the problem.

The front and back injectors are next and these are cleaned, it turns out these are okay and so unlikely to be the problem.

By this time the other guys in the pits have come over to lend a hand and between them they brainstorm ideas and theories. This is what I love about club racing. Everyone

was pulling together to make sure the rider could get back out on track.

The guys in the pits with us are called for their respective races and we are joined by a couple of lads from MV Agusta Racing and they see that the thermostat is not working. The system is flushed numerous times, the bike is put back together and the bike started. Sweet! It appears that the thermostat could have been the culprit.

Other racers ask Chris for advice or help or to borrow tools and he's always willing to help if he can. There's friendship and mutual respect in the pits and it's lovely to be able to experience it. It was great to be a part of the whole experience even though, for me, it was just for the weekend.



Doc's race is called with just twenty minutes to spare. The bike re-fuelled and started. A quick check over of the bike, the tyre warmers are off and doc heads away to the paddock.

Chatting to Chris he feels responsible for ensuring that the bike is properly put together and it's a constant worry that the bike suffers



no mechanical fault that could cause Doc to come off. He feels a huge pressure to make sure everything is okay. Here, I'm left with the impression that if something did go wrong with the bike, that Doc would just say 'that's racing'.

Doc's back and there's oil everywhere. Chris immediately starts looking where the oil is coming from, and a breather pipe has come off. The clip holding it has disintegrated. Chris then

starts to disassemble the bike again to not only repair the pipe but also clean the oil off. With no other racing today, a couple of the other riders come over to give a hand while a

nother couple fire up the bbq and get some food cooking. It's now time to chill for the evening, crack open a few beers and have a laugh. The atmosphere is relaxed and there is a lot of laughter. I was totally included and enjoyed spending the evening with them before heading off to find my hotel for the night.

Arriving early Sunday morning. There's one practice and race. The forecast is showers so a set of wet tyres from Den at AR Racing are ready just in case. It's decided to keep the inters in the tyre warmers and a decision on which tyres to run will be thirty minutes before the race.

Doc wants to change the rear sprocket to change the gearing to a 45 from the 46 on there. I ask Chris if it's normal for Doc to change his mind about the set up. Yes, is the answer. Doc will have a think about how the race went,

chat to other riders and tell Chris what he thinks they should change on the bike. Chris will often disagree with Doc on something but at the end of the day, Doc is racing the bike and the ultimate decision is his unless there is a glaring mechanical issue and then Chris will say so. He sees his role as advising Doc if something will work and to ensure that the bike is race ready and mechanically sound.

Thirty minutes before practice it looks as though it will be a dry race so inters are put on the bike. tyre warmers come off and Doc goes to the paddock ready for the start of practice.

When he comes back in, we hear he nearly lost the front end so after seeing nothing wrong with them they decide to take a bit of air out.

We all go off to watch Doc in his last race of the weekend. Although it's good when Doc comes in after the race and all is good, it's also a little bit sad that the weekend has come to an end. Racing is done for the weekend and now all that is left is to finish off packing up and start the journey home.

What a brilliant weekend I had! Thank you to Chris, Toni and Doc for being so welcoming and their hospitality. It really was a pleasure to spend the weekend with you guys!.

Also, thanks to John Allsopp at MotoGusto magazine for making the introduction.



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Cham Art Original Airbrushed Artwork

Here at MotoGusto we love a good looking motorcycle, jacket, helmet and anything else that looks good that you can customise in relation to Motorcycles, and engines in general.



As bikers, we all want our bike to have our own little stamp on it, to be personalised to us, and to match our own unique individuality.

With that in mind, I'd like to introduce you to Paul "Cham" Cunningham, of ChamArt.

Having seen some examples of his absolutely stunning work, it feels only right to be getting his name out there.

Paul is based in Essex in the UK, and has been airbrushing custom artwork for some time now. As an artist he is obsessed with perfection and someone with the skills and vision with the passion to bring those ideas in your head to life as artwork for you.

They say pictures speak a thousand words, but before we get to more of those, Paul put together some answers to some questions that our very own Minty asked him.

Can you tell me a bit more about yourself and your work?

I am now a full time artist and work on different mediums.

I have always signed my artwork as Cham, since the days of graffiti art and I am often known by this name and still sign all my work this way.

As I predominantly use an airbrush to paint, it enables me to paint directly onto different materials including canvas, metal

and leather, for example. I have customised helmets, cars, boats, parts of aircraft, guitars, a tractor and, of course, motorcycles.

Originally a portrait artist, I will often incorporate images of faces within my work as I find this is an ideal way to include some emotion and character to the final project.

What's your background?

A Product Designer by trade, specialising in creating new products for some of the world's top brands. It was a very good career and I got to work around the globe on some exciting projects, however I always needed to get back to creating my own art.

So I finally walked away from the day job so I could concentrate on my art.

What research do you do for your work?

I enjoy the research and preparations of each project, sometimes it is preliminary sketches giving me a rough plan to work free hand. Other times I can spend a considerable time researching the elements of a "Theme".

You can't add an image just because it looks "cool" when it does not add something to the meaning of the artwork.

What work do you most enjoy doing?

Portrait work is always fun, capturing some emotion and character but working with a client to create a piece of art that means something to them can be very rewarding.

What memorable responses have you had to your work?

Art is great for evoking emotions from people. Watching a client grinning at their own bike after I have painted it. If your bike makes you smile as much looking at it as it does riding it, then I've done a good job.

What is your link with Motorcycling and how did it come about?

Fond memories of my Dad collecting me from school and climbing onto the back of his Royal Enfield with no protective gear and an old leather helmet (simpler times back then).

I have had a love of bikes since that early age and will still choose one of my motorbikes over a car whenever I can.

I've been part of Battlesbridge Motorcycle Museum for a few years now and enjoy the camaraderie and banter that you have with fellow Bikers and visitors alike.

I've been told I own more motorbikes than I need, but disagree, as you can always find a need for one more bike.

What is your dream project?

Good question...

Head full of too many ideas and art I want to create.

However, I would love to create a large piece of art to showcase the heritage of one of the UKs historic racing circuits.

What do you like/dislike about your work?

Like: Every job is different and it's all about creating something totally unique for the client.

Dislike: Although a critical part of the job, people forget the hours spent in prepping before painting and the lacquering process afterwards. I often feel like I spend most of my time with a piece of wet and dry in my hand instead of an airbrush.

What's your favourite piece of your own art and why?

On a bike, it has to be the Douglas Bader tribute bike.

The client had good ideas about what they wanted and gave me free reign to create the art to look good on the bike but also have a narrative about Bader himself.

I included an image of Bader in uniform, details and design elements from his Spitfire, his DSO medal, a dog fight scene and even an image of Colditz to represent the time he spent there as a POW.

With a "Lest we Forget" tribute on the rear of the bike, it works well as a complete package.

On Canvas, I would probably say the portrait I painted of the great Joey Dunlop.

It helps to paint someone you truly admire and Joey is a legend in the motorcycle world.

It is good to remember such a great character.

I often add some visual message within my art and with this piece the smoke from his cigarette forms the outline of the IOM TT circuit.

To see more of Cham's work, please visit his website <https://www.chamart.co.uk>, pop down to The Magnet Micro Pub in Colchester, or The Battlesbridge Motorcycle Museum.

Cham also has a shop on his website where you can order copies of his artwork to hang at home.

Cham does accept commissions for custom jobs, and it's best to contact him to find out lead times and prices on these as he is quite busy most days! There is a contact form on the website to get in touch with him.

Keep up the awesome work Cham – it's truly inspirational seeing what you are able to create and how much you help people to achieve what they want in such stunning detail.



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FANCY AN '80s THROTTLE THROWBACK?

Dark Days Despatching

This tale from Tony Donnelly echoes many of **our editor, John Allsop's** motorcycle experiences from around the same period of the mid 80's.

The editor spent time working as a motorcycle courier (or despatching) before the age of emails and instant messaging. Redundant is a pretty nasty term at the best of times. When someone is saying it to you when you are only twenty, on the last day of a four year apprenticeship, the real impact becomes all too apparent.

Well if we wind the clock back to August 1985 I was that twenty year old. The manufacturing industry was under repeated attack from the hoards of Blue nasties led by the she-devil Thatcher herself and my redundancy came like a hammer blow. My chances of getting another decent job in such a bleak environment were not great.

With these factors I decided to make use of my bike licence. Obviously this would be my ticket to the £500 a week action the bike press always seemed to be on about at the time. I went off to be a despatch rider. Getting paid to ride a bike, got to be good, surely..?

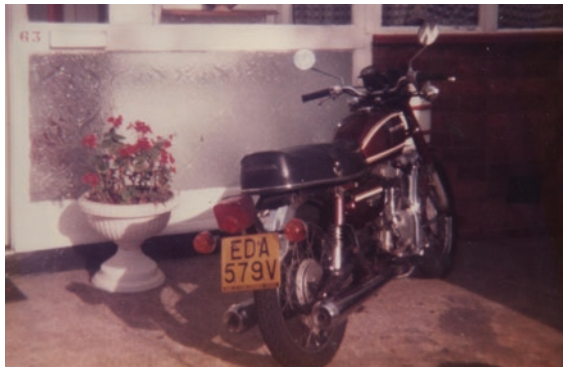
There was a courier firm based less than a mile from where I had just been laid off, so I headed around there. A quick chat with the owner and hey presto I had a job! No problem, the fact it had been so easy in the middle of a depression that Marvin the Paranoid Android would be proud of, did not set any alarm bells ringing; oh the joy and naivety of youth!

So that was it then, I was now a cool hard courier, a knight of the road! I was chuffed to bits and turned up on my first Monday, parked up my RD350 and expected to leap aboard a battle scarred Kawasaki GT750 and roar off to deliver desperately important top secret documents or maybe vital bits of nuclear reactors or something. The reality was rather more mundane;

So that was it then, I was now a cool hard courier, a knight of the road! I was chuffed to bits and turned up on my first Monday, parked up my RD350 and expected to leap aboard a battle scarred Kawasaki GT750 and roar off to deliver desperately important top secret documents or maybe vital bits of nuclear reactors or something. The reality was rather more mundane;

"You!, take the CD200 and deliver GKN's internal post"

A whole 3 miles, on a tired 70,000 mile Honda Benly. This was not quite what I had been anticipating. To make matters worse, GKN was the company that had just made me redundant! Oh isn't irony a wonderful thing?



The mighty Honda CD200

My fellow riders were a disparate bunch comprising a heady mix of drop outs, students, more mature riders, oh, and rejects like myself! All had nicknames and these doubled up as our call signs on our crackly radios. Mobile phones were few and far between in 1985.

There was "Fast Nick" an ice cool degree student who had dropped out of the system and who had the knack of getting anywhere quicker than anybody else. "SPG" (Special Patrol Group), was an ex copper, tough but friendly, while "Biggles" was a terribly well spoken Honda CB400F rider who sported a white silk scarf, a handlebar moustache and looked to the world as if he had just stepped from the cockpit of a Spitfire fighter rather than a beaten up despatch bike. We all hummed the theme to 'The Dambusters' film whenever he rode in! My title was Sidevalve as I rode an RD350 Powervalue.

We all gathered in a shabby touring caravan drinking tea and eating bacon sandwiches waiting for the next shout, "Fast Nick" tended to get the plum jobs using one of the firms three Kawasaki GT750s while new boys such as me wound up on local stuff on one of half a dozen CD200s the firm also ran.

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Classic amongst these was the so-called "Piss run" which was the rather charming title for a regular run from a hospital mortuary to a pathology laboratory with body fluids from the recently deceased! I used to leave my gloves on and my lid and jacket zipped up when taking drops to this client! There was the 'Rites of Passage' run and, after a couple of weeks another new rider would join and you get to hand over this delightful task to them! Soon I was out and about on the motley collection of clapped out CX500s that formed the bridge from the Benly to the GTs. These all had at least 80,000 miles on them and were tired to put it

politely. It was aboard one the CX500s that I set a personal biking record that stands to this day of 825 miles in 24 hours; the bike had 105,000 miles on it too. Boy was I knackered, and I even managed to fall off the miserable device at one point, drag it out of a hedge and carry on. In fact, crashing was a pretty good way of passing

time as a courier and in my brief stint I managed to stuff 3 bikes, a H100, the CX and a GT750 pretty spectacularly!

I crashed one just like this! The GT750 was superbly suited to the world of parcel delivery

Riding courier style also tended not to go down terribly well with the plod. One particularly memorable occasion occurred when I was storming out of Tamworth on the A453 aboard one of the GTs clocking about 80-90mph when I spotted a plod pointing a 'hairdryer' at me. Remember hand held speed guns before the days of unmarked vans and fixed cameras behind road signs!? Anyway, I lamped on the brakes as hard as I could, the single piston double disc set up testing the Avon Roadrunner on the front to the max (God has brake and tyre technology moved on since



1985!), and buried the headlight in the front mudguard. I came to a squealing halt with the back end going light. The copper strode over to me in that "I could have been in the SAS you know?" manner they all have and uttered the immortal quote;

"Well done sir, only 48" and promptly wrote me a ticket. I kind of miss the personal approach in these times of CCTV and Gatso and ANPR!

The job took me all over the country and the miles racked up quickly and after only a few weeks you feel like a veteran. The staff turnover was phenomenal, and one guy only did one morning aboard his Honda CB750F before packing it in because he got wet! What the hell did he expect?

All the runs blur into one another, but one day I was sent to the Premier League of the courier world: London. I was

taking photographic proofs from Rover (RIP) to the offices of CAR magazine in the Smoke. I got hopelessly lost in the swirl of vicious dog eat dog traffic down there. Getting late and desperate I spied another courier at the side of the road taking a fag break alongside his Suzuki GS650GT Katana. He was middle-aged and wearing a

battered Belstaff jacket, I pulled up alongside and explained my plight and pleaded for help.

Cool as a cucumber he said "follow me", stubbed out his tab on the pavement, slowly put on his lid, climbed aboard the Suzzi, thumbed the starter button and then proceeded to take off like the USS Enterprise going into warp! I gunned the CX in an effort to keep up and the next few minutes saw us slicing through traffic at breakneck speed. Every rule of the road was not merely broken, but absolutely pulverised, mirrors were clipped, roundabouts ridden over. It was like some wild ride on the back of an unbroken Mustang. Then, with a flicker of brake light he pulled up, pointed and then roared off again. Cheers mate whoever you were!

Well after 2 months and 8,000-10,000 miles I packed it in too, the lousy money, crazy hours, crashing and tickets all got too much for me. I would never do it again, I would never recommend that you do it either, but it was one hell of an experience. **Tony Donnelly**

<15>

HARLEY DAVIDSON PAN AMERICA TOO BIG FOR ITS BOOTS?

Our long distance guru **Paddy Tyson** tries out the Harley Davidson Pan America 1250 Special for size.

There's no chrome, no conchos and the 'look at me!' exhaust is a pleasantly muted affair. Can it really be a Harley? Well yes Jim; but not as we know it.

Aesthetically you may have difficulty with that front end, but at least jokes about Hoovers can now replace those about tractors. If you've never bought into the H-D brand before maybe now's the time to reconsider. This 1250 Pan America comes alive on fast smooth tarmac, is happy to pootle on little lanes and seems to lose all of its weight when you hit the dirt. It is certainly comparable with most other large 'adventure' bikes, and its pricing is between Yamaha's Super Ten and Ducati's Multistrada.

Moving so far from its cruiser comfort zone is a bold move for H-D, but the engineers were given a completely clean slate to work with and every part of this bike is new. The engine is a 60 degree liquid-cooled V-twin with alloy barrels and magnesium cases to reduce weight and noise and it utilises a twin-overhead camshaft design with hydraulic constantly-variable valve timing to generate great flexibility and produce a quite wonderful 150hp.

This completely new 1250 Revolution Max power plant has great fuelling too, with no



discernible snatchiness at low revs when you want it to pull in any gear. Yet when you climb above 6,000rpm it just gets stronger, willing you to explore all that available power. If you are seduced by the Pan America name and really see yourself heading off to foreign climes you'll be pleased to know it's designed to run on only 91 octane fuel and can perform on much lower grades.

The crankshaft and cams have balancers to limit vibration, but these are tuned to permit 'just enough' to keep you in touch with this beating heart. The result certainly makes you smile.

Gear selection is light-years ahead of what you'd expect from Harley and the six-speed gearbox, 8-plate slipper clutch and ultra-light actuation work well together. Neutral is easy to find and in a dramatic departure too, they've settled on a chain final



<16>

drive. Again this saves weight and is much more rugged if owners actually choose to ride on the dirt. If I'm honest, even on the road-oriented tyres, I was really surprised by just how easy it was to ride off-road. It's well-planted and balanced and inspires confidence, especially

the bike isn't compromised when moving, the way it is with lowering kits. Instead, as you move off the rear shock gently pumps itself back up. They call it Adaptive Ride Height system. Seat height is also manually adjustable by simply repositioning the seat squab, up or down an inch.

By design the engine was meant to be the 'heart of the

machine'. In reality it's also the spine. As a stressed member, the remainder of the chassis is bolted to it; the headstock carrying the forks at one end, and the rear subframe carrying

“““

Harley have demonstrated real innovation with a cool trick – and that's not something you hear everyday!

if you select one of the off-road riding modes which alters suspension, power delivery and output, ABS, traction control and more. There are 9 riding modes altogether, from Sport through to Off-Road Custom.

While on that suspension (all Showa), Harley have demonstrated real innovation – not something you hear everyday! Sensing when the bike has come to a halt, the 1250 Pan America Special model automatically lowers itself to ensure you get your feet on the floor.

This lowering can be anywhere from 25.4mm to 50.8mm depending on what you've programmed. This idea of enabling sag at standstill is brilliant because the geometry of

everything else at the other. The generous 21.2l light alloy fuel tank just straddles the gap.

It ensures a taut chassis which is sublime to flick from corner to corner on fast moorland roads. The wheelbase, at 1580mm, is only 20mm longer than the KTM 1290 Adventure

Brakes are provided by Brembo; radial upfront, very smooth and responsive, it's no wonder so many manufacturers use them. The Michelin Scorchers are superb too, and if you covet the spoked wheels they are mounted on, they are a £600 option. Cast alloy wheels are standard on both models of Pan America.

While you enjoy that lusty engine and rigid chassis you'll find the 'bars are tall and wide and fall comfortably to hand offering good manoeuvrability. If you plan to ride a lot off-road you may want the optional 'bar risers to make standing a little more

THE PAN AMERICA™ 1250



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comfortable, but other than that they enable a relaxed stance. The seat itself is wide, provides good comfort and doesn't get in the way when standing on the pegs.



» Gear selection is light years ahead of what you would expect from the brand...

Footpegs are in a classic 'adventure bike' position, ensuring no cramping of the legs and enabling a seamless transition to standing. Rubber comfort inserts can pop out for dirt riding so that the serrated edges of the pegs grip your boot sole. And another innovation - the rear brake lever pad can be twisted on a cam such that it can be made higher or lower in an instant to provide better control when standing.

Other rider equipment includes all the gadgetry

you'd expect with a TFT screen; navigation, phone pairing, clean or cluttered readout etc. If it's important to you you'll doubtless love it, but the switchgear on both sides of the handlebars is confusingly bulky as a consequence and what I really need is an easy-to-use indicator switch, something that is lacking.

The indicators at the front are mounted inboard of the standard-fit crashbars and look like auxiliary riding lights. It's a nice touch and adds to the overall look at the front. The appearance of the Pan America is aggressive, and although you might think 'robot' or 'Hoover', they've certainly created a talking point and love the fact that they haven't followed the herd with a pointless beak.

This Harley does not say 'Potato-Potato'. It does not lumber along, is not scared of corners. OK, it looks a bit weird but it's not as dramatic in the flesh and anyway, when you are on it, you can't see that front end. It's a whole new world, but are you brave enough to try it?

Engine capacity:	1252cc
Configuration:	8-valve, twin cam, 60-degree v-twin
Max power:	150bhp @9,000rpm
Max torque:	128Nm @6,750rpm
Transmission:	6-speed
Final drive:	Chain
Service interval:	8,000kms
Fuel capacity:	21.2 litres
Kerb weight:	254kg
Seat height:	830-850mm but can be further altered by ARH
Ground clearance:	210mm
Front suspension:	191mm travel Showa electronically active upside-down 47mm forks
Rear suspension:	191mm travel, Showa adj monoshock with ARH
Front tyre:	120/70 x 19" Michelin Scorcher
Rear tyre:	170/60 x 17" Michelin Scorcher
Front brakes:	Twin 320mm discs (Brembo radial calipers)
Rear brakes:	280mm Disc (single-piston caliper)
Instrumentation:	6.8 inch viewable area TFT display with speedometer, gear, odometer, fuel level, clock, trip, ambient temp, low temp alert, side stand down alert, TIP over alert, cruise, range and tachometer indication BT capable - phone pairing to access phone calls, music, navigation (H-D App ONLY)
Colours available:	Vivid Black, Gauntlet Grey, Deadwood Green, Baja Orange and white
Price:	£15,500



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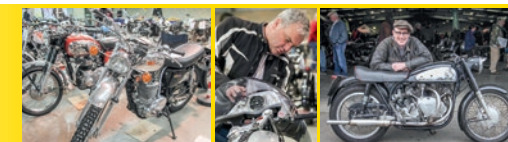
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KAWASAKI Z650

A worthy upgrade?

BIKER KAZ takes the new Z650 from Kawasaki for a few week's worth of real world everyday riding. The question is... did she want to give it back?

As you probably know by now I ride a Kawasaki Z900 so when I was offered the chance to have a Z650 on loan for a couple of weeks I jumped at the chance.

I thought it would be interesting to see what, if any, difference there is between the two bikes.

I picked the bike up from Kawasaki UK in Bourne End which is not too far from me and the chap went through the TFT screen with me and showed me how to change the settings (my Z is an older model so doesn't have this). I hopped on and rode off. It is a 4-stroke parallel twin engine bike and sounds so different (good different) to my Z (which has a 4-stroke in-line four engine).

I was riding home in heavy Friday afternoon traffic so did not get a chance to open the bike up properly and see what it can really offer but the bike was happy and easily handled the traffic well.

The following morning, I had a ride planned to The Classic Motor Hub in the Cotswold so I was looking forward to seeing what the bike was like on a good run.

Well, I have to say, I am very surprised by how impressed I am with the Z650. I thought my Z was a light bike until I got the Z650! It is such an easy bike to move about and get in and out of the garage which, for me, is a huge plus point.

The Z650 is a 650cc 68bhp bike with a liquid cooled twin engine which you may look at and think that it is going to be low on power and speed. I can tell you it most definitely is not lacking either of those attributes and to say it goes extremely well is probably an understatement. When you drop it a gear to overtake, the thing goes like a rocket.

If you've been to the Cotswolds you will know



that the roads are brilliant for riding on and as the bike is light, it is really flickable in the corners and I was loving the twisties. The bike handles really well and feels really stable.

The bike comes with Dunlop Sportmax Roadsport 2 tyres which, according to Dunlop's website, give an enhanced sport performance and are ideal for riders who want performance and value and are described as nimble, predictable handling, quick turn in and quick to warm up. I like these tyres very much.

Changes have been made to the intake and exhaust system components to ensure that Euro4 emissions regs are met leading to an increase in mid-range torque whilst maintaining the power of the previous model.

The TFT screen is really easy to navigate and when glancing down to look at your speed, gear, time etc. when riding, it is clear to see and gather the information you are seeking in a quick and timely manner. What I think is really useful is that you can connect your phone to the screen using the 'rideology the app' to giving you additional features.

When parked up, the bike was being admired as to the styling

and the green frame and wheels against the black really does set the bike off nicely.

Over the two week period I had the bike, I pretty much got out every day on the bike either for a ride out, to commute to/from work or just because I had some errands to do and it was a good excuse to take the bike out. I found riding the bike very easy, it is so comfortable to ride and very economical too.

It has a 15 litre tank and, according to the screen, I was averaging 57.5 mpg which, by my maths – and please do check, I reckon you could get 170 miles to a tank which is pretty impressive.

The Z650 is A2 compliant making this bike a great first 'big bike'. At just under £7,000, you are truly getting a lot of bike for your money. It is easy to ride, fills you with confidence in the handling and agility the bike has to offer and is a quick fun bike to ride.

Please don't think that this bike is just an A2 licence bike, it is way more than that. Do yourself a favour and take one out for a test ride, I think you will be as pleasantly surprised as I was.

In comparison to my Z900, obviously the Z650 is less powerful. In the real world this is only really noticeable in that you have to keep the revs up, for example, when overtaking it is necessary to drop it a couple of gears rather than just rolling it on in whatever gear you're in.

Handling wise, I would say both bikes are extremely nimble, while the Z650 does not have upside down forks, for example, I would assume due to its lighter weight, I cannot say I noticed the lack of these even on some quite bumpy twist bends.

There a couple of things I would change on the bike:

A tail tidy – I know it is a legal requirement that the number plate is the furthest part of the bike and some people might like the back end of the bike as it is, but personally I would have to change it;

A louder exhaust. Again, that is purely personal choice as I like a loud exhaust.

Heated grips. This one is just for my own benefit as I fit heated grips to all my bikes as I ride all year round.

Other than those three, which let's be honest are not major, I wouldn't change anything on the bike, I really do love it as it is and I was really sad when I had to take the bike back, I was really hoping that I would get lost en route.

Thank you Kawasaki for the loan of the Z650, it was a privilege to ride :-) BK



CLOTHING TEST

Tivola ST Gore-Tex Jacket

Our product editor **Dom Humby** puts the Held Tivola Gore-Tex Jacket through its paces.

Tested in the sub 5° range all the way into the mid 20°s. With the simplicity of six zip closures

ventilation goes from a gentle draft by any description to wind tunnel volumes of air instantly. The tie-back for the collar aids this perfectly with a simple clip. With Held's "ClipIn" technology used, there are various options for liners to tailor to your personal needs.

The Tivola ST Jacket, is part of the latest Held collection, comprises of a Gortex Z-liner, mesh lining and a DuPont Cordura 500 D outer shell. I've been out in torrential rain and remained warm and dry. Additionally, this jacket does not experience water logging so, drying times are kept to a minimum. This is arguably some of the best waterproofing on the market today!

Fit is good with adjustable arm straps secured with Velcro and a waist adjustment strap also secured in the same way. A simple drawstring at the very bottom of the jacket ensures a snug fit. There is also a connecting zip for the trousers.

The jacket is fitted with exclusive EN 1621-1:2012 CE-approved Held cloverleaf SAS-TEC® shoulder & elbow protectors. There is the option to add a back



and red for the back. All powered by a simple power bank that lasts for a long time, depending on the capacity of the power bank of course. Either way usually with the smaller power bank you're good for a good 4-5 hours riding time. Check out our YouTube channel for a short

video on how to install this additional LED kit.

I can't see any way that this jacket gets anything less than a solid 10/10 from us here at MotoMerit accolade - but extremely well deserved.



Top stuff as always from the design and development team over at Held Rider Equipment!

The Gortex Z-liner, mesh lining and a DuPont Cordura 5000 outer shell wins hands down...

protector and chest protector as well. Ripstop material is used on crash zones for enhanced reinforcement. There are panels of reflective print on the Tivola ST and, the option to purchase LED inserts.

POWER UP

A USB LED kit can be inserted into special channels on the front and back of the jacket, white for the front

LOMO INFLATE SLEEP MAT

UNDER REVIEW: These Inflatable Camping Mats are ideal for saving space when compared to a foam roll mat that would typically be strapped to the outside of your bag. Instead, this mattress compacts into a small dry bag, which is provided.

The 6cm thick mattress is very lightweight, weighing only 550 grams and the dimensions are 190cm x 56cm (inflated) and 11cm x 25cm (packed). This air bed is easily inflated by mouth so doesn't require a pump.

PROS: Lightweight / Easily Inflatable By Mouth / No Pump Required / Compacts Into Small Dry Bag (provided)

CONS: None so far (currently on review)

PRICE: £27.00

VISIT: www.lomo.co.uk



ROADSKIN JEANS

These jeans use a unique mix of 60% Denim/40% DuPont™ Kevlar®. The single-layer construction uses 40% aramid fibres throughout, meaning no weak areas or patches. They are tough enough to pass a CE AA rating whilst being single skinned. The result is a reinforced, straight legged, motorcycle jean that is light and highly protective.

PROS: Supplied with Level 2 knee and hip armour, Single-layer, Available in 3 different leg lengths

CONS: The knee armour moves around a little and would benefit from some velcro to make them feel more secure.

PRICE: £149.00

VISIT: www.roadskin.co.uk



SLUMIT CUB 2 INSTANT TENT



UNDER REVIEW: An Instant 2 Man Tent that is fully waterproof double layer flash frame quick pitch tent and pack system. The Slumit Cub 2 tent can be erected in less than 60 seconds using the pull up FlashFrame system. There is good room for 1-2 people inside.

The outer rainfly layer is rated to a high 4000mm Hydrostatic Head (HH). The Cub 2 packs smaller than a standard popup tent. Approx pack size and weight: 70x17x17cm, 3.9kg.



The breathable inner tent with a fine mesh door reduces condensation problems. There is a one year warranty against manufacturing defects. By purchasing Slumit equipment you are supporting a British company.

PROS: Light and fast to erect.

CONS: The frame system means that the tent is a little long when lashing to the bike.

PRICE: £89.99

VISIT: www.slumit.co.uk

BIKE BUILDING

From hobby to full time

BikerKaz meets Dom of Lucky Lane Cycles to chat over coffee and cake.



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RoadSmart

Dom, a builder by trade, started Lucky Lane Cycles some two years ago. What started as a passion for bikes and tinkering with them as a hobby, is now taking over more and more of Dom's time. He has now reduced the days he works building so he can put more time into developing Lucky Lane Cycles.

Parked out front are three bikes that Dom has been working on. Whilst all three happen to be BMW's Dom does work on all makes.

I'm particularly drawn to the exhaust on the R100. It's been fabricated to resemble an exhaust wrap by welding on what looked to be dimple finish insulation to give it a really unique look.

The seat was custom designed and made too, and carries through the retro theme. The next two in line for Dom's handiwork are a K1100RS and an R80RT.

Pretty much all of the work that goes into transforming the bike to the finished product is completed by Dom. Around ninety five percent of this being his own handiwork with remaining going to other specialists. Examples of this would be paint work going to a local body shop and the frames being powder coated by a local business too.

Dom sees himself as a bike builder, he will take a standard bike and custom design the way he wants it to look himself. Having had no specific training, Dom has learnt a lot from YouTube and Google and is not afraid to ring a friend for advice or guidance if he is unsure about anything.

Strip. Rebuild. Put them back together.

Dom is no stranger to stripping and rebuilding an engine, changing a clutch or cleaning the carbs and putting them back together. Depending on the new design for the bike, the frame may need modifying too and this is something Dom will do himself.

Designing and manufacturing specific bikes parts is something Dom relishes in the challenge of. The front forks on the R100 have been replaced with Kawasaki



front forks of a ZX6R but they did not quite fit and Dom designed himself and had them manufactured by Linton Precision Engineers in Aylesbury with spacers to make them fit. They are a beautiful piece of engineering to behold.

You can tell by the feel and workmanship that a lot of time and effort went into the design process. To see them on the bike and solving any problems must surely be a huge personal achievement. I know I am in awe of people who can look at a problem and come up with a design that will not only solve the problem but also looks incredible.

Dom's vision for his bikes is for them to be displayed in a bike showroom to garner the interest they rightly deserve. If someone would like to buy one of his bikes then that would be an added bonus, as a lot of the pleasure Dom gains from his bikes is in the designing and building of them.

You can see lots more pictures on Dom's Instagram page and see for yourself the transformation of the bikes and the work that goes into them.

It was an absolute pleasure to meet you Dom and I wish him every success.

ABR FESTIVAL 2021

The 'MG' Boys camp it up

Editor **John Allsop** and Product killer **Dom Humby** set up camp at this year's Adventure Bike Rider Festival



The last eighteen months could be described as a challenge at the very least. One beacon of light in the long, dark night of Covid was the Overland Event in 2020 but such oases were rare in a veritable desert of meetings and shows.

Now in 2021, cancelled events have also been very much the order up until this year's Adventure Bike Rider Festival at Ragley Hall.

With the kind offer of press passes from Will Sandilands it would have been rude for some of the team not to attend.

The duo dispatched from Motogusto Towers faced some challenges on route toward the festival this year. Horrendous traffic that even slowed the editor's progress whilst Dom took probably the worst cross country route possible courtesy of using google maps...Google maps! Arriving mid evening on the first day was not the plan. However, with tents and tarps pitched

the two ventured out to see what was going on before hunkering down. They were treated by a wide selection of food stalls and, perhaps, a bar or two. And so to bed...It rained...a lot! Thankfully the camping equipment supplied by Lomo proved that it was as waterproof as claimed. Thank you Lomo.

Who doesn't need coffee first thing?

Awoken by the sound of engines firing up in the morning sun. Our dynamic duo set out again to get incredibly muddy on the 20 miles of trails the festival had to offer. After a bacon butty and at least four coffees they ventured out among the exhibitors to see who, what and where things were.

One of their first finds were Matt Bishop and Reece

Our dynamic duo set out to get incredibly muddy on the 20 miles of trails the festival had to offer

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Gilkes. (Better known as The Sidecar Guys). Why 'The Sidecar Guys'? Because they chose to ride a scooter and sidecar around the world-raising awareness of modern slavery and set a Guinness World Record in the process. Until you have seen their scooter you won't believe quite how much of a challenge they took on. You can learn more of their amazing story in Our Ridiculous World Tour! They're also hosting their own event The Armchair Adventure Festival at the end of September. Next the delightfully eccentric Steph Jeavons with her book "Home By Seven". Steph's also part of Moto Junkies, a trail riding company

till her daily transport too. Her book "Hit The Road Jac" gives an engaging and thrilling insight into her trip.

Then, they had the pleasure of meeting Billy Ward and Mick Extance.

Billy Ward is certainly a character to meet if you get the chance. Often found knocking boots with Charley Boorman in between his own adventures. His tales of trips to Iraq with Claudio Von Planta amongst others will raise your eyebrows at the same time as tickling your funny bone. His witty and irreverent attitudes also make him an excellent compere.

True grit on display

Mick Extance is a homegrown legend competing in the infamous Dakar Rally many times. His return to extreme motorcycling after his brain tumor is a story of true grit. And, his off road Motorbike Enduro Experience in Wales is another top tip to try.

Showcasing their adventures at the festival were the intrepid Elspeth Beard who in the early 80's became the first British woman to ride a motorcycle around the world. Her trip is recounted in the book Lone Rider. Simon and Lisa Thomas

were there and, if you want to be impressed, you can check out their sixteen year trip which is the world's longest continuous motorcycle ride. The Girl On A Bike (Vanessa Ruck) was also there to relate her harrowing tale that begins with an accident and leads her right in the thick of enduro riding.

Plenty of 'try before you buy'

Also, there were plenty of opportunities to try off-road riding on the latest models from main manufacturers such as BMW, Ducati, Honda and Suzuki. Riders equipment was also well represented. Ruroc were on site showcasing their latest helmets and the new range of clothing "Enginehawk", Enduristan had a full complement of items on sale, the boys also got a chance to chat to Jill from Visorcat and Phil Cotton with his fantastic Kawasaki "Goose bike" from the original Mad Max film.

The festival site itself is also surrounded by some of the finest motorcycle roads that the country has to offer. Another great option at the ABR Festival was the option to speak to

the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists (IAM) and get some advanced rider techniques demonstrated on those very roads. The IAM offers courses and this is something our Dom is currently doing.

With the very noticeable crowds there were some issues with queues but we would certainly not be surprised to find that the event easily met its cap of four thousand visitors a day. Despite a few bumps in the road this year's Festival was a great first experience for Dom and a great returning one for John. Next year take a trip up to the ABR Festival and you won't be disappointed. Dom will be using a different mapping app to get there though.

The team at Motogusto would like to thank Will Sandilands for providing press passes for the event and we look forward to returning in 2022. We hope to see many of you there and if you see us pop over for a chat!



John challenges Dom to down the suspiciously cloudy cider 'in one'



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...Plenty of opportunities to try off-road riding on the latest models from the main manufacturers

in Wales which we hope to pay a visit to very soon. Shortly after they bumped into Jacqui Furneaux with her Royal Enfield Bullet 500 on which she visited 20 countries over 7 years. It's

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