

Editorial

A truly text-packed GeN this issue which should have reached most of you in time to read over the Christmas pud.

Three extremely informative articles from hard-riding, high-mileage Northwest owners. Thanks Mark, Kevin and Ian, I am sure your experiences will be of great help to others.

Membership is settling around the 130 mark again. The recent arrival of several Saturnos from Japan may provide prospective members with suitable mounts but no Runner owners have been signed up yet.

Does Motor Cycle Sport know something we don't ? I quote from 'Perception' in the December issue:

"...And in Italy there's every prospect that the Gilera marque, which is now owned by Piaggio, will return to the mainstream motorcycle market with a Supersport 600 before the turn of the century to join their erstwhile rivals MV Agusta, Benelli and Moto Guzzi."

Comments Pontedera please (after all the 21 December is the 110th anniversary of Guiseppe Gilera's birth !)

No G-Mail this time because contributors provided excellent full-blown articles. Much to your relief no Northwest Frontier - the bad news is no Isle of Man hillclimb again ever, the good that the 604 seems to have stopped pumping up the cooling system. I realised that even the hot 2.2 Kms of Ger had not caused a problem, so - hooray - no need to have the motor out this winter ! A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year one and all.



Now read on ...

A CLUTCH TOO FAR ?

*It's been a while since I've written and my only excuse is that I've been working on my *%\$ing bike most of the time. Last time I wrote was summer 1996 and at that time my water pump had packed in, well not my water pump, it works fine thank you, if you're interested, but the water pump on my increasingly swear-worthy bike, which had conspired to prevent me from attending the track day. At that time I said I would sell her if she gave me any more trouble. Well, as if to test my will power, she proceeded to break the mounting lugs on both rear side panels, blow both fork seals dumping 10-weight oil all over my new brake pads. Then, when I had new seals ordered and a tool for fitting them, all set to go to the track day and AGM complete with new leather trousers, on my way home from work, lovely sunny day, new BT90 on the front (they've got expensive) and Dragon Corsa on the back, dreaming of my first knee down and scraped pegs when, 100 yards from my front door - a noise not unlike an angle grinder going by itself flat out in a box of spanners began to emanate from somewhere between my legs, I mean feet. Clutch in - noise abated somewhat but continued it's painful cacophony (poetic or what ?) for about 3 seconds and then stalled. "Oh bother" I thought (you're right), dismounted and pushed the bane of my life into my drive past my concerned looking wife, past my concerned looking dog (nothing to do with my bike, he just looks like that most of the time) and into my garage-looking garage.*

Off with the right engine casing, didn't even bother to drain the oil, in my despair I forgot, boy was that a mistake ! And what I saw in the black mess on the floor (2.2 litres spreads a long way on concrete) nearly made me cry, and I'm not normally the emotional type. There were springs, lumps of metal and steel and aluminium filings glistening in the light. I could probably have sold it to an art gallery for a fortune. What had happened ? The 3 allen headed screws holding the clutch basket to the cush mechanism had sheared, allowing the basket to bounce merrily against the engine case at 4500 rpm and the cush plate thingy to attempt intimate relations with the oil pump. New clutch basket ? - a snip at £270-ish. New oil pump ? - a mere £150-odd. Thank heavens for

plastic cards. I think Gilera must have shares in Visa. On closer investigation the oil pump was salvageable, a local engineer welded up the outer cover, the part which houses the cogs had escaped injury and the inner cover was OK. I thought rather a long time debating whether I could get away with stripping the engine to clean it. The mechanic at Lilleys said I should but, no offence if you are reading this Mr. Mechanic, I got a second opinion from Benjy Straw. He said the Gileras have an excellent oil filtration system (I suppose something had to work right) and that if I was careful to clean the sump out well and all the visible parts on both sides of the engine, I would probably get away with a couple of oil and filter changes in very quick succession. So I set to with a torch, cotton buds attached to a long piece of wire, magnetised screw driver and a gardeners weed-killer sprayer full of paraffin and cleaned every visible piece of swarf from the outer parts of the engine, then from the sump. You wouldn't believe how much bits of metal a cotton-bud will hold on to. I then ran 2 litres of clean engine oil through it, oh yeah I cleaned the strainer attached to the oil drain plug especially meticulously and took out the four allen headed grub-screw things in the bottom of the sump (a lot of the crud had collected round these) then as I said ran two litres of oil through. I drained this, again taking the grub-screws out, and was amazed at just how much swarf had still been in there. I then ran 2 litres of flushing oil through it after draining the oil filter, and on letting out the flushing oil there seemed to be no more crud, even around the grub-screws (I'm sure that's not what they're called but that's what they look like). A new filter and quality (non-synthetic) oil and 1000 Kms later everything is holding together okay. One more oil change this weekend and I'll go back to normal service intervals.

This was a real downer for me as that's two summers in a row I've missed biking, and even though it's a Nordie, winter just isn't the same, and that's not even to mention the track days. My mates are now making Skoda type jokes about Gileras. I can't quite bring myself to actively try to sell it but I don't think I would be difficult to persuade. This new MuZ Mastiff thing that PB tested looks like a heap of fun, and with a Jap engine too, or there again Honda are supposed to be bringing out a CBR engined Hornet, but running my Nordie has become something of a

quest now, it's like she's doing this on purpose so I get really attached to her. You know, treat him mean and keep him keen (I must be cracking. I don't believe I even thought that), but she is still beautiful and a joy to ride (see, there's the comparison again) and I'm sure nothing else will go wrong and there's always next year's track day, and my knowledge of engines is increasing in leaps and bounds (you're only fooling yourself Mark), but then you all know at least partly how I feel.

On a lighter note, a clutch cable from a 350 YPVS Yam fits if you remove the clutch cover and move the rack and pinion mechanism round one notch, and smooths out the clutch action unbelievably as it has a plastic (Teflon?) coated inner sleeve. A 250/350 LC cable also fits if you just screw the adjuster barrel at the lever out a bit but doesn't give so smooth an action. This is good because at £20 a Gilera one is not cheap considering the quality difference. Yes she also broke her clutch cable as well.

When you're rebuilding any parts of your bike, be very careful about torque figures given in the manual. I have found a few to be way too high for the size of relevant bolts, e.g. brake disk mounting bolts, also at times the manual is not always very clear which bolts it refers to with its torque figures.

If your clutch should explode like mine did, I cannot recommend repairing it without stripping the engine. I believe I got off lightly, and I did spend a long time cleaning it, but for the first few hundred miles I was just waiting for something else to let go due to an iron filing that I had missed. To quote someone whose name is not important (although I'm not sure it was to him/her) "on your own head be it", like a crash helmet.

I tried to make a crossword to send in but it was a lot harder than I thought so I did a kind of crossword, wordsearch thing. All the answers are linked to Gileras or general motorbiking. It would be too easy if I said what clue referred to which answer so there is no 'across' or 'down' clues as such. It is pretty crap I know and the links to biking may be very tenuous, but hey, no-one's forcing you to do it, and it may even inspire someone more skilled in these matters than I to make one up. I'm sure there must be a computer

programme to help with this sort of thing, maybe someone on the 'web' could have a go (I don't have a PC, it takes every spare penny to run my bike).
[see this page for Mark's excellent puzzle - Ed.]

Anyway, as the miles rack up on a twisty B-road and the tyres get warm on an autumn afternoon and I make fools of people on much faster bikes and as I park by the harbour/cafe/other biking gathering place and watch the attention my bike gets, from old people saying "Ahh Gilera" and going all misty eyed, to middle aged people (with big bikes) saying "that thing's bloody quick", to youngsters saying "look at the length of the seat !" I have to admit that deep down I love this bike no other (BLEEEUGH !).

Happy Christmas Everyone

✍️ Mark Gracey

CLUES TO MARK'S PUZZLE

- 1) 3 types of modern Gilera (3 answers)
- 2) Italian motorbikes whose owners don't mind sharing
- 3) Keeps trousers and lining in just the right places
- 4) GFR 2 Nordwest 4
- 5) Not really a wheelie
- 6) ? in Italy
- 7) Synthetic oil will knacker this (2 words, one answer)
- 8) Italian maker of performance Gilera parts
- 9) Mr ?, European bike dealer in the place where they make movies just outside London
- 10) Racetrack in Lincs. (2 words, one answer)
- 11) A "meet" where you might find a part for your classic bike
- 12) All encompassing name for motorbikes, scooters etc. (abbreviation)
- 13) Piaggio factory location
- 14) Abbreviation meaning genuine part
- 15) French racing type, big influence on Nordwest designers

- 16) Benjy ?
- 17) What have Esso and Triumph in common?
- 18) What a guy, Rinaldo ?
- 19) Connects engine to wheels
- 20) Gilera nearly did, overheated brakes will
- 21) Tin worm
- 22) Our patron (2 answers, 2 words)
- 23) Keeps combustion separate from lubrication

Solution on page 22

FOR SALE

Morini Rider **Neil Proctor** wants to sell a rare Arizona model (another suitable for Leigh's collection I wonder ?)

1983 GILERA RX125 ARIZONA trail bike. Water-cooled 125cc 2-stroke, 6-speed gearbox. 23,000 miles. Marzocchi suspension including rebuilt monoshock. Taxed to March 1998. MoT to July 1998

£575 Tel. 01782 516133
(Staffordshire)

Paul Kent's late SATURNO is available:

GILERA SATURNO 93 - L.Reg. 7000 Km in first class condition, dry use only. First to see will buy. Urgently for sale.

£3800 ono Tel: 01323 843223
(East Sussex)

Norman Close has a 50 on offer:

GILERA TRIALS 50. Excellent condition. Host of new parts.

£400
Tel: 01407 720596 (Anglesey)

Unique opportunity to acquire a totally sorted

1986 MORINI 350 K2 'Classic'.

Yes folks the Secretarial K2 has to go. Everything that can be replaced in the ignition/charging system has been. The motor has never been apart (genuine 28,000 miles). Needs an MoT but should be no problem. Yours for only **£1250 ono.** I have to make room in the garage and I just never ride it any more. You know my number.

CHANGE FOR THE NEW MILLENIUM

After reading an article concerning the UKs ban on leaded fuel in the year 2000 - which we are only too often reminded is only three years away I would be interested to hear other club members ideas or views on - fuel for the future - i.e. what to run my RC600 on.

There are some additives on the market which are supposed to give the required lead substitute to the fuel. At the present moment in time there is speculation that this is not reaching the manufacturers promised specification causing obvious results to the engine.

There is a company in Wales which has invested in a 'Serd' millenium machine which performs a head conversion to full super unleaded fuel. The drawback is engine out and at this moment about £50 for each seat and valve.

As always I would be interested in any member's views. [see Chairman's Chat - Ed.]

SILENCE IS POLISHED SILVER

I have recently had a Gazelle stainless steel silencer fitted to my RC and would like to say firstly how pleased I am with it. Shape, sound and quality are excellent. Secondly Gazelle like to make the can in the jig then ask you to attend their fitting centre in Stratford-upon-Avon to have the silencer fitted which includes having all the fixing brackets assembled and welded to the machine. It takes a maximum of about three hours to complete the job. The silencer comes with a lifetime warranty and is also stamped with a BSI mark. The company also does a race version of this exhaust, which does not carry a BS mark.

 **Les Wassall**

Why can't I like Hondas, just like everybody else ?

This was me, sitting at the table, surrounded by copies of Bike trader, M.C.N. and suchlike. "Coz it wouldn't be you if you did !" This was my long suffering wife answering me, accurate as ever. I've never been one to conform, if it wasn't for the lack of time, money and expertise, I'd probably be the type who'd be knocking specials up in the shed. I settle for the next best thing, motorcycles that are unusual or overlooked by your run of the mill rider.

For the previous seven years, I'd been trundling about on a Guzzi. Not any old Guzzi mind, but a Guzzi trail bike ! A V65TT no less. You don't get any more unusual than a shaft drive trailie ! Anyway, the time had come for my trusty old TT and myself to part company, as I'd decided that she was getting a bit long in the tooth for my sixty mile commute to work and back. Looking back though, I think it would be more truthful of me to say that I just wanted a change, something a bit more sporty. But what ? My requirements for a bike are that they be goodish on fuel, unleaded of course, quite simple in design, because I do my own maintenance, fairly quick and light and FUN! Not to forget strange of course. I'd been thinking of T.D.M.s, new Triumphs, Ducatis etc, but all had been dismissed as too boring, heavy on fuel or unreliable. Also, unless you get a race-rep, downright porky. The TT weighed in at around 380 pounds kerb-weight, not too bad for a shaftie, so I definitely didn't want to get some behemoth.

The last time I dared to go near a set of scales, I was just nudging 16.5 stones, so add this to my height of 6'5" and the suitability of a 400cc grey import is right out of the window ! So what have we got now, unusual, light, quick, tall, un-thirsty, torquey, what does that spell to you ? That's right, trail-bike. Been there, done that ! Super-Moto then, yes please ! Tuned CR's aside, what is there ? K.T.M. Duke, yes, yes - - no ! Right out of my price range, unless I bought a barrel of vaseline and hit the streets, then again I'd want the bike this side of my pension ! Maybe in about 3 or 4 years time, when they're second hand. What about a Northwest then, they look quite groovy. I'd first seen one in the early 90's when

Benjy Straw brought one up to the Morini A.G.M. Black and pink if I remember, with really naff stickers. I had a quick spin on Vince Bennett's a year later, and thought it was great. Vince's mate had crashed it with me on the back taking part in the slalom ! The naff stickers would have all peeled off by now. The more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea.

The first step was to get all the bike ad. papers and mags. and work out what one should cost on average. Having done this, I set about ringing a couple of shops who had one. Both dealers had already sold them. Mmm, more people about with good taste than I thought. I didn't really want to go private 'cos I wanted to unload the Guzzi. I decided to give Bob Wright a ring, to see if he knew of any about. "Actually I've got one here I want to sell, a black and yellow one" was the reply. The only problem was that he didn't want to take on the Guzzi, but despite this I knew that this was probably the one. Remember what I said earlier about liking to be unusual ? With the exception of Benjy's bike, every Northwest I'd ever seen had been blue. I had seen a photo of a pink, sorry, 'magenta' and white one which I'd quite liked the look of, but Wifey told me I'd look like a big nonce riding a pink bike about ! Anyway, one hot, sunny midweek afternoon we made the 50 odd mile trip to Weston to look it over. Wow ! If ever a bike had 'Kevvy's Bike' written all over it, this was it !

A quick check over told me the chain was about halfway through its life, ditto the rear tyre (although my inexperience of modern radials caught me out here, as you'll see later). The front fender had a small split at the bottom by the right fork-leg, but otherwise it looked fine. 24k on the speedo was a little high for an 'L' reg. I suppose, but not in my book. The haggling began. Bob was asking all bar 3000 for it, I offered him 2.8. We eventually settled on 2850, the tax was nearly out but he threw in a workshop manual. I still think I got it for a reasonable price. I arranged to pick it up the following Friday. The big day arrived and I scrounged a lift to Weston, where the Northwest had been freshly cleaned and was lurking in the showroom, menacing the collection of 125's and mopeds present. Money changed hands, and I became a Super-Moto hooligan. Bob quickly ran through things like where the choke was, and which way to turn the un-marked fuel tap, then I

was off. Not for very far though, after less than 100 yards it conked out. I restarted it, went for about another 100 yards or so out onto the main street, where it spluttered to a halt again, this time in front of a gang of kids with haircuts that looked like they had elastic bands round their heads. Ignoring the jeers I checked the fuel, yup - still had some in there, but it wasn't easy to tell how much. There was a Tesco petrol station around the corner, so I decided to push it and fill up. Revelation number one, aren't they light! So much easier to push when you break down! I managed to squeeze in just under 10 litres, experience with the Guzzi had taught me always to fill up sitting on the bike, holding it upright, you can get more in. A must with small tanks. The bike started first time, it didn't take me long to work out that I had got main tank and reserve the wrong way round! Off I went again, picking my way through the rush hour traffic. For about 3 miles anyway, that's when I noticed the front offside indicator lens was missing. I couldn't believe it! Back to Bob's for a replacement.

A short while later, I was back on my way, through the traffic and out on the open road. My route home would take me through the Cheddar gorge and up over the Mendips, following the old Roman road that used to link the lead mines with the south coast ports, a road of glorious bends and fast straights, whooping my way over the dips and crests, only rivalled by the Bridport to Abbotsbury road in Dorset. This road is more bleak though, especially in winter. I can imagine some poor sod from southern Italy joining the Legions to see the world, and ending up guarding the lead convoys on their way to Porchester. A bit like a modern posting to the Falklands! Well, like it's forefathers, my little Italian was following near enough the same route, but only for half the distance.

It was like learning to ride again. The Gilera's very different from a Guzzi, quicker steering and less torquey, but the hardest thing to learn to do again was change gear. With Guzzis you stick it into top and leave it there, hills make very little difference unless they are really steep. The N.W. demands more input from the rider's left foot, and you really have to keep it above 3 grand to get anywhere, but what really caught me out were the brakes. Going into my first fast corner, just

'covering' the front brake with a couple of fingers, more out of habit than necessity, almost brought me to a standstill! I think new pads were the main culprit of this early habit, because after a few days it didn't happen anymore, but the brakes have stayed shit hot. I'm only glad those first few days stayed dry. Incidentally, I'm still on the same pads front and rear after nearly 20 kms! Over the years I've owned four disc-braked Italian bikes, two kitted out with Brembos and two with Grimecas. So far the Grimecas have out performed the Brembos by miles. I really do think that Grimecas are a vastly under-rated make.

Later that night I rode my shiny new toy in the dark for the first time, and discovered that the headlight was shall we say, not capable of rapid negotiation of un-lit country roads. In other words it was shit! I had a 100/55 halogen bulb in the Morini, so I swapped them round. This made things a bit brighter, but the beam still wasn't one of the bike's strong points. Further inspection revealed that the headlight adjusting screw was missing, causing the beam to be far too low. Rigging up a new one improved matters no end, but it still isn't good enough for me. As soon as I can afford it I'll get one of Uncle Dik's R.C. fairing top halves and if I can get hold of one, a projector beam shell.

The next couple of things on my list were a N.G.K. DPR9EV9 plug, 'cos the GeN siad they were good and I was still a little paranoid about single cylinder bikes, and a Chaintec chain oiler because I've been spoiled by shaft drive for years and couldn't bear the idea of mucking about with chain-lube sprays! While the fairing was off to fit the plug (! ! !) I took the opportunity to go mad with spots and tabs, not to mention a roll of draught excluder, covering anything which showed any contact marks. Despite this I still can't get rid of all the rattles that fill my helmet when I'm riding. With the fairing off they disappear, likewise when you leave the bike ticking over on the stand as you try to find the cause of the noise. It doesn't help that I'm too tall for the bike, and the wind blast off the screen goes more or less straight on my lid! A GSXR-11 riding workmate of mine says welcome to the modern world! The Chaintec proved to be a bit of a problem as well. I didn't want all the gubbins to show and spoil the look of the bike, so I decided to

rig it up to wok on the gearbox sprocket as opposed to the rear. A quick call to Chaintec's help-line confirmed that it was possible, so I went ahead. It just would not work properly. Intermittent operation, air in the pipes, you name it I had it ! a couple of months and and one chain later I gave up, and rigged it up to rear sprocket like everybody else. It's been O.K. since.

One day while washing the grease off the back wheel, I discovered to my horror that it was wobbling about on the spindle, a sure sign of knackered wheel bearings. A replacement set was bought and I set about fitting them. It was only on closer examination I realised that the actual bearings were O.K. but the one on the caliper side was loose in the hub. I also noticed that the bearing on the sprocket side was a nice black sealed S.K.F. item while the other was Taiwanese with a reddy brown dust seal. Just like the two new ones I had just bought. Mmm, somebody else had thought the bearings were bugged too. A couple of hours were spent trying to shim the bearing into a section of housing which wasn't worn, but without any luck. I had too think of something else other than getting the housing re-bored. Have any of you tried something called 'Chemical Metal' ? I must admit it seems a bit dodgy at first look, smelling, mixing and looking just like Plastic Padding. It is actually made by the same people, which probably explains the likeness, but don't let that fool you, this stuff is good ! I just used it as a sort of super Loctite and that was that - sorted.

A couple of days before Christmas, on my way home from work, I was just coming out of one of my favourite sets of bends and just putting on the power, like you do, the engine just revved and didn't provide any drive. The clutch got pulled in pretty quickly considering I hadn't ridden a two stroke for some time, and I coasted to a halt. I thought the gearbox had gone, but a quick glance revealed the problem. You don't get very far without a chain ! The thing had snapped and had been thrown clear, causing no damage other than a very small chip on the edge of the number plate. If I had put the customary small plate on the bike, like I usually do, but hadn't due to increased police activity against that sort of thing recently, I would have escaped even that. Once again I admired the lightness of the bike as I pushed it to the nearest 'phone box'.

Towards the end of February I noticed, to my horror, the canvas starting to show through on the rear tyre. It caught me completely by surprise as I always give the back tyre a quick look every time I get off. Like I mentioned earlier, I have no experience of modern radial tyres whatsoever, and I'm used to more obvious signs of wear than here today - gone tomorrow ! It was a nasty surprise, guess what I thought of the cost of a new one. A Mez-1 set me back 130 quid ! Wifey had started to call the bike 'the money pit' ! Why a Mez-1 ? It was all I could get at short notice and to be truthful it didn't really perform any better than the Avon AM what-have-you.

It was during this period, October to February, that the bike started losing water. There was no evidence of it getting into the motor and the head gasket seemed to be O.K., but great stain marks of radiator coolant started to appear on the engine cases. I replaced every single hose clip on the bike as they all seemed more or less shagged, but I was still losing water. Then I noticed that water was running down the outside of the expansion tank. Has anyone noticed the expansion tank when riding along ? [I have been known to give it the odd glance on the 604 ! Ed.] The bike's vibration shakes the water all over the shop, and what seems to be happening in my case was that the little rubber cap on top of the tank was not quite as good a seal as it should have been, and the coolant was getting past it and running merrily all over the engine ! Not being fond of the idea of a flimsy rubber cap standing between me and total coolant loss, I nipped down to the local chemist's and bought one of those rubber bungs with a hole through the middle, and set to work with a stanley knife to make it fit. Next, I got a small length of micro-bore tubing left over from the Chain-tec and sealed it into the hole in the bung with instant gasket. Then I slipped the black rubber cap over the top of the bung and put the original breather tube over the protruding micro-bore. This cured the leak, and the modification doesn't even show. Kevin 1: Belligerent rubber bit 0.

Soon after all this, the speedo cable broke ! A cheap Yamaha one was sourced at a local bike shop for only £8.30. A little too short, but experimenting with the routing got round this. It also added on 5 mph. at any given revs. By far the cheapest tuning mod. I've ever bought !

April came around and so did the M.O.T. Sods law dicated that a couple of days before it was due the fork seals started leaking. What is a boy to do eh ? Well this boy pulled down the dust covers, filled the gap with my pretty blue instant gasket and pushed the covers back up. All I had to do was check for leaks just round the corner from the test station, give the forks a quick wipe over and Bob's yer uncle ! Heh, Heh: Isn't it great when a plan comes together ! What the tester did pull me up on was the fact that the headlamp dipped the wrong way, and how did it get through its last test like that ? Search me. Anyway the were pretty good and let me tape up the glass to get through it. I later used the official Piaggio factory race mod. to put it right.

When I did get round to changing the fork seals a couple of months later, it was only because they had started to really leak quite badly. Shame on me ! As usual I got round to it when I really couldn't do without the bike, and the job had to be done, like, yesterday. I didn't have time to wait to get hold of the fork seal tool, but decided to get on with it anyway. How hard can it be to put in a couple of rubber seals ? The answer to this is 'bloody difficult'! Getting the forks apart and the old seals out was pretty easy, if messy. I didn't need a vice like the Gen says, just pulled the two halves of fork apart, but getting the new seals in was, shall we say, quite a different matter. It ended up with me clamping the fork legs in a 'workmate' and gently easing the new seals in with a couple of large screwdrivers. I can feel you all cringing already ! Still, it worked alright and they don't leak anymore. What's all this about using plastic coin pags to protect the seals when you put them in ? I couldn't risk that. Knowing my luck I'd have bits of ripped bag hanging out of the forks ! What I did was to smear loads of vaseline over everything. It worked a treat. [The plastic is just used while you first put the new seals on over the end of the legs to protect them from the sharp edges - Ed.] I've managed to nick a short length of scaffolding pole to to make my own tool from for future use, but if Bob Wright got a special tool made up at a good price, I'd be first in line for one.

About this time I fitted a pair of RC handguards. Yes, I know that at £18.50 they are a little steep, but it saved all that trimming an after market pair would have needed. They look pretty neat too.

Cambelt time came round at the start of May, which didn't pose any problems. I marked the old belt with a high-lighter pen like it says in the GeN. The belt was changed after only 10k as I couldn't be sure how long it had been on there. When I started up the bike afterwards, it started to make weird tinkling noises when it was cold. I put up with this for about a week, then thought it might be best to check it out. You guessed it, the belt was running too slack and touching a section of casting inside the casing, leaving slight marks on the outside of the belt. Oh shit ! Still, they weren't actual grooves or anything, so I decided it would be OK. Shortly afterwards the new edition of the GeN arrived, which warned about over-tightening the belt. That's right, mine was now too tight ! Still, I've got quite a dab hand at whipping the fairing off by now !

By the end of June the back tyre was down to the canvas again. Would I ever get used to these tyres ? The Mez-1 had lasted for about 4300 miles. On a 53 bhp. 600 ! That's pretty crap by anybody's standard. This time I replaced it with one of those new Avon Azaros, which are supposed to have hard rubber in the middle and a softer compound around the outside. This set me back £115. What a great tyre this one is ! When I get home, the outside edges are all peely and sticky to the touch. Also the centre of the tread has some wear indicators, a must for numpties like me ! So far it's done about 6000 kms, and it's still not quite down to the top of the indiactors (the Mez-1 was BALD by 6900 kms.)

A couple of weeks later, when about to come home from work, the bike wouldn't start. The starter was spinning merrily but not driving the engine; you've guessed it already - starter clutch failure. It had been getting a little noisy of late, but I hadn't put two and two together. Has anyone tried to bump a Nordwest ? If you haven't yet, do yourself a favour and don't bother ! All you do is leave impressive rubber marks on the tarmac and wear yourself out. A little old bloke with a Yamaha step-thru was watching me with interest. "You'll never do it in first mate, try second" he said helpfully. I looked at him in the only way you can when your water-proof clad helmeted body has just hauled 150 kgs. of dead super-moto up and down a short, steep incline for about ten minutes and answered, "It's not in first, it's in top!". What a bar-steward ! I gave up and

resigned myself to calling out the R.A.C. I gave the starter just one last push, and would you believe it, it burst into life ! A new starter clutch, plus gasket and oil seal cost me just short of £174 ! Bang went my fund to replace the rapidly disintegrating exhaust system. Still, it was easy enough to fix.

This seems to have been the last mishap to happen for quite some time, all I seem to do is start it up, ride it and put it away again, just the way things are supposed to be with bikes these days. The speedo cable broke again after five month's use, but that's all. I replaced it with a genuine one this time, and lost my extra 5 mph. Oh yes, one annoying trait is the bike's going through rear indicator bulbs on a regular basis. What seems to be the problem is water getting into the shells. This doesn't seem to happen on the front ones. I've recently plugged the stems on the inside of the shells with vaseline and outside with grease. Add this to taping the joints between the shells and lenses, leaving the drainage slots free for any condensation, and I should have licked it this time. I've tried converting the pilot bulb to run a 15 or 20 watt halogen bulb from those after-market mini indicators you can get, but they cannot cope with the continuous use. One even ended up looking like it had had an afternoon with a glass-blower ! I don't seem to be able to find one of those purpose built halogen bulbs that were popular a couple of years ago. I lost one of the bar end weights a while ago and replaced both with a pair of after market ones, minus original paint and polished up. Despite being a smaller size than usual, I still had to open up the I.D. of the bars a little. I've recently got hold of one of those little rubber caps that go over the spark plug to keep the crud out. Now I shouldn't have to give the recess a going over with a footpump before being able to take the plug out.

What else ? Oh yes, I've caught the stainless steel bug. I'm slowly replacing everything with a thread on it with stainless ones from a local factors at very reasonable price. I rode the Northwest up to the A.G.M. this year and discovered how uncomfortable the seat is. I was half expecting things to happen though, and took a lump of foam with me for when things got too bad. Sad to say that I lost it on the way back and paid the price. God did my arse hurt ! When the seat needs to be recovered it gets firmer foam put in as well.

I'm into the second year now and have just treated the bike to a complete stainless exhaust system, along with one of Uncle Dik's huggers. I bought the hugger finished in primer and sprayed it with Hycote matt black exhaust paint. This doesn't inspire confidence in my taste does it, but I reckon it looks great. The bike's just gone through another chain and it's first 15 tooth drive sprocket. The chain lasted about 14000 kms. and the sprocket about 18000. As yet the rear sprocket seems to be ok. Has anyone thought of producing some sort of sprocket carrier to make it possible to use cheaper alternatives ? I'm not looking forward to replacing the rear with the original costly item. Nothing really interesting has happened in my first year of Northwest ownership, I just get on it and ride it. I suppose there was the time when I was chasing some big Honda down a fast 'B' road, keeping up with it up to about 70 when he started pulling way, catching up rapidly because he didn't seem to want to take it above 90 on the short straights and totally nailing him on the brakes. Chasing a ZX10 for about twenty miles, on 'B' roads again, but losing out at the end of a by-pass in a torrential downpour when the bike developed wet weather brake lag. Getting done by an Escort on the by-pass. as he got past me, I saw the word 'MEXICO' on the boot lid, so I suppose that's not too bad , is it ?

Life's just one big party when you are a super-moto hooligan !

Information for Anoraks; Running costs 20/9/96 - 19/9/97.

MILEAGE: 16252 kms (10097 miles)
PETROL USED: 750.99 litres costing £454.88
AVERAGE CONSUMPTION: 61.2 mpg
COST OF SPARES: £649.37 (including consumables)
COST OF EXTRAS: £117.27
TAX, INSURANCE, M.O.T.: £194.67 (two years worth of insurance)
TOTAL RUNNING COSTS: £1416.19

I work this out to be costing about 14p per mile in all, which i suppose isn't too brilliant is it ? Still, it beats driving a car - or a Honda!

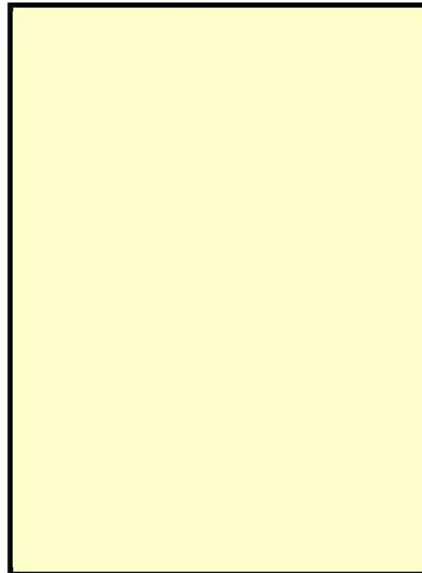
✉ Kevin Bennett

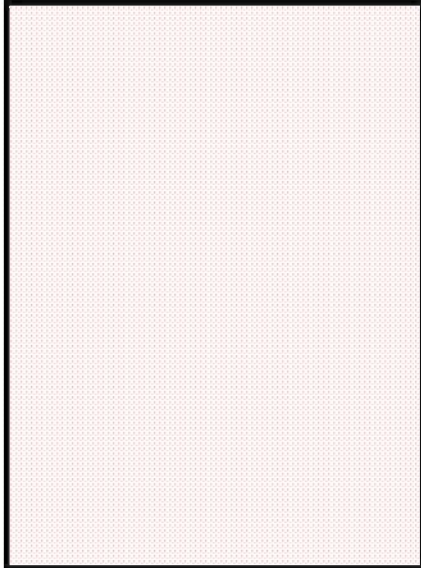
SATURNO REAR SHOCK HORROR - NOT !

As you will see from the photo of my Saturno's original rear shock, the bolt connecting the shock to the linkage had worn significantly over the threaded portion, i.e. the shoulder was too short, causing significant play in the rear suspension. The second point to note is that the new spring is a larger diameter than the standard item. This leads to clearance problems with the cast chassis plates/engine, since the spring has a tendency to rotate when adjusting pre-load.

What difference has it made ? I'd love to describe the transformation in ride quality ad nauseam, but I can't. Most of the time the suspension feels like it hasn't got any work to do, until you swap bikes (Laverda at Nurburgring). I guess that means it's working well. The only time I'm conscious of it's effect is when I've hit the sort of bump that you anticipate would rattle your teeth. The rattle fails to materialise, and I think of the thousand or so Guilders that the shock cost me, and no, I don't feel disappointed.

RING OF CONFIDENCE





Regarding the Nürburgring trip, I feel I ought to say more about the 'Advanced Riding Course' in general, than our particular trip. What it boils down to is this:- £500 is a lot of money. It'll buy you some wheels, two or three sets of tyres, a new paint job or a fancy crash helmet. None of these will improve your riding skill. Five track days might, but nothing will change the way you ride your machine as much as the 'ring'.

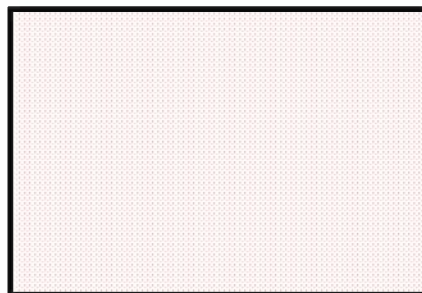
I've heard a story told by chief instructor Hans-Heinz Ditley, about a journalist who thought of an idea for the ultimate feature. Filled with excitement, he spoke to his editor. "We hire a track, and assemble a range of sports bikes from the very smallest to the very largest. Then myself and ?????? (insert racer of the moment, say Foggy) do laps and compare times. I start on the biggest machine, Foggy on the smallest. Eventually we see which two bikes lap at the same pace!" Without looking up, the editor replied "They don't make a bike small enough." Furious with this rebuff, the journalist storms out of the office and tries to convince the rest of the staff with his plans for feature to end all features. When he'd finished recounting his idea, the photographer piped up "They don't make a bike big enough".

Whatever your level of confidence/riding skill, at the ring, under the very high standard of tuition

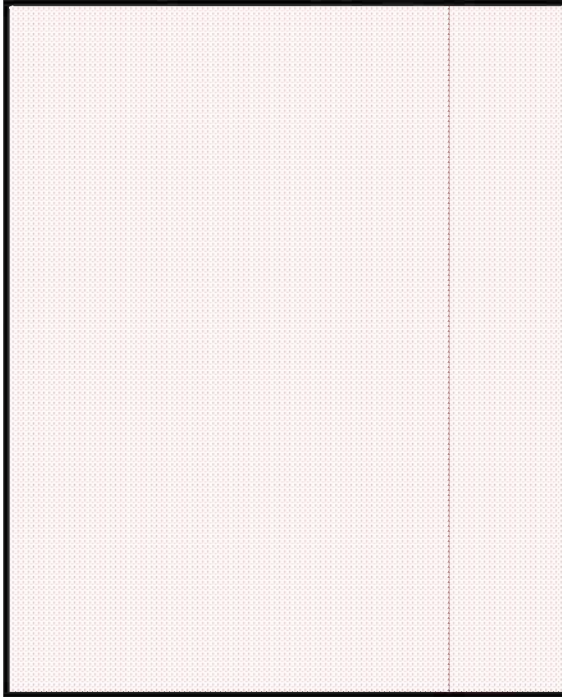
provided, it is inconceivable that you will remain unaffected. Aside from the awesome ride through Belgium and into Germany, you will experience at least 40 laps of the most awesome circuit on the planet. That's over 500 miles of track. That works out at the same pounds per mile ratio as even the best of the UK track days, even the Morini day at Cadwell. With three days of 3 star accommodation and excellent food thrown in, the 'Advanced Riding Course' represents excellent value. Be warned, the chances are it will become a regular commitment, but hey, you reap the benefit whatever you ride, and your skill is transferable from bike to bike. I've seen a standard Nordwest keep in touch with EXUP's, GSXR's, 916's..... well all sorts! Just do it.

For more details about the ring, see Hugo Wilson's excellent article in Bike magazine (August/September). Details of the course from the Nürburgring Riders Club, Little Croft, Guildford Road, Shamley Green, GU5 0RT.

✉ Andy Wallington



BOOK REVIEW



course the story of Raymond's success in seeing a Gilera once again lap the TT course at 100 mph when Mick Noblett rode one of the author's Piumas to 8th place in the 94 singles TT. I knew very little about the 250 GP campaign of 1992/93 before I read this book other than realising where the distinctive colour scheme for the GFR originated. Raymond tells all including speculating on the fate of the machines. My knowledge of the 125 and 175 twins was previously limited to their mention in 'Milan to the Mountain' and this work provides much more information.

A must for all Gilera enthusiasts (OK so I am biased by getting a mention and the inclusion of a photo of the ex John Rushworth Norturmo) with many wonderful photographs including Mick Noblett and Gavin Lee leaping Ballaugh Bridge in fine style.

UK Network members may purchase a copy direct from Raymond at a reduced rate of £13, post free. His Benelli Road racers book is also available at £5, or you can buy both for £17, post free. Raymond's book 'Laverda' is on offer at £15 as well as the paperback 'Laverda SFC 750' by Tim Isles at £10. Please be sure to send your Network Membership Number with orders. Cheques should be made payable to Raymond Ainscoe and sent to: 3 Mendip House Gardens, Curly Hill, Ilkley, LS29 0DD.

This latest work from the pen of Network member Raymond Ainscoe with the assistance of Gilera Four owner Gianni Perrone covers all the racing output of the Arcore works other than the legendary fours which Raymond covered so extensively in 'Gilera Road Racers'.

Nothing is left out, from the original 1909 317cc hillclimb winner to the ill-fated 250 GP's last outings in 1993. Once again Raymond regales us with a treasure of anecdotes and images to tell a story which reveals a wealth of detail concerning the marque. The various racing versions of the Saturno naturally command the lion's share of the text with chapters devoted to the 'classic' Competizione, Sanremo, Piuma and Bialbero plus Saturno 'specials'. For many Network members the chapter on the new Piuma will be the most fascinating, dealing as it does with machines bearing an obvious link with the nouvo Saturnos, Nordwests and RC600s that we ride, and of

PSF

Chairman's Chat

I had hoped that I would have managed to get a ride on the new 180cc Gilera Runner by now but it looks as if it is still a couple of months away. Hopefully I will have a test report in GeN 15. A test rider at the factory told me he had frightened himself on it and had never been so fast on a scooter. If you have ever ridden a 125cc Typhoon you will know how quick a 12hp scoot can be. Piaggio claim 19hp for the 180cc engine, that is a big increase in power. Top speed around 85 mph and acceleration that should produce serious Doppler shift! This is not going to be a scoot for little old ladies to go shopping on, well, not unless they still want to have fun.

No news of any new bikes yet, sorry. But I did notice one of the monthly mags says there will be a new Gilera before the end of the Millennium. Where did they get that from?

As you may expect, I spent a lot of time at the Bike Show and a good show it was. Disappointed not to see the new MV. Aprilia had the new V twin on show but it is a bit so what on a podium, what will it go like? All but one of the Ducatis had little name stickers that looked as if they had been put on as an after thought, maybe they had. Still no single.

Guzzi had a new sports model on show that looked good apart from the colour and much as I hate to say it the new BMW cruiser does not look quite so bad in the flesh. Oh yes and on the first two days Back Street Heroes had a couple of very attractive ladies doing a striptease at four o'clock. PC or not, let's face it: sex sells. They almost bought the show to a halt on both days. I was only looking at the bikes of course. I had better not mention the Lady on the Vesrah stand who looked like an over inflated Pamela Anderson.

Brian Ashley (The Magazine Man) was able to sell me three copies of the excellent Italian magazine Moto D'Epoca that had Gilera articles. One was a comparison between the Saturno and Piuma, the others were Saturno Corsa and 175 Regolarita.

The library is starting to grow, helped by Kevin

Bennett who kindly sent two mags with tests of the CX 125 and NGR 250. Thanks Kevin. At this rate I will know what I am talking about soon. Leigh Millward spotted that I do not know as much as I make out. In GeN 13 I said the MX-1 & MXR 125's had the electronic power valve. Yes Leigh you are quite right the power valve was mechanical on them. I will write out one hundred times "I must try harder". Leigh should know because he is a bit of a Gilera 125 fanatic and owns about a dozen different models! And he uses them, as his article in GeN 13 proves.

I hope I will see you somewhere during the coming year. In the mean time have a very happy Christmas and keep enjoying that bike.

PETROL: LEADED OR UN-LEADED

Leaded petrol will disappear from the pumps in 1999. It's official. So the obvious question is how will this affect our Gileras? Can the big four strokes use un-leaded petrol?

No one seemed sure so I asked the factory. The official reply is "We don't know". They are still trying to find out so watch this space for more information. The problem is that they can not find a piece of paper that says what material the valve seats are made of. Someone who used to work at Arcore thinks that the material may have been changed in 1991. So maybe late Nordwest's and RC600's are OK for un-leaded. But for the moment we do not know, so play safe and use 4 star.

There are additives that can be used with un-leaded, but I would not recommend using these because they are mostly unproved and some people are suggesting that they may not work very well. Soon there will be proper evaluation trials and official approval. By the time leaded is discontinued there will be proven additives in the shops.

What about the other Gileras? Two strokes have no problem with using un-leaded. Older engines will be fine on ordinary "premium" un-leaded but the newer high compression engines should use 'super'. In workshop manuals etc. the factory recommends 95 RON for all the GFR series of engines so if you have a CX, MX, Crono, GFR etc. use 'super'. Premium may cause "pinkling"

and that could end up giving you a big repair bill, so play safe.

All the older four strokes need lead and I include Dakota and Saturno in this.

SPRINGS AND SHOCKS

The Dutch suspension specialists WP (White Power) offer fork springs and rear shocks for several Gilera models.

Progressive fork springs cost £70 a pair including a litre of fork oil. If they do not list springs for your bike they can probably supply them if you send your old spring. I have WP springs in my Saturno and they have improved the handling, particularly in bumpy corners. Andy Wallington also has them and thinks they are good. He tends to ride quicker than most of us so a good recommendation I think.

Rear shocks come in two types both with spring pre load adjustment.

1. Adjustable rebound damping (11 settings) at £300 + vat.
2. Adjustable rebound (11 settings) and compression damping (7 settings) with remote reservoir at £495 + vat.

They list both options for the Northwest & Saturno, and the two way unit only for the RC600. People to contact are:

WP Competition Suspension (UK) Ltd.
Unit L. Lincoln Court
Borough Road
Brackley
Northants.
NN13 7BE
01280-705888

Oh yes. If you want some fancy forks they can do you a pair of 43mm upside down legs for a grand plus VAT. The KTM Duke has them which may begin to explain why it costs £6500+.

Talking of the Duke, did you see the road test in MCN of another Northwest replacement attempt? The new CCM. Even more expensive than the Duke. Also if you went to the Bike show did you notice a new Norton on the MCN stand? A limited edition Rotax powered machine to be made

by Norton Motors Deutschland GmbH. Price to be announced. I thought it looked reasonable, cunning tank styling made it look a bit like a Dominator and it has a pair of low level swept up silencers like a Commando. How the mighty have fallen!

All this talk of new singles brings me onto my very own Gilera project.

RC600 PROJECT STRADA

The last copy did not have a progress report because there had not been much progress. The bike has not been idle but I had been too busy to get on with the changes.

Latest is the acquisition of a four pot Brembo Gold Line calliper. EBC can supply a suitable floating disc and will make a carrier with the correct offset (when I know what it is). It looks like time to stop riding it and start pulling it to bits.

1. Make spacers to fit the 41mm Showa legs into the RC's 43mm yolks.
1. Get a wheel spindle made to suit the Showa forks.
2. Make a calliper mounting bracket to fit Brembo onto Showa leg.
3. Lace a 17" rim onto front hub.
4. EBC disc and carrier.
5. WP can supply softer springs for the Showa legs if I need them. I expect I will because the RC is a lot lighter than the CBR 600 that the Showa's were intended for.

That's enough to keep me going for now. The bike has been going well and doing quite a lot of miles. Always starts easily and has not used a drop of oil. Fuel consumption is about 55 mpg, nowhere near as good as the Saturno despite me tending to ride it slower because I find the wind noise awful at speed even with ear plugs. It will have a small screen when it is finished !

NORTHWEST & RC600 CARB ADJUSTMENT TOOL

I have recently talked to a couple of people who needed to adjust their slow running mixture.

During a conversation I realised that maybe there is a connection between starter clutch failure and badly adjusted carbs. OK so it's not quite the X Files but it is a curious story.

Sometimes when you try to start your bike it kicks back and makes a terrible metallic "crack". That kick back is pretty violent and must give the starter clutch a hard time. If that happens often maybe it is a contribution to early clutch failure.

The engine probably kicks back because the mixture is weak. If you richen the slow running mixture the kicking back can be prevented.

The slow running adjustment is a brass screw that is situated underneath the left hand carb in front of the float bowl. It is recessed in a vertical tubular part of the main body casting. You need a very short flat bladed screwdriver, this can be made easily and cheaply from any cheap screwdriver or a piece of bar with a blade filed on the end. The drawing gives you some idea of the type of tool you need.

If you need to remove the adjuster screw because you are cleaning the carb jets etc., first, start screwing it in and count how many turns it takes till it is in as far as it will go (do not use too much force). Now you can take it out. When you refit it, screw it all the way in and then un-screw till it is where it was originally. It should be about 1.5 turns out + 0.5 turn.

Warm up the engine then experiment by turning the screw a quarter of a turn in one direction. Is the idle and pick up better or worse?

If it is better. Try another quarter turn. Is it better or worse?

If it is worse, turn it back the other way quarter of a turn. Is it better?

If it is better, try another quarter of a turn.

Get the idea? You will soon find the setting where the idle and pick up are best. As you adjust it you will probably find the tick over speed will need to be reset. Keep the tick over set to about 1200 rpm. When you think you have the setting right go for a slow ride. How does the pick up and slow riding feel? When you shut the throttle there should not be any backfiring or loud popping from the exhaust. If there is, the mixture is weak, turn the screw out quarter of a turn and try again. If the mixture is too rich you will notice that when you

rev the engine and then shut the throttle the idle will at first be low and then will recover to the correct speed, turn the screw in a quarter of a turn and try again. Screw OUT to richen the mixture.

I find that I need to adjust the screw by 1/4 to 1/2 a turn on both Saturno and RC600 during the year to keep them running sweet in hot summer and cold winter. It is amazing how much nicer that little adjustment makes them feel.

Oh one last thing. If you can not get rid of backfiring then you may have a leak in the exhaust system and air is being sucked in. Examine all joints and check everything is tight. If there is a leak you will find signs of a black sooty deposit. By the way if you have a carburettor with the adjuster screw on the air inlet side of the float bowl (many older carbs are like this) then you screw IN to richen the mixture.

KICK START & ELECTRIC START

The other half of this story is the starter clutch. We have talked about this before and all I have to add is that if yours fails a new one will cost you £195 inc.VAT. Don't forget that I have some notes available, if you want to try a repair. Send me an s.a.e.

You may feel inclined to put a kick start on to ease the load on that starter clutch. Yes it is an option and all the parts are available. It is not a big job but the bits ain't cheap. Altogether the parts will set you back something like £350 ! If you are determined to do it I have a list of the part numbers you need and an exploded view of how it fit together. You do not need to do any modifications, you just fit the bits in.

BRAKE PAD OPTIONS.

If you need new brake pads for your Nordwest, Saturno, RC600 or GFR here is a list of pads that various manufactures offer. Be careful if you are ordering by mail order because some peoples' listings are wrong. Manufacturers may have pads that are the correct size but the material may not be suitable so I would suggest that you stick to recommended pads.

NORDWEST

	Front	Rear
Original-----	318833	323626
Ferodo -----	FDB 498	FDB 207 R
EBC -----	FA 126	FA 47
Vesrah -----	VD 943	VD 911
SBS -----	601	519

SATURNO

Original -----	318895	323626
Ferodo -----	FRP 408	FDB 207 R

RC600 '91

Original -----	346224	341888
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same as below

RC600 '89-'90

Original -----	341878	341888
Ferodo -----	FDB 499	FDB 383 R
Vesrah -----	VD 942	VD 239
SBS -----	608	575

GFR 125

Original -----	346487	953631
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K&N AIR FILTERS

The easiest way of getting a bit of extra power from your engine is to use a more free flowing air filter and exhaust. The exhaust could be a Stainless one from Bob Wright, or a can with a connecting pipe made to suit your bike.

K&N have filters that will fit the Saturno and Nordwest. A few things to consider if you want to change your filter.

1. You will need to get the engine on a dyno and re-jet the carb.
2. Saturno. You will have a large empty space if you remove the air box. The bike will look much better if you make some side plates to replace the air box.
3. The engine breather normally goes into the air box so you will need to think what to do with it. Racers normally have a beer can or washing up liquid bottle to catch any oil from the breather. A road bike does not normally blow oil out and a length of large bore tube will let the engine breathe without making a mess. K&N have a breather valve that you could fit under the seat somewhere to make a really neat job.

BITS WE IGNORE # 1. STEERING HEAD RACES.

Back in the good old days when I was alive, motorcycles had to be fiddled with continually to keep them going. Weekends and evenings were routinely spent cleaning, adjusting and replacing. We were intimately familiar with every stripped thread and frayed cable in our trusty machines and how we loved their quaint little ways. The way they would always refuse to start when we were already late for work and the way the lights always went out half way round an unlit tight bend. Now we are denied these pleasures because bikes have become so boring and reliable. What I am trying to say is: because your bike (nearly) always starts and runs sweetly it is very easy to ignore lots of little things that would ultimately make your bike last longer and in time to come, be more reliable.

Steering head bearings tend to be forgotten by most of us until it is too late and then we just change them and forget about them all over again. They do not need much maintenance but a little bit of effort can make them last for ever.

Most Gileras are not fitted with a centre stand and that makes it much harder to check the condition of these bearings. You need to get the front wheel off the ground to make a quick check. Head races are checked by raising the front wheel off the ground and turning the handlebars slowly from side to side. If you notice a slight notchy feel especially as you pass the straight ahead position the bearings are damaged. Next stand in front of the bike and grip the bottom of the fork legs. Pull and push, there should be no free play at the head stock. If there is movement, you need to tighten the races. Sometimes you can feel this movement but as it is very small you may not. Get someone else to pull and push while you put your finger half on the bottom yolk and half on the head stock. You will be able to feel the smallest movement.

Adjusting the Head Races

1. Loosen the pinch bolts on the bottom yoke.
2. Loosen the top nut, in the middle of the top yoke.
3. Under the top yoke there is a castellated ring.

Turn it clockwise to tighten using a C spanner or tap it round with a hammer and punch. It will not need to be moved much. Do not turn it till it is tight. The taper roller races are correctly adjusted when there is just no free play. It is very easy to over-tighten them and then they will fail quite quickly.

Tighten them until the forks will not fall from side to side under their own weight when you turn them. Now slacken off slightly until they will fall freely. Next tighten the top nut. You may find that now the races are too tight. If they are, slacken the top nut, loosen the adjuster a bit and retighten the top nut.

If it feels OK, tap under the bottom yoke with a hide or nylon hammer (both sides) just to make sure that the fork legs have moved in the clamps and then tighten the clamp bolts.

Job done.

Now I wouldn't mind betting that no one has greased those bearings since the bike was built. That means it is long overdue time they were greased.

1. Support front of the bike and remove the wheel.
2. Take the callipers off and tie them up to the bike somewhere.
3. Disconnect the speedo.
4. Take the top yoke off. Be careful because when you loosen it the forks will fall out and they are quiet heavy.

The forks will come out complete with the bottom yoke and one half of the bottom bearing and the rollers. The top race will be left complete at the top.

5. Clean roller cages and races in petrol or something similar.

6. Inspect the races for any sign of dents or damage (rust etc.)

If all is well then thoroughly grease the rollers and reassemble and adjust as above.

Because you have not loosened the bottom yoke clamps the forks will go back together easy and straight.

If you have to change the races then the difficult bits are getting the bottom inner race off the stem and getting the outer races out of the steering head. There are tools designed to do the job and a local bike shop may lend them to you. Otherwise you will need a long punch which you can put through the head stock and tap the race out, first one side then the other, a little at a time.

Getting the bottom inner off is tricky. Carefully tap a slim cold chisel or screwdriver under the race, first from one side then the other, go steady. You will probably damage the dust cap which is under the race so replace it (it's cheap). The important thing when refitting the races is to get them to be fully seated all the way round. Don't hit them directly with anything metal, use a wooden drift. The races will probably settle a bit so check the adjustment after you have done 10 or 20 miles.

PLACES TO GO '98. CZECH RALLY

I have mentioned a rally in Czech Republic. Now I have the dates for 1998. The rally will be held over 5 days from 4th to 9th July.

Plan to leave home on Saturday 27th June and get home on Sunday 12th July. A steady pace going the scenic way needs three days so there is no need to hurry and plenty of time to spare for sight seeing. If you want to look at a map. The rally is in small village called Hovezi. Looking at a map of Czech Republic, find Brno in the south then look east for Zlin. Hovezi is just to the east of Zlin but it may not be on the map because it is fairly small. The rally is a very friendly affair and the club organise places to visit, entertainment etc.

GEN BINDERS AND OTHER STUFF

Do not forget that we have superb hard binders for your copies of the GeN magazine.

Antique red with gold blocking on the spine. Each binders holds twelve copies. £ 4.10 each or £3.95 each if you order more than one. P&P included. Cheque made payable to Gilera Network for binders.

Also I have:

Red T-shirts with Gilera logo on left breast in white. L. XL. XXL. L will fit about 38 chest.

£5 each + 75p p&p for any number.

Red base ball caps with Gilera logo in white. One size fits all. £2.50 each inc. p&p.

Embroidered badges. Golden yellow logo on black or red. £2.50 each.

Cheque made payable to D.Champion for these

please.

✉ **David Champion**

Nick Wingate 01300-345285 is looking for a **Saturno**.

Sally Kelly (member) is looking for a cheap **Saturno** (second one) to go racing with.

Bob Wright has a very tidy, very low mileage blue **Nordwest** for **£2995**.

WANTED & FOR SALE

30,00 MILES ON A NORDWEST

After 3 years of running a Nordwest I have finally got around to writing into the GeN and re-living 30,000 miles of to date trouble free ownership.

It all starts with a Honda CBX 550 which having survived a tour around France in 1992 was looking very unlikely to manage a second through France into northern Spain in 1993. A new bike was needed - along with a quickly arranged loan as we were only a week away from our holiday! That was when I remembered an article in "Which Motorcycle" for a Nordwest. Now this bike seemed to be the ultimate street hooligan, and as luck would have it, the magazine printed all the Gilera dealerships of that time. A quick call to Trevor Goodalls Motorcycles of Didcot (who still do all my servicing) and I was on my way to test ride the bike.

Well, one test ride, some handing over of cash and one week later my wife and I were belting down to northern Spain, two up on a Nordwest with throw over panniers flailing behind. Now this holiday as luck would have it turned out to be the wettest I've ever had - no wonder northern Spain is so bloody green!

Throughout the holiday the bike ran without a hitch which having had no time to prepare the bike before we left the U.K. was great. Initial impressions of the bike were of a quick engine that lived off revs, a seat like a rock and no turning circle because of the upside down forks which seemed to have missed out on any damping development time. This, however, didn't stop the bike achieving enough angle of lean to drag Carol's feet on the deck in tight switchback corners. Despite my initial scepticism a Nordwest is definitely OK for two up touring over big distances. [Agreed! - Ed.]

After the tour the bike was put straight into action as a 100 mile a day commuter into London. This is the role at which the bike excels. The height, handlebar leverage, lack of weight and "those brakes" have got me into and luckily out of a lot of cross London scrapes. The closest I've got to a big off was a bit embarrassing. One minute I'm riding

through Camden Town, paying no attention, going relatively slowly, the next I pay more attention to the traffic in front which has now come to a standstill and I hit the brakes in panic. It was that moment of maximum tyre/road interface that I did my first near vertical endo. If you've ever done one you will know of that horrible moment when it feels as if you're going straight over the bars with the bike following directly behind.

Luckily the bike came to earth but the rear suspension promptly compressed, rebounded and spat me off into the kerb. The bike came to no harm because I was lying underneath it pinned to the road. I wouldn't like that accident to happen now because in common with most Northwest owners the fuel cap leaks petrol.

Despite having done over 30,000 miles the bike is looking and running well. The main cosmetic problems have been a seat which has totally fallen apart and is now covered in silver industrial tape. The side panels have cracks around their mounting points but apart from these items the Northwest polishes up as good as new. Maintenance of the engine over this amount of mileage is constant with the oil being changed every 1500 miles, with the filter every other oil change. The bike is now on its third cam belt.

One dangerous aspect of the bike at the moment is the performance of the brakes in the wet. When wet there is no initial stopping power at all. The shock of not slowing obviously makes me apply a bit more lever pressure, at which point they suddenly bite. This then upsets the balance of the bike whilst trying to avoid the back end of the car in front. I suspect glazed pads front and rear. Has anyone else had this problem - if so what was the fix? Another problem in the wet is an engine which wants to stall at tick-over and 'bogging down' at low revs. Has anyone else had a similar problem and solved it because I can't find anything wrong with the electrical system. Both these problems make riding in the rain no fun at all on the Northwest.

The consumables list so far is pretty large with the biggest outlay being tyres. To date I've tried Michelin Hi-Sports, Dunlop Battleaxes and Pirelli Dragon Corsas. Of the three I would recommend the Pirelli corsas. They provide a

massive amount of grip and feel totally secure at peg grinding angles of lean. They were put to best use during the track day of Italia 95 around the 1 mile Stowe circuit of Silverstone race track. This was where I met Pete Fisher and promptly lapped him a couple of times over the mile long circuit (sorry Pete but I had to mention that!) But this was not the highlight of the day because John Surtees was there preparing for the following day's classic race on his M.V. Agusta. This was obviously too good an opportunity to miss and I set about trying to lap him, which after about five laps I managed. Now you could say he was taking it easy for the next days race but I reckon that once a racer always a racer and he was trying to keep me behind. [I think the only Gilera not to pass the MV that day was the four! - Ed.] Well it was a great day and this year I will definitely be at Cadwell Park to see how many times I can lap Pete on his 604 Northwest.

So far I haven't made any additions to the Northwest. A pair of Polysport handguards which are held in place by the bar end weights have been added. These proved to be quite awkward to fit as the brake line banjo bolts to the master cylinder had to be changed to give enough fitting tolerance. The bar end weight retaining bolts were also replaced by some coach bolts which were longer than the original cross head bolt and maintained a flush fit. The only other accessory has been the fitment of a Scott oiler which I would strongly recommend. This item was fitted behind the left hand passenger footrest. There is a small gap set within the existing splash guards which allows the oiler to be located unobtrusively. It gets the full brunt of all the elements but after 6 months has caused no problems at all. Chain adjustment has been greatly reduced and, therefore seems to be lasting much longer.

Well, the only area left to report is what go-faster goodies I would like to blow cash on. This list could obviously be large but the main items I would like are:

1. Extremely loud carbon fibre Quill silencer system. This will replace the tinfoil standard fitment which is rotting away and make me much more noticeable in traffic.
2. Keihin smooth bore carbs for a bit more power (but how expensive are they and where can I get them from? [about £300 from Allens Ed.]
3. A Stan Stephens head tune (as detailed in

'Performance Bikes' approx. two years ago.
4. A new seat cover - a gain of at least 10 mph as the existing cover lets the foam soak up gallons of water - which is now freezing to a large ice cube in this winter weather.

Well that's the story so far on my well-travelled Nordwest. Having read of other people's problems it would seem that they can be avoided by riding the bike more frequently as I've had no problems at all (or maybe I've just got a good 'un ?)

What ever the reason it would be good to see more Gileras on the road to help keep the marque alive. See you after the next 30,000 miles - which at the current rate should not take long.

 Ian Hambly

Simon Roberts has some second hand parts for sale (all '93 model). All prices are in sterling excluding postage and packing. Contact Simon at:

Diakenhuisweg 57
2033 AP HAARLEM
The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)23 - 533 05 43
Fax +31 (0)23 - 533 85 54
Email: mailto:simon@socom.nl

Rack, Handles and Bolts - 30 .00

USED PARTS AVAILABLE

Belly Pan - 10 .00
Tank - 50 .00
Rear Mudguard (Magenta) - 15 .00
Silencer (Aborbtion Baffled in Alu/Stainless) - 75 .00
Standard Silencer (13k km's) - 50 .00
Passenger F/rests and Hangers - 20 .00
Rear Subframe - 30 .00
Indicators (no bulbs) - 5 .00
Shock (30k km's) - 30 .00 , Linkages & bolts - 35 .00
Fuse Box and steel compartment - 15 .00
Right Rad & Header Tank - 35 .00
Left Rad - 10 .00
Cooling Fan - 10 .00

Clutch Lever & Mount - 5 .00
Airbox - 5 .00
Rear Mudflap - 5 .00
Rear Light (no bulb) - 10 .00
Instrument (30k km's) - 40 .00
Fr. Master Cyl. (Scratched Lid) - 20 .00
Mirrors (new pair - 25 .00) (old pair - 15 .00)
Battery Carrier - 5 .00
Ignition Relay - 5 .00
Carb. - 140 .00
Handguards (scuffed) - 5 .00

Adrian Hawking would like to contact any members in The Netherlands or be put in touch with dealers near Eindhoven. Contact hime via the Secretary.

Tony Moore asks about tyres for a Nordwest. The experiences of three hard-riding high mileage Nordie owners are featured in this issue. Any other feedback - particularly on better mileage ?

Quick Queries

Christian Matt has a problem with a flat-spot between 3500 - 4500 rpm on his Nordie. He suspects it may be due to someone modifying the silencer to reduce back-pressure - any ideas ? He is not impressed with the forks, but as we know there is little you can do with the Paiolis except experiment with weight and quantity of oil. The fork seals will always require regular replacement I fear ! - Ed.