

BRITAIN'S ONLY WEEKLY BIKING MAGAZINE

ON SALE WEDNESDAY  
WEEK ENDING 30th JULY 1983 50p

# MOTOR CYCLE WEEK



**Silverstone Showdown: GP preview inside**  
**REPORTS: British Motocross GP, Race of Aces**  
**ROADTEST: Bitten by Hesketh's Vampire**

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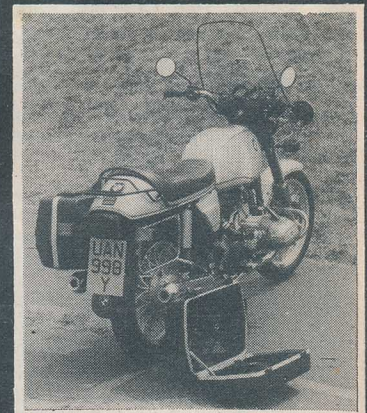
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- 7 BRITISH 500cc MOTOCROSS GRAND PRIX: The Hakan Carlqvist-Andre Malherbe duel for the world championship continued at Farleigh Castle on Saturday before thousands of fans and millions of TV viewers. Relive the excitement by reading Jack Burnicle's account of what promised to be the most thrilling motocross encounters for years.
- 12 RACE GOSSIP: Sports Editor Nick Harris and Brendan Quirk reflect the tension in the road racing world in the build-up to Silverstone this weekend.
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- 25 SILVERSTONE SHOWDOWN: Nick Harris likens the Freddie Spencer-Kenny Roberts clash in the British Grand Prix on Sunday to a world championship confrontation of a very different kind and himself boxes clever in a bid to pick the winners in our six-page Silverstone preview, which also includes an insight by Peter Clifford into the Roberts 'training camp'.
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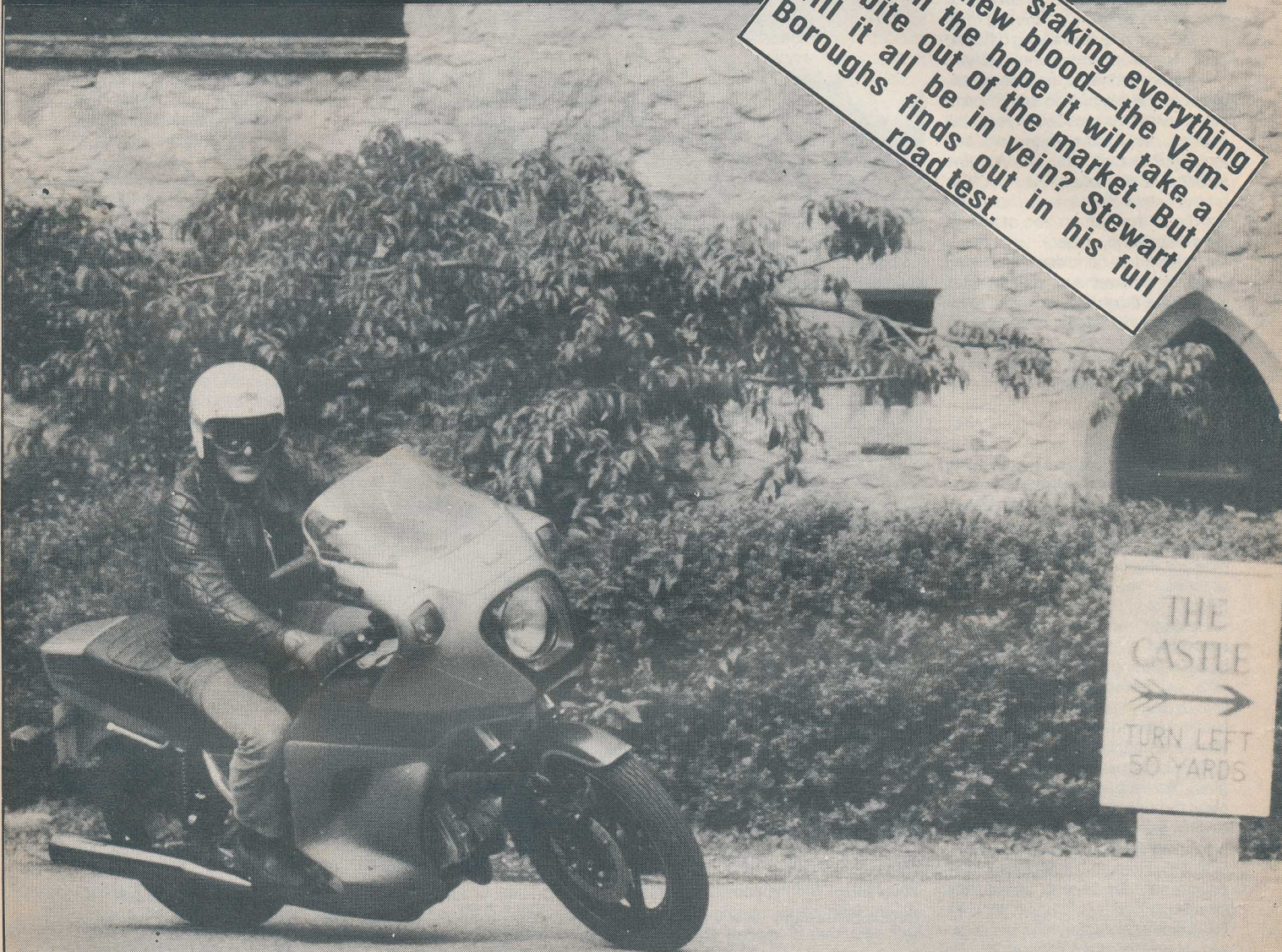


## IN COLOUR

COVER: Rivals on and off the track . . . Freddie Spencer and Kenny Roberts indulge in a little lighthearted pre-British GP arm 'wrestling'—but they'll be fighting for real on the track at Silverstone this weekend. LEFT: Graham Noyce leads Hakan Carlqvist in an early-season 500cc motocross GP and was looking to do likewise at his 'home' world championship round at Farleigh Castle last Sunday.

# Fangs for the memory

Hesketh are staking everything on their new blood—the Vampire—in the hope it will take a big bite out of the market. But will it all be in vein? Stewart Boroughs finds out in his full road test.



THERE'S a lot to be said for assuming an open mind and the philosophical approach—expect the worst and you won't be disappointed.

Such was the rather negative view I adopted, I must admit, with the Hesketh Vampire.

And not just because of the possible risk to life and limb that the model's name confers.

Such was some of the press criticism when the original V1000 was launched two years ago, especially with regard to its gearbox, that it seemed the sensible approach to take for my first ride on currently the last vestige of a once great and dominant British motor cycle industry.

In reality, of course, the vision I had when I set off from London to deepest Northamptonshire to collect the bike—of a deserted, baronial estate, howling werewolves and creaking doors—couldn't have been further from the truth.

The ancestral home of Lord Hesketh is there naturally, at Easton Neston, and the stable workshops since production has been switched from Daventry.

But no bats, just a stone deer's head above an archway and Reynolds 531 frame tubing hanging from the rafters.

Mention performance to this opulent aristocrat of the road and it will look down its nose at you with indifference.

You just don't hurry the Hesketh.

Engine lump is basic cooking iron producing, for its capacity, a modest 82bhp at 6,800 rpm. But it is fast enough with a top speed of 118.50 mph, best 122.00 mph. Maybe not to stay with today's fastest thoroughbreds over a short spurt, but to catch them nevertheless over a long haul.

The quality, weight and sheer size of working parts in the massive engine—the equivalent of a 440 cu in Chevy Rat motor in the car world—have been designed for longevity, to outlast Dracula himself.

Being a 90-degree V, and consequently having perfect primary balance, the short-stroke 95 × 70mm, 992.4cc engine is silky smooth, a

blessing that also gives clear reflections in the vibration-free mirrors that are wide enough apart to easily clear your elbows.

Basically, the Vampire powerplant is almost identical to that existing at the much publicised closure of the Daventry works. However, some modifications have been made to the oiling system, in particular to alleviate leaks around the camboxes, and to try and improve its reputation for poor gear selection.

The oiling remedies have been very successful and there were no traces of oil on the test model, neither was any burnt.

Even so the present, huge 9.5 to 1 Hepolite 'dustbin lid' pistons are to

be replaced soon with thermal expansion Mahle items, uprooted German pistons that will allow closer tolerances and consequently an even quieter engine.

Main thing to remember about the gearchange is the Hesketh is completely different from the knife-through-butter cog-swopping we take for granted in the majority of today's Japanese machinery.

Pedal movement is long, the action slow and deliberate and the cogs have to be eased home. Try to change at normal speed, or let your concentration drop, and you're almost guaranteed a neutral, occasionally changing up from second to third but most likely on the big drop into top that requires a long delayed action to ensure you maintain drive.

It remains one of the poorer aspects of the big V-twin which combines with the model's very tall gearing, restricted steering lock and lengthy fork tail, for straight line stability, that makes the model a pretty cumbersome brute to manhandle in the human zoo of suburbia and built-up areas.

Under such conditions third and fourth ratios are the ones used most for engine flexibility and safe overtaking. When pulling the skyscraper high 3.918 to 1 top gear ratio, the bike suffers from transmission snatch below 2,500 rpm (46 mph indicated).

Compounding the Vampire's visible bulk is the machine's all-up weight of five hundredweight—with a gallon of four star aboard—and tall 33in seat height. The seat itself is comfortable over short distances but not so acceptable over 200 miles or more when it causes slight soreness to the backs of your thighs.

Hesketh recognise the problem and plan a thinner cushion, but firmer padding, so killing two birds with one stone—greater comfort with a lower seat height. A first-class, heavy-duty 20-piece tool kit lies beneath the lockable seat.

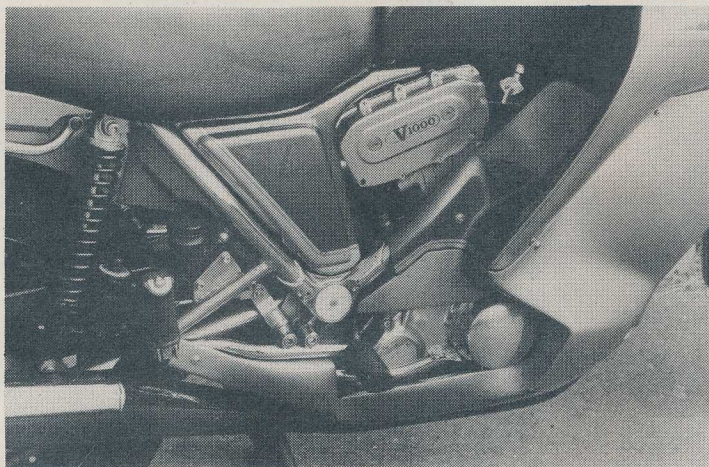
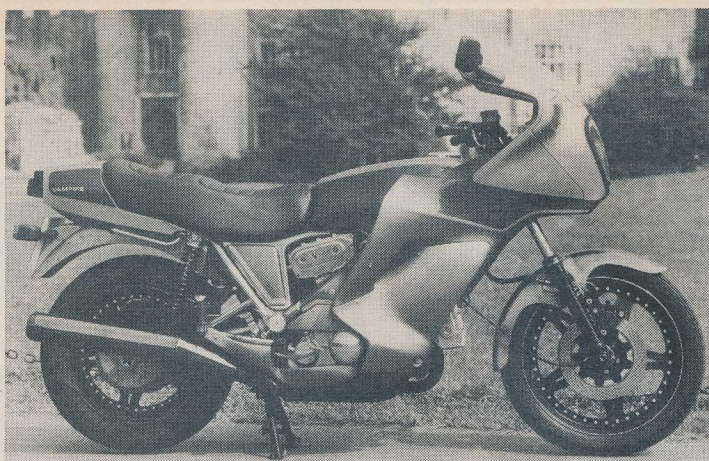
The fairing is a hefty product in glass fibre—and while super slippery through the air, it must have had an adverse effect on our acceleration times.

Chief Hesketh engineer Mick Broom, a former road racer, has clocked a best ever 12.50 secs for the standing quarter-mile on a naked Hesketh, but inhibited by the extra weight we were restrained to a best 14.15 secs and average of 14.17 secs/98.15 mph.

Designed by Johnnie Mockett the extensive streamlining, which stretches back round the model's underbelly to the pillion footrests, was super efficient. It gives sitting-up speeds a mere one mph less than those attained in the prone position.

When made of a glass reinforced plastic (GRP) its weight will be approximately halved.

A radio and tape deck are among other plans being contemplated for the future, with speakers in the fairing and pick-up sockets to pipe to your helmet music-while-you-ride entertainment.



**TOP: Imposing profile of the Vampire that breathes opulence from every pore.**

**MIDDLE: Cockpit view with the extras; clock and ambient temperature gauge. Clutch operation is hydraulic.**

**ABOVE: Workmanship and quality is of the highest standard. Allen screws are used exclusively.**

Screen fitted, the lowest Hesketh offer, is a little short for maximum comfort and for personal choice I would have picked one of the four taller options that Hesketh sensibly offer.

Standard accessories among the instruments include a clock, air temperature gauge and neat warning light cluster for alternator, oil, neutral and main beam, and separate turn indicators.

An adjuster for varying the headlight level from the saddle is a worthwhile addition, while the centrally-located choke for the pair of 36mm Dell'Ortos was never re-

quired for firing up the big twin in the hot, humid conditions that prevailed.

Unleashed on the open road is the Vampire's natural habitat, handling is rock steady and its slow steering comes into its own. The harder you ride the Vampire, the better the handling. Not many laps had been completed of the test track's parallel mile straights—linked by two banked loops—before scrapes on the underside of the fairing on the right were added to match those two-day older scars on the left.

Silencers are tucked well up, the

exhausts well in, the system finished in a superb black chrome resembling gun metal (conventional polished chromium plating is also available) which it was a shame to spoil, for we managed to crank her over even further—tearing a slither off the underside of the exhaust. It was a surprising jar at the time because it just didn't feel that far over, the plot felt so stable. No cause for complaint with the Red Arrows rubber supplied as standard, and fitted to five-spoke Astralite wheels.

And it's on the open road where the lazy-revving twin is happiest, stretching out its long legs to cruise effortlessly at three figure speeds all day.

At the ton it's shadow boxing with little more than 5,000 rpm on the revcounter and nowhere near approaches maximum revs of 6,800 rpm even flat out with the rider prone on the tank.

The Vampire would benefit from a tooth or two more on the rear wheel sprocket without losing any of its present charm. The lower overall gearing might improve top end performance speed, but the main aim is to give it that little extra flexibility in mid-range.

The new streamlined team of 12 based at Easton Neston, on the outskirts of Towcester, through which thousands will pass on their way to this weekend's British Grand Prix at Silverstone, are well aware that all is not perfect and that their jobs, and Hesketh's survival, will depend on improving the breed.

Most would agree that the Hesketh engine is over-engineered, and for the moment we're stuck with the present, slow methodical gearchange.

But, as it has also been pleasing to see at Triumph until recent months, enthusiasm is high, commitment strong for the challenge and progress will be made slowly and surely.

Their awareness of and willingness to get on with making desired changes is welcome indeed, and flexibility is the name of the game as far as they are concerned.

A hotter engine producing more power and speed? Broom is currently developing a potent, prototype café racer.

Power sought by raising compression and gas flowing the ports (presently untouched from the casting) is around 95 bhp which, pulling suitable gearing, should provide speeds in excess of 130 mph.

Partisan bunch that they are—some are former Triumph and Devimead BSA workers—even they have to resort to utilising some foreign components to maintain standards where comparable Brit equip is lacking—either in performance or it has been completely outdated in specification and style.

Headlight on the Vampire is a French Cibie Z-beam and the flamboyant Italians supply important chassis components—Marzocchi the front fork and rear struts, Brembo the two braking systems and the rather heavy hydraulically-

# ROAD TEST READOUT

Hesketh V1000 Vampire

PRICE: £6,784 inc all taxes

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

## PERFORMANCE

Test conditions: Warm, humid, light wind. Bike tested by 12-stone rider in one-piece leathers at the Motor Industry Research Association's proving ground near Nuneaton, Works.

**MEAN MAXIMUM SPEEDS:** Rider prone: 118.50mph. Rider upright: 117.50mph.

**BEST ONE-WAY:** 122.00mph.

**MEAN QUARTER-MILE:** 14.17secs/98.15mph

**BEST QUARTER-MILE:** 14.15secs/99.94mph

**MAXIMUM POWER:** 82bhp at 6,800rpm (claimed).

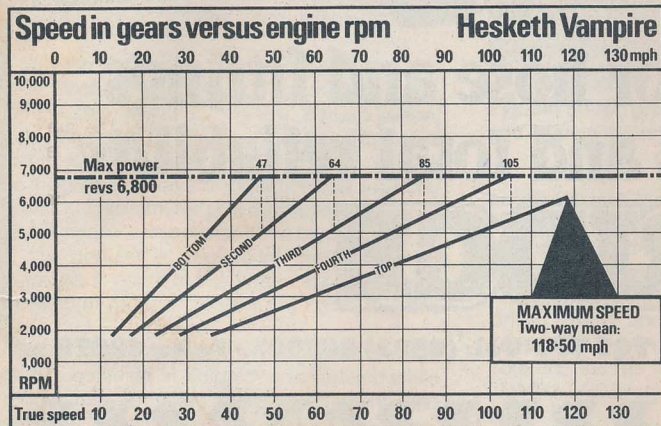
**MAXIMUM TORQUE:** 78lb-ft at 5,400rpm (claimed).

**FUEL CONSUMPTION:** Overall: 34.4mpg. Best: 36.1mpg. Worst: 32.9mpg. Average range: 189 miles.

**BRAKING DISTANCE:** From true 30mph: 28ft; from true 60mph, 128ft.

**SPEEDO ACCURACY:**

Indicated mph: 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100  
Actual mph: 28.7 38.8 49.0 59.6 70.1 80.8 90.9 101.6



## ENGINE

Dohc, 90-degree V-twin with four valves per cylinder.

**CAPACITY:** 992.4cc (95 × 70mm).

**COMPRESSION RATIO:** 9.5:1

**CARBURATION:** Two 36mm-choke Dell'Orto carburetors.

**TRANSMISSION:** Helical gear primary drive. Wet, multi-plate clutch and five-speed gearbox. Final drive by DID50HDL  $\frac{3}{8} \times \frac{3}{8}$  in chain.

**OVERALL RATIOS:** 10.899, 8.073, 6.055, 4.883 and 3.918 to 1.

## ELECTRICS

Lucas Rita electronic ignition. 12V, 27AH Yuasa battery and Lucas starter/alternator. Cibie QH headlamp with 60/55W main bulb.

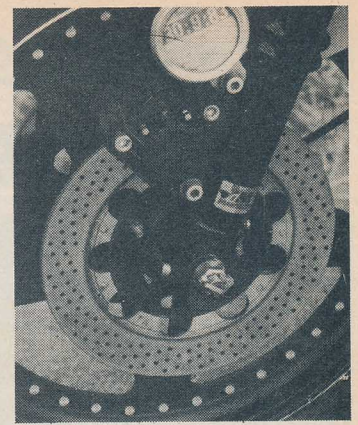
## COMPARISONS

	Capacity cc	Price £	Speed mph	Fuel mpg	St $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, sec/mph
Hesketh Vampire	992	6784	118.50	34.4	14.17/ 98.15
BMW R100RT	980	4055	107.20	43.3	14.37/ 92.30
Ducati 900S2	864	3369	123.00	43.9	13.34/100.84
Honda GL1100A	1085	4250	112.93	37.0	13.61/ 97.60
Laverda RGS1000	981	4250		36.0	12.70/104.78
Moto Guzzi Spada	949	2799	104.92	43.3	14.77/ 88.91
Yamaha TR1	981	2025	115.09	40.6	13.33/ 97.45

Test bike supplied by Hesleydon Ltd, Easton Neston, Towcester, Northants.



Head-on view of the slippery Johnnie Mockett streamliner with integral indicators.



Surprisingly the drilled cast-iron Brembo discs lacked initial bite in the wet.

operated clutch mechanism.

Further evidence of the sad state of the British automotive industry, Japanese equipment stares you in the face, underlining their total involvement today in the instruments.

The revcounter, red-lined from 7,000-10,000 rpm—and very accurate 150 mph speedometer—are Nippondenso, the switches strongly resemble Suzuki components of a year or two ago, and the final drive chain is not Renolds but Japanese DID50HDL.

Reason is that the sealed-link chain has proved far more durable during testing than conventional roller chain. Chain tension is maintained via eccentric cams but no adjustment was required during the 700 miles we covered for the road test.

The battery, too, is Japanese, the largest they could accommodate on the bike, a massive 27-amp-hour Yuasa.

Maintaining such high speeds as the Vampire is capable of, and with such nonchalance, plus the very accurate speedo, had its inevitable price to pay in fuel.

The best return 36.1 mpg, heaviest 32.9 mpg. Range given by the large 5.5 gallon tank at 34.4 mpg overall is consequently 189 miles with a more respectable 200-plus perfectly realizable ridden with less elan.

Advantages of a limited production and the personal Hesketh/owner relationship that exists—with down the road spares back-up—is the facility to specify your own indi-

vidual requirements for the bike.

And this covers other than the 'standard' two-tone gold and two-tone silver grey paint jobs.

Include in your preferences dog-leg levers to give that little deftness and refinement to operate the controls.

Unusual today, each new machine is given a down-to-earth appraisal by road tester Pat Slynn before the finishing touches are made. This includes a 100-mile road test, Pat relying on his vast experience of the bikes to detect if all is running sweetly rather than the clinical, impersonal readouts from a computer.

It is those personal touches that help sell the bikes.

But, of course, the big uncompromising problem if you wish to own such an imposing, opulent hand-built bike as the Hesketh is, as of a Rolls-Royce, the high cost.

As tested, with nickel plated frame, the Vampire cost £6,784. From Hesketh's nine appointed dealers the cost is £249 less for the paint job.

Comparable prices for the standard V1000 are £5,896 and £5,647 respectively.

Present production is two machines per week with the happier prospect of three machines of either model later in the year.

Expensive they are, yet at least Heskeths can now duck the notoriety of being the most expensive. Thanks to Bimota and the legendary MV Agusta fours being offered by Verghera at £8,500 last week.

# Bol— d'or



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