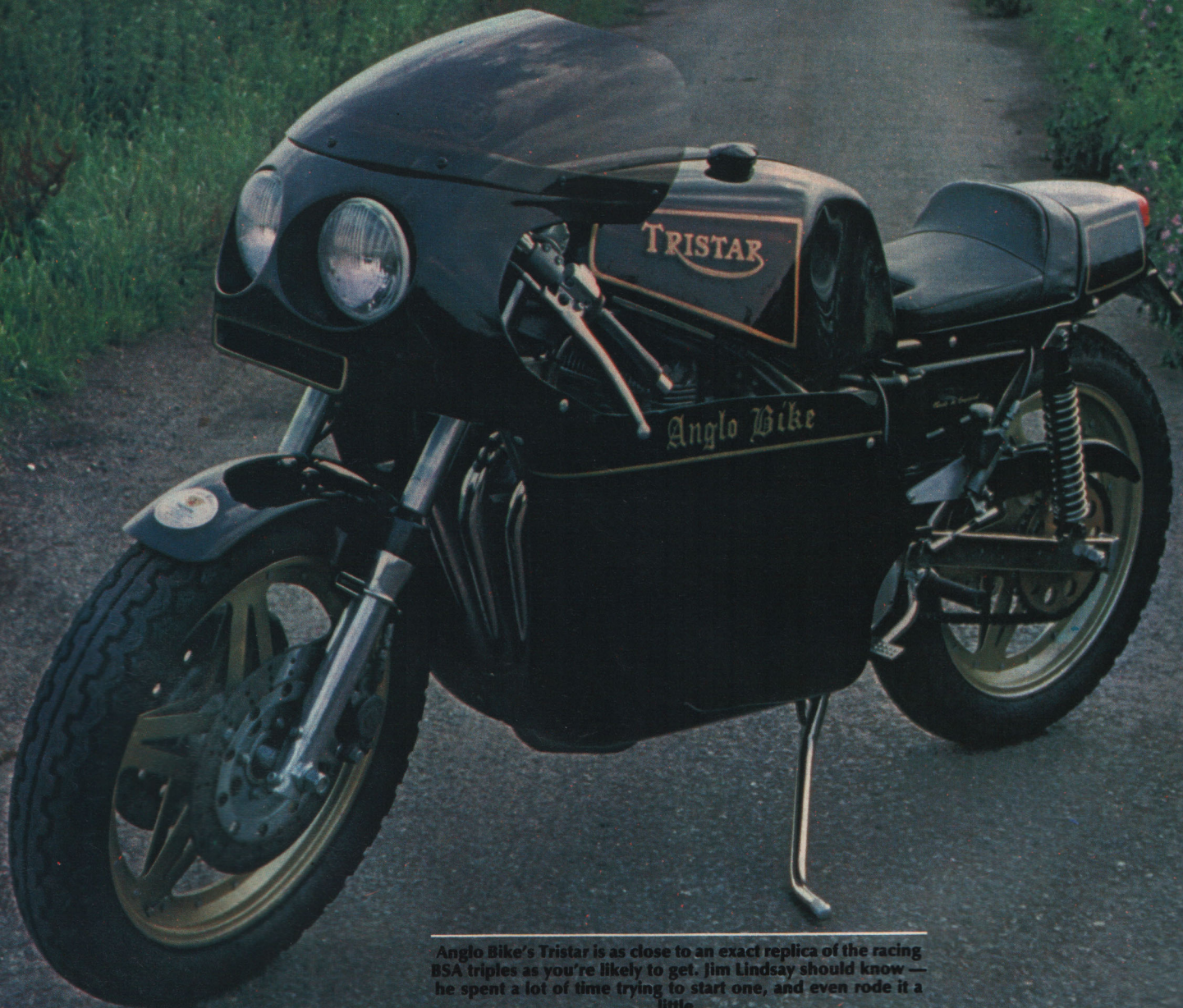


RACETRACK REFUGEE



Anglo Bike's Tristar is as close to an exact replica of the racing BSA triples as you're likely to get. Jim Lindsay should know — he spent a lot of time trying to start one, and even rode it a little.

'LOOK JIM, IT'S NOT HARD. ALL YOU gotta do is tickle the carbs, pull down on that piece of bog chain for the middle one, fold the lever out from inside the fairing, give it a good hard kick then keep it held down with your foot while you transfer your left hand to the throttle. Ok? Right, with your free right hand, reach down and take hold of the kickstart, take your foot off it then fold the lever back inside the fairing.'

BWAAAAAAAAAAAA, kerchunk, kerchunk, phut, went the motor.

'Oh yeah, sorry, Got to keep blipping it until the motor warms up.'

Two guys hired to fill in the petrol shortage tanks at Anglo Bike's Berkshire premises watched disinterestedly while I struggled to master the starting technique. I almost dropped it once. The second time I nearly took my patella off on the edge of the swish, black fairing and, take three, it started but I stalled it again straight away. Going down for the fourth time I got it right and wobbled out of the forecourt with what was left of my dignity.

What was it? It was the Anglo Bike Tri Star 3, a full chat Trident motor living in a Rob North works replica frame. A fast refugee from the early 70s with as much legality as a sawn off shotgun, and the most visually exciting street racer that we've had all year. There was no speedo, just a Krober rev counter with pieces of Dymo-tape stuck on to indicate the speeds in the gears ('It's experimental officer.') And the exhaust system would bend a decibel meter even on tickover ('Yes officer. The baffles fell out down the road apiece.') In all respects a conspicuous and somewhat lethal motorcycle.

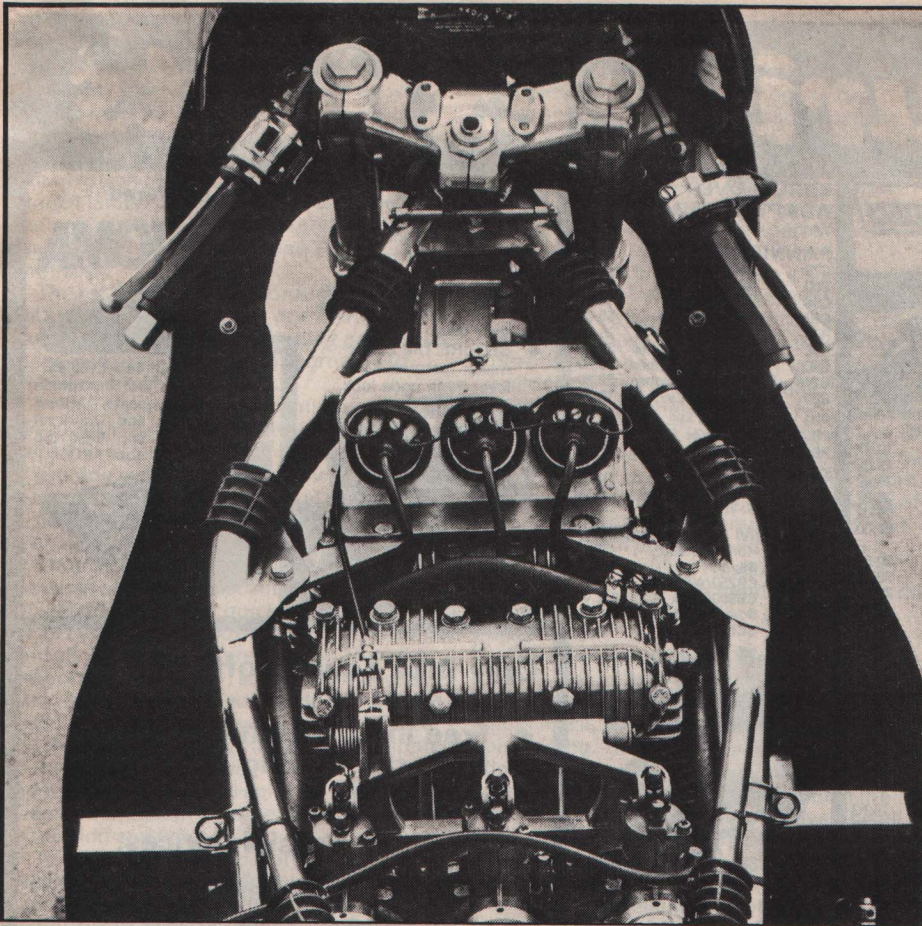
It took at least ten miles of the journey back to Peterborough before I started to feel comfortable on it. I love clipons an' sets, they're my favourite crouch, but the setup on the Tri Star was so radical, hands halfway down the fork legs, feet above Uranus, that it took a longer period of familiarisation than usual. The steering lock was the tightest I've ever come across. No sweat when you're mixing it in the curves but a pain when you're negotiating T-junctions. All that elegant, expensive fibre glass just waiting to be destroyed doesn't do much for your nerves. However, you get over these things eventually.

The motor is pure animal with a top rev limit of 9,000 and nothing much happening below 6,000. To get the best out of it you have to use the box all the time and a pair of earplugs ain't a bad idea either. When that short megga has been assaulting your eardrums for more than a hundred miles it makes you kinda punchy. Below six the, er, silencer puts out a flat bellow but once you hit the magic figure, it snarls and storms round to nine grand with indecent haste.

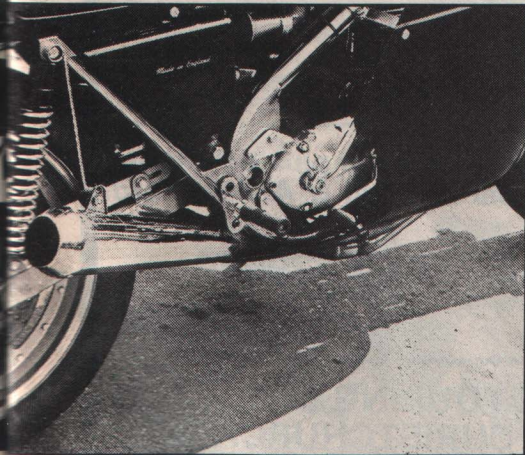
Having turned all available heads in Newbury we picked up the A38 and headed towards Oxford. Speed like a pancake over the five gallon tank, tucked in behind the tinted screen at Xmph it's a great bully's bike. It makes so much noise and the twin headlight version of the famous letterbox fairing looks so mean and nasty that motorists scuttle out of your path like to many frightened bugs.

'Ah, this is the life,' I thought to myself, 'warm sun, quick, pretty bike, good middle distance journey over an interesting mixture of roads. Hey, sometimes this job is almost as good as it sounds.' Until . . .



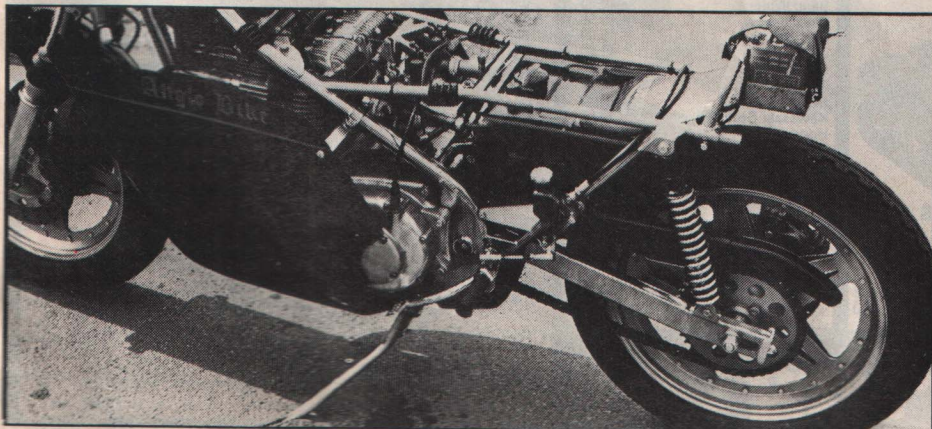


Above: The massive double cradle of the North chassis gives plenty of elbow room around the top of the motor. Evidence of neat preparation abounds all over the place.



Left: Oh yeah, this is meant to be a silencer. About as effective as an empty bean can. Astralite wheels come pretty expensive at £100 a time but they sure do look the business.

Below: Low seat rails for ground hugging bums make the clipons just about bearable. Massive box section swingarm keeps the back end nice and rigid through all manner of lunatic abuse.



Until I pulled into the big café on the Oxford bypass to decant some lunchtime beer. There dripping from the frame tubes was the old black blood my brothers, always on tap, always the same. It looked like the pushrod oil seals. Not serious enough to turn back, I decided, just have to take it easy on the bends. To be fair, Peter Frost had told me before I left that this bike was a prototype and might give me one or two problems. It didn't matter much anyway, I munched on a Brand X cookie (The Choice of Champions), sipped a cup of tea and went on my way suitably anaesthetised and able to take life at a safely sedate pace.

Anglo Bike have been playing round with the triple motor for quite some time and this is potentially the hottest motor that they've come up with so far. The head has been milled to give a CR of 10:1 and has also been fully gasflowed. The cams are works racer TH6s operating standard valves fitted with competition springs shimmed out to allow the motor to rev to 9,000rpm, which is fast for a British pushrod triple. The inlets suck from three 27mm Amal Concentric Mark 1 carbs mounted on an angled manifold to give a semi-downraught effect. There are no air filters of course and the Amal bellmouths have been cut down to improve gas velocity.

To keep all the spinning bits together, the crank has been balanced and the clutch has had some weight shaved off it along with the valve gear. A special oil pump squirts the black stuff through enlarged drillings. The waste products are chucked out of a works replica three into one exhaust system copied from Doug Hele's pattern for the works racers' systems. There is an absorption baffle fitted to the silencer but it don't seem to do very much in the way of reducing the noise output. The whole plot is sparked by Rita from Lucas who keeps the bangs coming smoothly all the way to the top of the rev range. It's quite a package and gives the kind of urge that you wouldn't normally expect from a Triumph 3. Eesa queek one señor.

By the time I got back to my Peterborough and Environs Kustom Kage (They have to lock us lot up at night to prevent us running away to London) the oil had spread over a few places it shouldn't. My jeans and my boots, not to mention the pool that had collected in the bottom of the fairing and then been blown over the lefthand side of the back tyre, making for an occasional sideways two-step shimmy on lefthanders and roundabout exits. My almost famous arse (We knew it — ed.) had taken a hammering from the thinly padded seat too but I prefer it that way 'cos you can feel exactly what's going on between the bike and the tarmac. With the excellent handling of the Rob North chassis inviting much stupidity, you want all the feedback you can lay your hands on.

It was a Thursday and the bike was due to go to MIRA for a butchery session the following Monday and I didn't fancy sliding round the banking at 100mph and faster. A plaintive phone call to Peter Frost of Anglo Bike did the trick. 'We'll be up to fix it on Sunday,' he affirmed.

'Stay and have dinner with us,' I said generously, thinking we could at least eat well and claim it all back on expenses. While the two Peters spannered in the ramshackle conservatory we prepared a massive dinner in the kitchen. It didn't take too long before they were running the motor up in the back garden, shattering the Sunday afternoon peace of the quiet neighbourhood (serves

'em right) and scaring the living daylight out of the dog.

On Monday I rode an oiltight bike to MIRA, put on my butcher's apron and got on with the job in hand. The gearing let the motor down. It steadfastly refused to pull fifth down the timing straight even after holding it flat out in fourth on the banking. It did manage to clock 118mph in fourth, which ain't bad going. So, with the right gearing the bike should run well into the respectable end of the 120s.

The road back to Peterborough from the MIRA track at Nuneaton is one of my favourites as I never tire of telling people, so it seemed like the perfect opportunity to check out the handling . . .

Which turned out to be confidence inspiring in the extreme. The bike has a veritable excess of ground clearance. In fact, if you ride one and find that you're grounding it regularly you'd better trade in your bike for a racer and take to the circuits. The most I managed was to put down the outer edges of my boots and I was going some to do that. Because of the riding position the only way to hustle the bike down quickly is to do like the racers do, shoulder down, bum out, knee out and all that jazz (it's a great pose). The bike responds very quickly, so quickly that you have to be careful not to overdo matters and put it down lower than you intended. Once on the right line, it stays there despite ripples, bumps, potholes and all the other impedimenta that the Highways Repair Department see fit to leave there for our education and enjoyment.

The rigidity of the Rob North chassis is legendary — that huge double cradle frame constructed in large diameter T45 tubing hardly flexes a micron and the firm spring takes care of the rest. The forks are Betor 38mm units while Girling gas shocks handle the back end. Those fancy Astralite racing wheels (same as used on the Hesketh) are shod with massive looking 4.25 x 18 TT100s

front and rear, and it takes a lot to get them sliding. No wonder it handles like it does. I never found its limits, and I'm not even sure I got near them, but I did give one or two unsuspecting riders some nasty shocks as they were twitching, hopping and sliding into bits of bent road. There's nothing like coming through on the inside a good 10mph faster with a big grin on your face. Very good for the ego and that factor is a large part of the Tri Star's appeal.

Wherever you take the bike it's greeted by gasps of disbelief even from those people who know nothing about motorcycles. It's hard to see how any machine can look that beautiful. Anglo Bike certainly know how to build bikes. The attention to detail is nothing short of astounding! As hard as I looked, there was not a naff solution to a problem anywhere. One hassle neatly overcome is the lack of mudguard mounting lugs on the fork sliders. To get around this they took a pair of U-shaped car exhaust clamps of the correct size, had them polished and plated to a standard that wouldn't disgrace an award winning show bike and mounted them on the sliders to hold the trim fibre glass guard in place. Neat.

The fibre glass work on the fairing and the seat is of a similarly high standard, smooth surfaces embellished with a gleaming coat of gloss black, and relieved with elegant gold pinstripping. The fairing is a particularly well designed adaptation of the letterbox items used on the works triples with a slot in the chin to allow the free flow of air over the oil cooler. The front is scalloped out to take two 60 watt Cibie halogen lights that make night look like day on full beam. The end result is a moulding that retains the styling of the original yet makes it practical for night and day use on the road. The mounting brackets are all sturdy, so nothing flaps around in the wind or buzzes with vibration.

The tank fitted to the test bike was an all alloy job with a capacity of five gallons. They

offer a 3 gallon version as well. Both are well made with lines that blend exactly into the overall styling. As it says on the cover, this is the sexiest, meanest looking Trident ever.

With all that go and handling on tap you need to be able to stop in a hurry too and this department is taken care of more than adequately by Lockheed Racing components getting to grips with a pair of 11 inch discs on the front and a single 10 inch disc on the rear. They're almost too much — using them hard makes your forearms feel as if they're about to break and your groin gets ground into the back of the petrol tank. Such is the integrity of the chassis however, that hard application of the brakes pulls you up in a dead straight line from any speed.

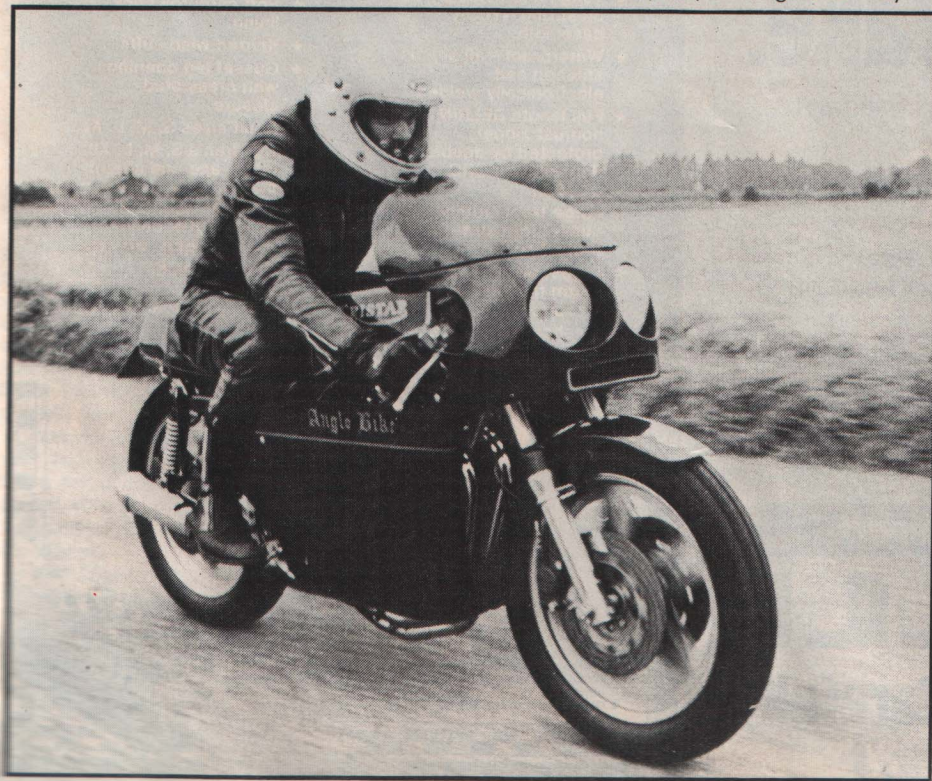
My last outing with the bike was at Mallory Park. As an upshot of my trip to Italy earlier this year, the Laverda Owners Club had invited me along for the day when they hired the club circuit. The week before I'd taken the bike back to Peter Frost so that he could set the motor up and drop the gearing to cope with the short circuit. This being done he trailed the bike up to my place and on the Sunday morning we loaded it into the *Bike* pickup truck and made our way towards the Leicestershire circuit.

Despite the large number of Italian triples, some of them decked out in very fancy clothing, the Trident was definitely the star attraction in the paddock. As I warmed it up a crowd gathered to stare, most of them holding fingers in their ears. One guy was was under the impression that the bike was mine even offered to do a straight swap with his '79 Jota.

On the track it was a slightly different story. As well as the bike went through the bends and as pretty as it looked, it lacked the power to keep up with the big Wops on the straights. I also had the misfortune to be out at the same time as Pete Davies and Roger Winterburn, stars of the *Avon/Bike* race series. They walked over everyone else too. No great surprise. I came in from the track wishing that I'd asked for lower gearing still. Going into Gerrards I had to use third, and then losing time by taking fourth halfway round. Still, it looked and sounded the business and the level of interest among the spectators remained high throughout the day. Also, I managed to stay on.

I had mixed feelings about returning the Tri Star. In some ways it was a troublesome machine, none too brilliant at coping with everyday transportation. It wasn't built for that. But when it was on song and the weather was nice it gave that unbeatable buzz associated with outrageous, uncompromising machinery that lunatics like me find totally irresistible. That snarling exhaust and them old high frequency vibes release more adrenalin than a gramme of the finest sulphate. More please.

Anglo Bike only make a very few of these specials and at prices from £3,500 up, depending on what spec motor you want, they're far from cheap. Especially when considering that the same money will buy you a Jota or a Hailwood Replica and leave you some change. The Tri Star is definitely for the well heeled or totally dedicated enthusiast who believes that if it's not made in England it's not a motorcycle. If that is you, Mr. Prospect, buy one. You'll not be disappointed.



Jim Lindsay