

The mere mention of a 600cc four-stroke thumper is too awesome for the off-road tyro to contemplate; a staggering monster that would defy the most determined starting effort of even the Jolly Green Giant. Of course it would vibrate like a thrashing machine and probably explode with an atomic thunder somewhere between the starting line and the smoke bomb. Why, that's exactly half a Harley 74 - incredible!

How well I know the reaction to such a bountiful single, for over the past twelve years this thumper freak has en-

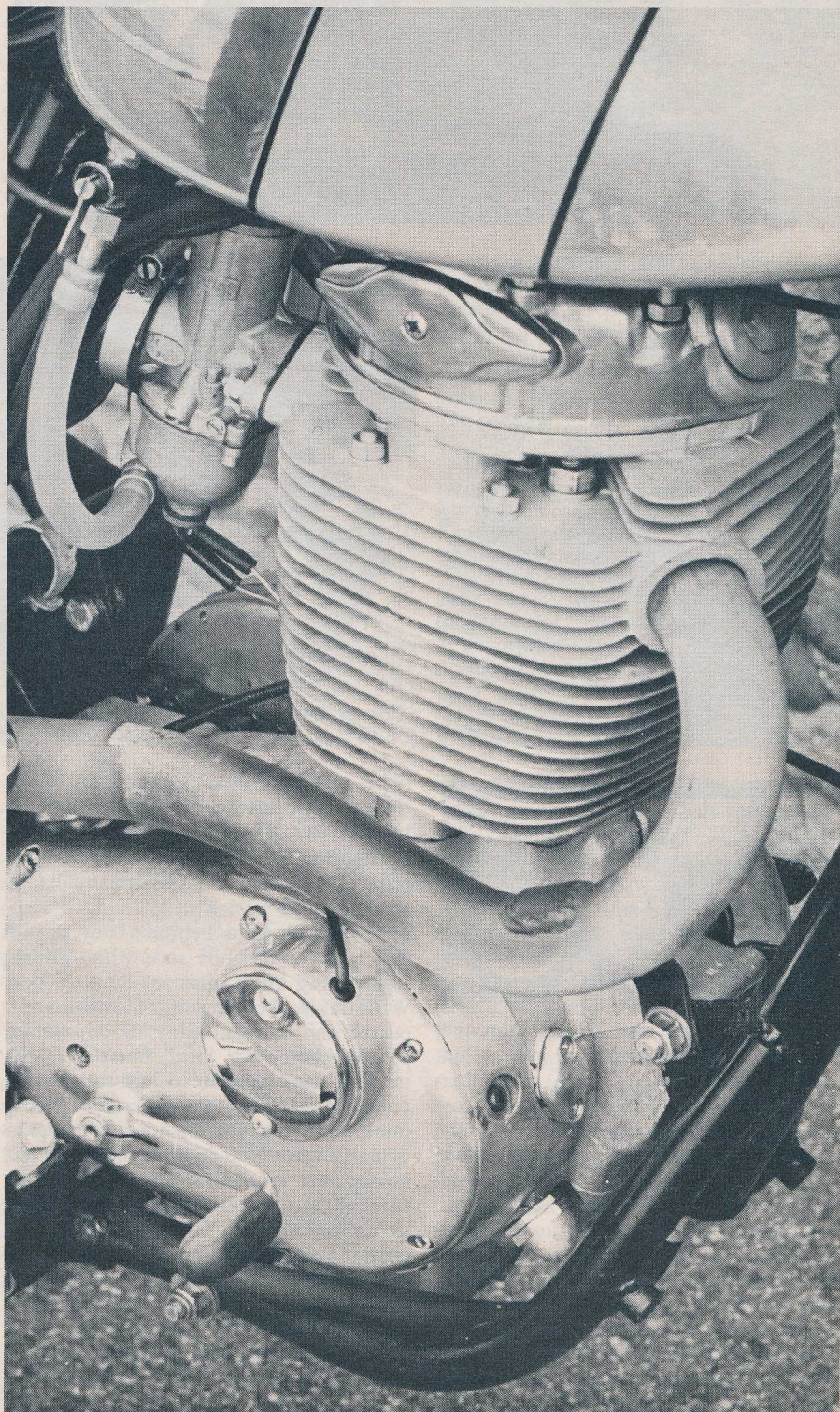
countered it upon the occasion of every appearance of his 1961 Matchless "Typhoon" through over a decade of desert competition campaigns. Little kids shriek and recoil in terror as it thunders by; two-stroke riders shake their heads in disbelief upon being able to count the thumps and seeing each mighty impulse hit the ground with a puff of dirt following each power stroke. Even Mother Earth knows that a 600 is nothing to monkey with; if she throws it an impasse, brings it to a stop, either she gets jolted off her axis or a tire gets

cremated. There is no compromise. The irresistible force easily overpowers the immovable object.

But in modern off-road history, only the Matchless owner has known the feel of such brute slugging power, and the fallacy of speculative legends fabricated in the minds of many small-bore owners and a discouraging number of engine designers unwilling to give it a try. All the more exciting that Triumph/BSA has decided to rekindle the flame by offering a big-bore kit—cylinder sleeve and piston - for their B-50 series

Muscle kit: BSA unleashes a 600 sleeve and slug for their 500 MX

*If you're going
to ride a thumper,
ride a THUMPER!
Text and photos
by Bob Greene*



of 500cc singles including the T-Model Enduro, the SS Streeter, and the pure Moto-Crosser. Although the T and SS are no longer offered, their engines are identical to the currently available and more popular 500 MX, thus the kit applies to all BSA big singles back through 1971. The cost? A very reasonable \$55 for the finest Forged True piston and rings and a cylinder liner. The price is only approximate at this early date, but it is close, running about \$35 for the piston and rings, and \$20 for the iron sleeve.

ment means higher permissible gearing and lower engine speed. Consequently maximum road speed is greater and, more important, engine accessory wear is reduced; everything turns at a slower pace and therefore lasts longer.

Additionally, lower revs mean less chance or necessity of wheelspin and therefore better control under critical circumstances. And when the old mill starts to fade, the overkill built into the larger engine allows it to press on regardless. Being less "cammy" and less demanding in respect to high rpm igni-

lighter than the average Japanese 250 Enduro. For except for the cylinder and piston, the weight is identical to their 500 BSA which, again, bears a similar relationship to their previous 440 Victor from which the 500 sprang.

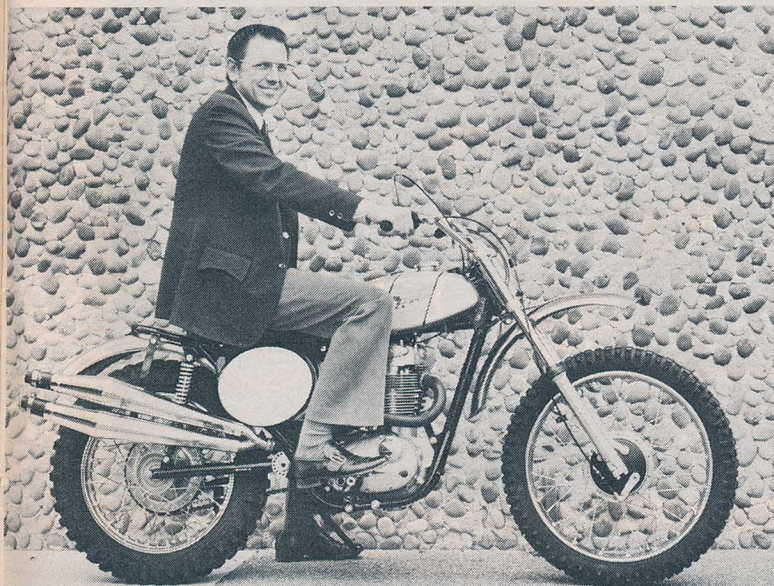
Bob Tryon's appearance here is due to more than his good looks; he developed the big-bore kit, campaigned it under nationally famous "Feets" Minert, and subsequently sold his boss Pete Colman on the idea that the company should not only offer the pieces to the public but incorporate the new dimension in a regular production model. The first step is fact; the latter is being considered for 1974 introduction. Let's hope the production model version gets the green light from Birmingham.

For it is a simple process; bore the 500 barrel, push in the new 90mm sleeve, hang on the Forged True slug and button it back up—instant smash. Hopefully you won't be too disappointed to learn that the poke job isn't a full 600. It was tried, as were several other combinations, but the happiest arrangement of all with the Beezer's cases turned out to be 572cc stemming from the 90mm bore.

How does it feel compared to the ol' Matchless? Different. Over 100 pounds lighter, it naturally feels like a toy. Having lighter flywheels and 1mm shorter stroke, it builds quicker and would undoubtedly pull the Phoon's cork in a drag. Gear for gear, the BSA seems to run more R's; the whack is not nearly so noticeable but the torque is there in spades. I can't feature anyone wanting more muscle. Starting was easy—one kick. The technique involves bringing the piston up on compression with the kickstarter parallel to the ground, then pulling the compression release and easing the starter lever all the way down before turning loose of the compression release, letting the starter return to the top of its travel and giving it a smart stroke. For Tryon it was little more than a leg exercise, barely rising out of the saddle.

It's a lot easier now with the new BSA singles, for they have capacitor electrics rather than the previous energy transfer system, and they are fitted with a 12° automatic advance mechanism which permits the timing to retard 24° at the crankshaft. Not only has the new MX more dwell time but the tendency to kick back is greatly reduced. Starting is a push-over.

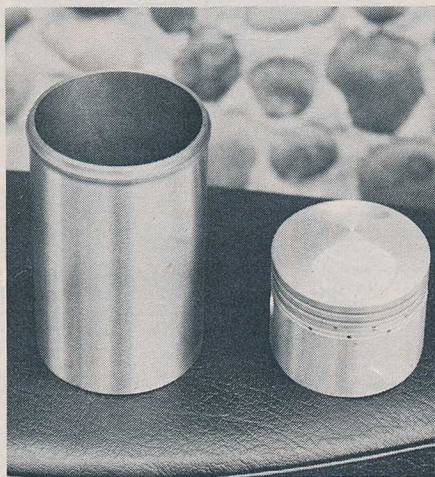
By the time you have digested this, the BSA B-50 500cc single series will have been supplemented with a Triumph version known as the TR-50. Almost identical to the Breezer, it will feature only cosmetic changes for identity. And until such time as the B-60 and TR-60 arrive, the muscle kit will lend itself to either faction. One way or another, Birmingham wants You.



Far left: If you can keep the sneer off your face, no one will suspect you're packing the big load Beezer—till you gas it. Appearance is identical to 500. Left: Bob Tryon of BSA reflects the feeling of smashing torque caged in factory-kitted 600cc Moto-Cross thumper. Below: Big-bore sleeve and piston turn the trick. Since anything over 250 runs in the big class, you might as well double your fun.

But how can the concept expect to survive, considering all the phony jive touched upon in our opening paragraph? Only through communication—the spreading of truth. For no one knows better than I the advantages of the big-bore, long-stroke single in the off-road application. Taking it from the top, the elephant motor is not hard to start when the proper pedal drill is used. One or two, three at most, kicks bring it to life from cold. I've sat there idling many a wintery morning waiting for a fellow trail scout to breathe life into his 250 twin. But the manufacturers of big singles have erred tragically in not taking the time to include explicit starting technique instructions with each machine. BSA plans to correct that oversight now. Their kitted 600, incidentally, is an easy starter.

My personal experience has been that the 600 single is the most dependable desert sled I've ever owned, and although the BSA is no Matchless, it is now getting into the same displacement family and many of the attendant benefits will apply. In respect to vibration and engine component longevity, the extra 100cc over a 500 allows the engine to turn much more slowly. Although power impulses are stronger, they are also slower, and definitely not objectionable. Increased displacement



requirements than a smaller, more highly stressed powerplant, the big boy does a creditable job even when it is slightly off song. Major tune-ups are fewer and farther between. Summarily, big is beautiful in the areas of power, accessory wear, maintenance, top speed, traction, longevity and even noise.

But what about weight? Surely there is a penalty here. Well, how light do you want to get? The B-50 shown in the included photos scales in at about 268 pounds dry, according to that dude in the saddle, Bob Tryon of Triumph/BSA Incorporated. That's several pounds