

CCM 500 Super Sports T/E

HAVING MADE SUCH a fuss in previous chapters about how highly I value integrity and veracity in journalism, this track test ought to prove the idol most definitely has clay feet – some might say a clay head too!

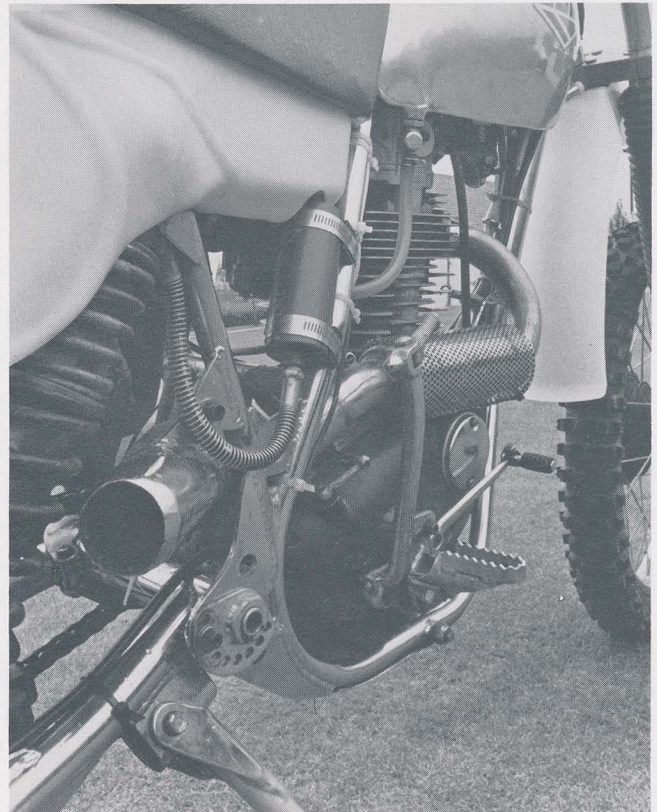
It is a classic example of the careful editing of information. Everything in the story is true, but the article is not an objective one. A truly objective story would have made much of the CCM's archaic design, the right-hand gearchange and the problems owner Richard Brown had found with the lighting.

However, I defy anyone to be totally objective about a bike which was so far from the mainstream of motorcycling as to be almost a member of a completely autonomous sub-species. When I tested the bike it was £300 more expensive than its most expensive, and race-winning, competitor and was nowhere near being raceworthy itself.

Added to the esoteric nature of the beast was the fact that I fell in love with it. I rode the thing all afternoon and only returned when it ran out of petrol. The CCM was simply pure joy to ride. It was stable, predictable and zoomed about in quite an effortless fashion, and all the time that anti-social megaphone bellowed and boomed. Effective or not in objective terms, it was the quintessence of an off-road motorcycle and reminded me that riding a bike could be fun in itself without any thought of medal winning.

If I ever raced a CCM in an enduro AND won a medal on it, I would reach the heights of ecstasy.

When I was shaking with desire to win a Gold at every enduro I entered, I might well have written a different report on this bike. However, I now ride only for fun so I look at bikes in a



somewhat different light.

At one time I considered that the only yardstick against which a racing bike could be judged was its ability to win. Now I think that the 'fun factor' ought to be considered too.

As a race winner the CCM is outclassed, but I must admit that I haven't had more fun on a bike all season.

To be fair to CCM the bike we tested was not a full enduro mount. CCM supremo Alan Clews

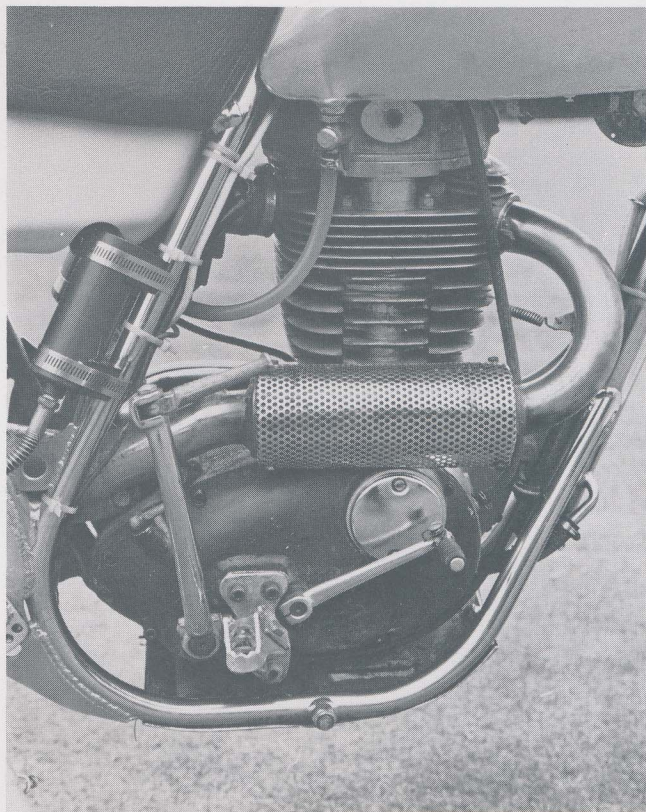
The idiosyncratic CCM motor, right-hand gear-change, forward-mounted footrests, BSA valve gear *et al.* The expansion/contraction silencer is interesting since it contained no baffles. The exhaust note was nothing less than erotic.



The once all British CCM had begun to buckle under the pressure to use foreign proprietary parts of high quality and low cost. The front fork is the magnesium-slided Marzocchi, whilst the front hub is by Grimeca – both equal to, or superior to, the earlier British made parts.

Left

The exhaust note from the CCM is reputed to bend the frame of Japanese two-strokes at 50 yards.



describes it as a 'super sports' trail bike. In fact, the bike's present owner, Richard Brown, commissioned the bike in this form and it underwent several changes in engine specification before evolving to its current state.

Originally the basis of the bike was the 1979 works motocross chassis and motor, with a smattering of modifications to make it enduro legal. Thus the original motor was a four-valve CCM motocross engine containing BSA B50T gearbox internals and an expansion/contraction silencer.

In this guise the bike proved to be a trifle lively for trail riding and it returned to CCM for a detuning course. It came back with a two-valve motocross cylinder head, an 8:1 compression

Overpage

Power sliding the CCM on fast shale roads was a dream.





piston and a BSA road cam fitted, along with a new silencer which muted the original motor's rather raucous bark.

At first impression the CCM could well repulse some riders. It looks very dated, with the motor's BSA heritage still very much apparent. Also, this particular frame was the victim of a fortunately brief experiment, with TIG welding everything. Consequently, instead of beautiful bronze welds, each one a work of art in itself, the frame is stuck together with nasty electric runs which, whilst no doubt very strong, still look really horrific when chromed. CCM should revert to bronze welding forthwith.

Personally, I like the appearance of the CCM, but I would confess to being in a minority. However, I defy anyone not to fall in love with the mellow bellow of the exhaust note. Yes, it might be a little loud, but there is a world of difference between the bass boom which the CCM emits and the soprano cutting edge of a noisy two-stroke.

Starting the CCM is simplicity itself. In fact, it is probably the easiest-starting enduro bike we have tested this year, two- or four-stroke. Flick on the choke of the 34mm Amal, ease the piston over tdc and then give a good prod – not even a kick – and the motor bursts into life.

The secret of CCM's taming of the infamous BSA kick-back is a clever electronic advance and retard mechanism which ranges from 6° advance at 600rpm to 36° at 6500rpm. This means that the bike will never kick back, and this trait, together with a very healthy spark at low revs, gives excellent starting.

In its present mild trim the CCM purrs away from rest, rather than lunging about like the BSA B50s I used to ride. Power output is about 31bhp at 6500rpm, but this should not be confused with a similar output from a two-stroke. The CCM will pull prodigiously high gears under all conditions. First is virtually redundant except for squeezing through tight woods going, while, most of the time, top and third in the four-speed box will be employed.

The test course used included the whole



spectrum of terrain, ranging from fast shale tracks, through motocross going, to trials sections in woods.

On every section the motor was happy, and on faster parts deceptively quick progress could be made. The steering-head angle on this model was rather shallow and this made for excellent straight-line stability, whilst the suspension, still on firm motocross settings, swallowed up bumps and ruts as if they had ceased to exist.

One is not conscious of the great leaps forward which typify two-stroke riding, but nevertheless very rapid progress could be made just by keeping the motor pulling and converting all that four-stroke torque into drive.

The problems occurred on tighter going for two reasons. Firstly, the bike is too tall for enduro use. Footing is very difficult and there is a definite

Despite its trail bike designation, the CCM could rattle along in the grand style.

The CCM super sports trail bikes: all that was best from the 1950s in the 1980s.



sense of flopping into very slow corners which is not confidence-inspiring. Secondly, the shallow head angle, which gives such excellent straight-line stability, also causes the front wheel to push out on corners unless the rider really bangs the bike in hard. Diving in causes the excellent Marzocchi front forks to tuck in and effectively steepen the head angle, but this sort of riding tactic is just beyond me in an enduro. Before I throw a bike into a corner that hard I have to have practised on it four or five times!

One strange thing about the CCM is the weight. When several knowledgeable friends knew I was going to test the bike they threw up their hands in horror! Four-stroke weight was the cry, since, in theory, a 250lb bike should be a lump. The truth of the matter was that the CCM was such a nicely built motorcycle that it felt feather light

and certainly a lot more manageable than some big-bore two-strokes I have ridden.

At the end of the test I really wanted to take the CCM home with me – an unusual thing with me, since testers do not normally suffer from this sort of avarice. So what is stopping me from racing one in 1981?

Problem number one is the £1875 it would then have cost for a new CCM – still a lot of money, even for a hand-built bike. Second, the right-hand change with its down-for-up sequence (even if it is ergonomically logical!) means that I, or any other rider, would have to ride nothing but the CCM. I had to think my way through gearchanges and this is no good for racing. Finally, the bike really needs a five-speed gearbox to be competitive and there is no chance of such a cluster being produced for the small number of potential sales.

Having said all this, I would dearly love to have a super sports trail bike like this one simply for the pleasure, pure and simple, of riding the thing. It was gorgeous!

CCM 500 Super Sports T/E

Engine: Single-cylinder push rod 4-stroke. Two valves
Capacity: 498cc (84 × 90mm)
Compression ratio: 8:1
Carburation: 32mm Amal
Maximum power: 31bhp at 6500rpm
Transmission: Wet multi-plate clutch with duplex primary chain
Ratios: 1 – 2.18:1; 2 – 1.64:1; 3 – 1.24:1; 4 – 1.0:1
Electrical equipment: Lucas five-way alternator powering CCM pointless electronic ignition with CCM electronic advance and retard
Fuel capacity: 6.8 litres (1.5 imp gal)
Suspension: Front forks by Marzocchi. Air assisted with magnesium sliders. 300mm of travel
Rear dampers: Öhlin, giving 300mm of rear-wheel travel
Brakes: Front 6in sls by Grimeca. Rear 6in CCM magnesium sls
Frame: Single oil bearing top spine with duplex engine cradle. 16-gauge Renolds 531 tubing used throughout
Wheels: WM2 × 21in front; WM3 × 18in rear. Both Akront Green Label
Tyres: 3.00 × 21in front; 5.00 × 18in rear. Pirelli motocross in both cases
Wheelbase: 58½in
Ground clearance: 11½in
Saddle height: 36in
Handlebar width: 36in
Claimed dry weight: 240lb (all unladen)