



“It’s a mid-life crisis *gone mad!*”

The enthusiasm for sixteener sports mopeds shows no signs of abating. Rod Gibson ventured to the wilds of Northamptonshire to meet a most enthusiastic gathering of owners.



Organiser Tony Collins with his mint condition purple Fizzy, as shown at Stafford. Tony not only runs the Sixteener Special website, he also specialises in top quality paintwork – ring him for a quote on 01227 369652.

WORDS/PHOTOS: Rod Gibson

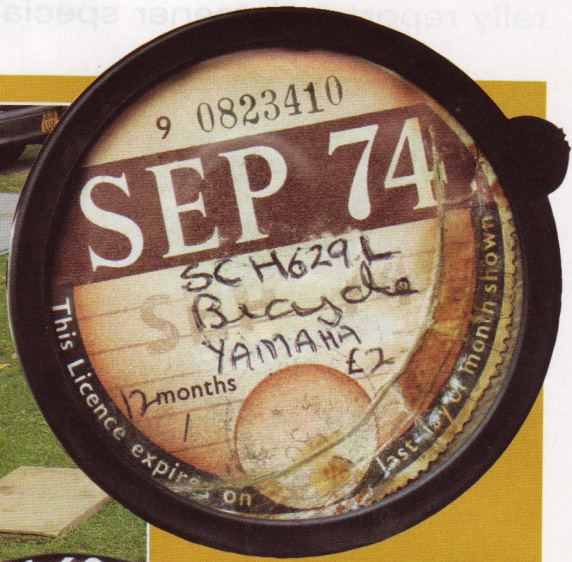
I was just too late to catch the sports moped craze of the 70s. Already past my 17th birthday I have to confess to an occasional sneer of superiority at 'ped riders as I cruised past on my huge and powerful Honda CD175, easily capable of speeds they seemed to brag about, but never actually achieve.

With hindsight, I missed out on one of the great youth movements of the 70s, and while the old pressed-steel Honda 175 twin will always have a special place in my affections I can only nod in sympathy for those whose first biking passions were ignited by the humble sixteener moped. Those youthful passions show no signs of abating, and the number of readers who love, restore and even ride pedal equipped 'peds is truly astonishing.

Riding the crest of the wave for sports mopeds, FS1-E and Fantic Chopper owner Tony Collins decided the time had come for an impromptu rally, and (more or less on the spur of the moment) booked a site at Billing Aquadrome for the first ever Sixteener Special weekend on 1-2 September.

With history repeating itself, I rode in on a bigger bike – this time our restored Kawasaki Z1 – which in deference to the masses of buzzing two-strokes I opted to park in a discrete and distant corner of the field. Just as well, as the massed ranks of moped owners had attracted large crowds of spectators and not a little media interest – even extending to a local TV News camera crew.

Considering the word-of-mouth nature of the event, the turnout was truly spectacular. Some 60 bikes



Charlie Owens from Ashbourne walked away with the 'best in show' trophy with the orange Fizzy he first bought in 1977. Charlie was the bike's second owner, and after passing his test the bike languished in his shed for ten years before he passed it on to a mate, who stored it for another nine years! The bike was fully restored in 2000 and is now part of Charlie's collection of 15 bikes, six of which are FS1-Es. The collection also includes a Z1, an H2 and a Ducati 916.

arrived on site, including no less than 20 FS1-Es. I arrived as the bulk of the riders were buzzing around Northants on the Sunday afternoon ride-out, and was therefore treated to the spectacle of the massed ranks arriving back on the site when they returned. Members of the public must have wondered what on earth was going on as ranks of buzzing Fizzys, AP50s and Garellis swarmed past like a timewarp visit to a 70s housing estate.

The gathering also offered the opportunity to line up the bikes for a

unique photoshoot – the row of FS1-Es rumoured to be the most ever pictured together since they left the factory decades ago and continents away. And judging by the ranks of happy riders, many now with their families in tow, Sixteener Special is likely to become an annual event. We hope so, and maybe next year I could even borrow a Fizzy to take along, and find out what I've been missing out on for all these years! You can get involved through the website forum at www.sixteener-special.co.uk



Due to be married four weeks after Sixteener Special, Ian and Jannine borrowed this FS1-E from Russell at Fizzy Galore for a quick buzz round the field. "I used to own a DT50 years ago," remembered Jannine, "and would thrash all the boys off the local estate who struggled to keep up. This is my first time on a sports moped since 1979!"



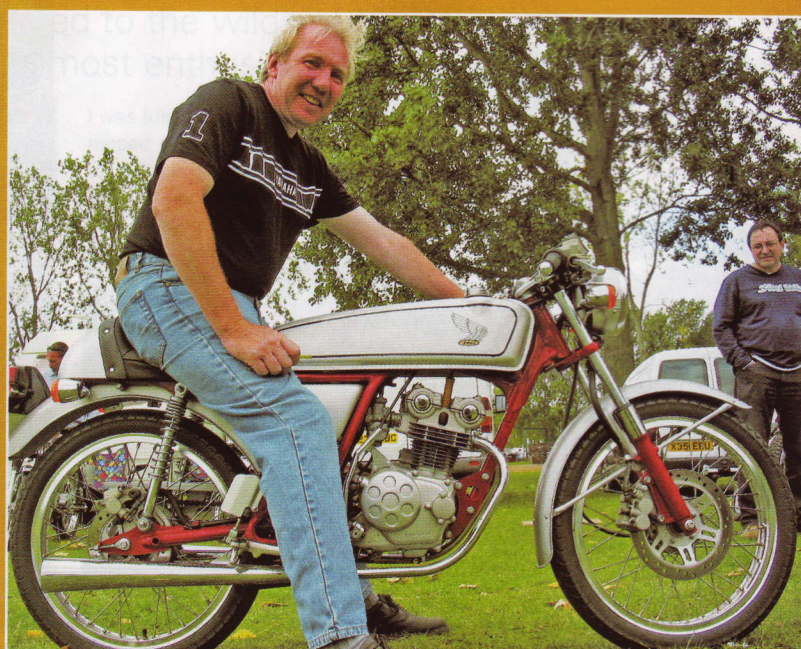
Twenty (count 'em!) Fizzies in a row – possibly the largest number ever gathered together in one place since they left the dealers.



Kawasakis weren't completely forgotten. Rosie Cline tries dad Lee's AR50 fitted with AR80 engine, as raced at the Peterborough BMF show.



Not a sports moped as such, Dave Jefferson's Honda CB50 attracted lots of attention. "It's a grey import made in around 1998," he told me, "and is basically a C110 replica." The Japanese market dohc four-valve engined bike makes 5.6ps at 10,500rpm, and is rumoured to be the most powerful 50cc road machine in mass production. Dave also owns a TY50, two FS1-Es, an XS650 and a Honda CB400F.

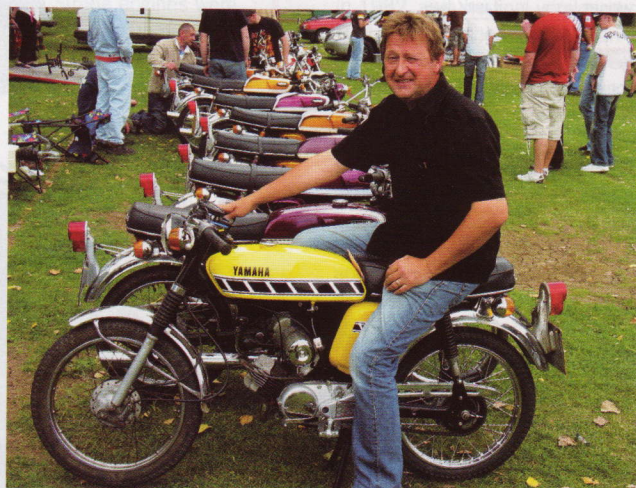




Though not original, everyone agreed that Steve Jacobs' recently acquired FS1E-DX looks the absolute dog's doo-dahs with its Kenny Roberts race fairing and seat.



This rare KTM Comet Grand Prix belongs to Dave Gyde, who bought it as a rough runner three years ago. Dave plans to restore it so it can join his Casal SS4, and is looking for parts. If you can help please drop him an email at j_dgyde@hotmail.com



Yamaha collector John Powell fooled a few people with this Fizzy hybrid. "Over the years I've collected all the wrong bits from my Fizzy collection, and finally assembled them into this bike just to show it could be done. Every detail is absolutely wrong!" The other bikes in John's museum, in Carmarthen, are, he assures us, all correct!



Gary Dexter (left) and Dominique Lock on a pair of Fantics, both now quite rare. Gary's bike is a six-speed Caballero, Dominique is on his four-speed Fantic GT.



You don't see many of these about. Nat Turner from Dursingham, near Sandringham, owns this blue FS1-E, a colour scheme rarely seen in the UK. And doesn't it look smart?