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Motorcycle **ENTHUSIAST**

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FEATURE ARTICLES:

ROAD TESTS — Kawasaki, Laverda, Moto Guzzi & Yamaha

LOOKING BACK ON THE TT by Mick Grant

TAKING YOUR BIKE THROUGH FRANCE TO SPAIN

VELOCETTE REBUILD

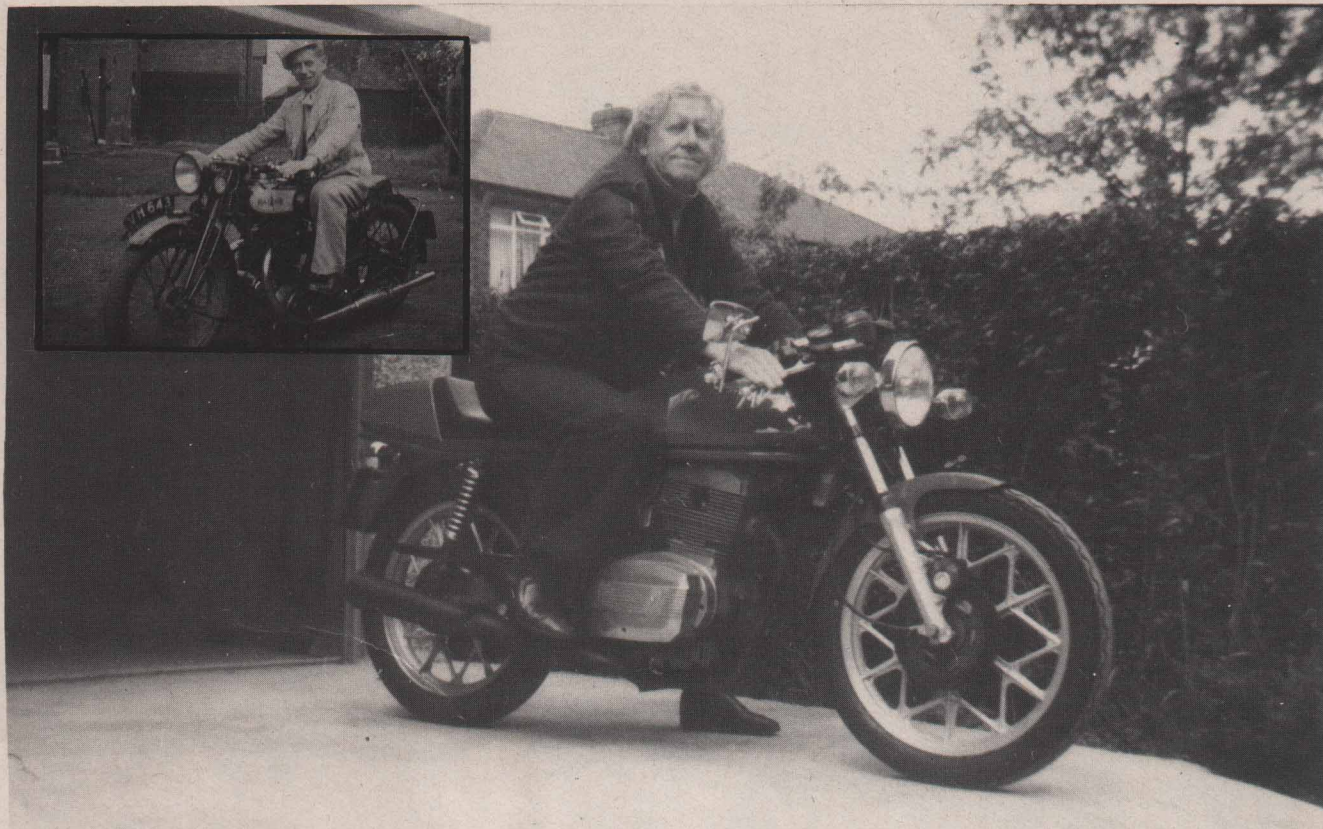
ROAD SAFETY

..... AND MUCH MORE

MV AUGUSTA 350 SPORT

Reported by John Fairclough

Photographed by Tony Sykes



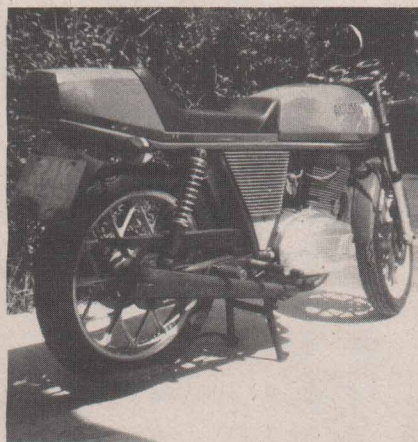
Fred on the 350 Sport

Inset: Many years past on a 1936 Raleigh 500

Fred Duffin's white hairs belie his interest in motorcycles. He resembles a retired art dealer. Retired he is. Art dealer he's not, unless owning and caring for motorcycles is an art form.

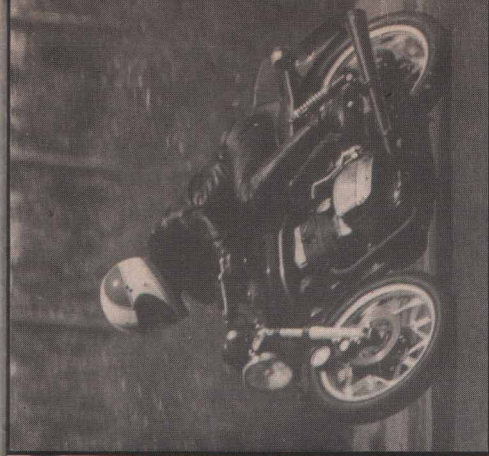
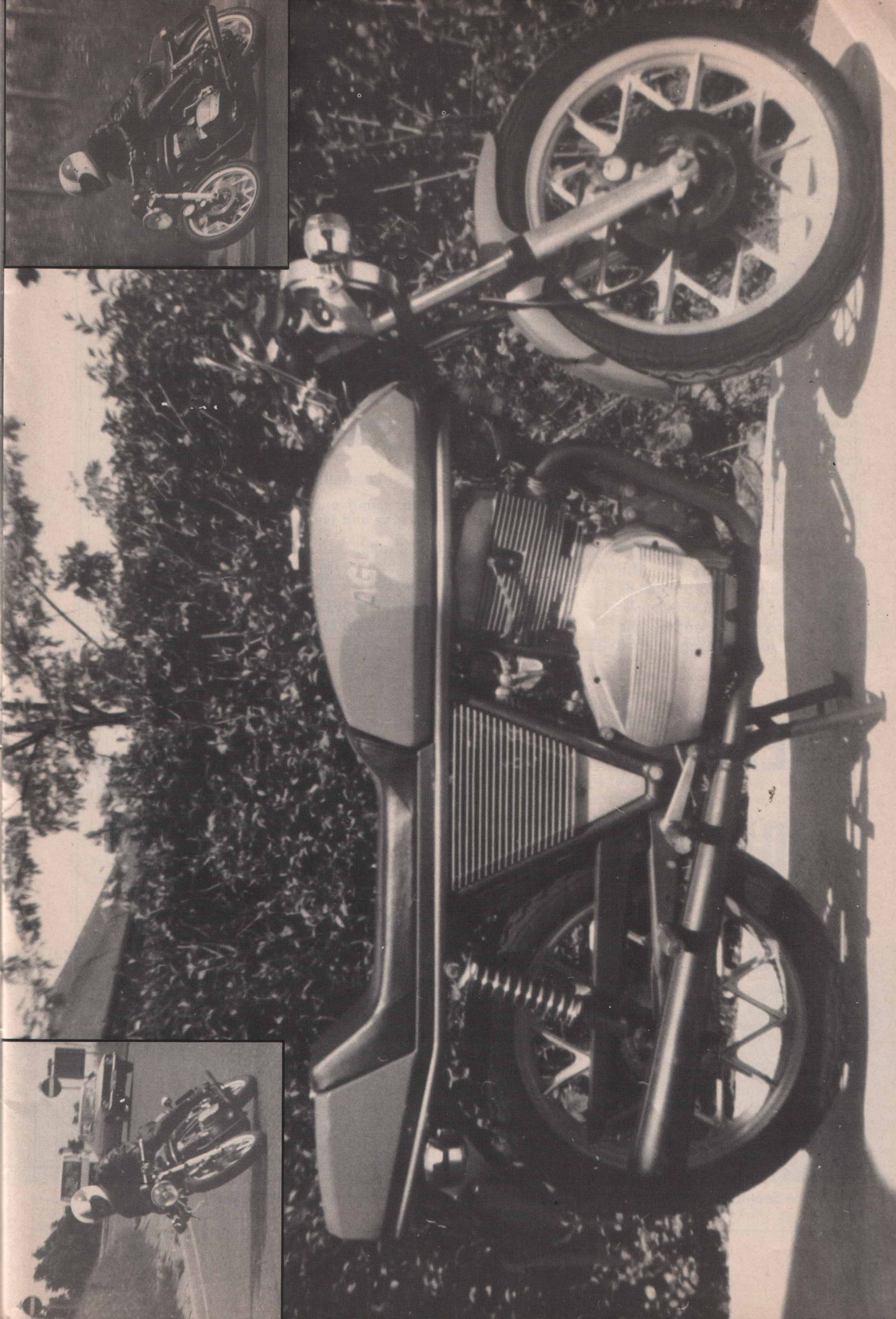
The list of bikes that Fred of Ossett, West Yorkshire, has owned totals over twenty and reads like an ABC of motorcycling. It began many years ago (he won't say how many) with a 1936 500cc Raleigh. This was followed by a 1929 350cc A.J.S., a 600cc Scott of the same year and a 1928 500cc Rudge. Bikes of the 30's he owned included a 1931 400cc Matchless Silver Arrow ("slow, but sounded right"), a 350cc o.h.c. Velo (1935) and a SS80 Brough Superior (1937). He's also sampled some of the less exotic machinery of the fifties

and sixties including a 1956 B.S.A. Gold Flash ("steady"), Ariel Huntmaster (1956) and 500cc A.J.S. twin of 1961 ("too ordinary"). He quite liked a 1971 Yamaha YDS6 and thought a 250 MZ (1971) "O.K." for what it was." Man of few words Fred is. His latest acquisition is a box of bits which should assemble into a 1954 MAC Velo.



Although he seems to collect and dispose of bikes at an amazing rate, Fred isn't eager to sell his pride and joy, a 1977 MV Augusta 350S. This little machine owes nothing engine-wise to the d.o.h.c. fours and triples. It's a very simple pushrod-operated o.h.v. 360-degree paralld twin whose massive side-covers were originally intended to enclose balance shafts to tame the vibration inherent in such an engine. These, unfortunately, were never fitted.

If the engine is nothing unusual, the frame certainly is. It's backbone is a double tube running from headstock to above the rear number plate in a continuous elongated rectangle. The down-tubes hang from this, the front one stopping at the motor's crankcase. The design ensures



remarkable rigidity. Front and rear suspension is by Ceriani, and triple Scarab calipers plus 9" discs provide the stopping power. Wheels are attractive sandcast alloy, perhaps rather over-spoked by current fashions. Equally fancy slatted alloy side panels hide electrics and battery. Good quality fibre-glass is used for front and rear guards and the seat base/glove box unit. The whole package weighs under 350 lbs.

As soon as you sit on the MV's low, plank-like "dual" seat, and drop your hands to its keenly-raked clip-on bars, you feel part of the bike. It starts first or second kick. Once on the move, you have to accustom yourself to the incredibly sensitive steering. The bike is eminently flickable and can be thrown into corners in blasé fashion without any "setting up". Nothing scrapes. The Roadrunners stick and the brakes pin down the machine with power to spare. The ride is hard, but the bike gives you a feeling of total

confidence; it will respond to your every whim, and then some.

However, nothing is perfect, and although the MV's engine is remarkable for a 350 (it will propel the bike at around 105 m.p.h.) it vibrates like fury when asked to go beyond 80 m.p.h. In spite of rubber-mounted 'bars and foot-pegs some of the bad vibrations get through to the rider,

most of them through the seat of his pants. The bike is such a pleasure to ride that the vibes often go unnoticed when you're on the move. When you get off, the numb bits of your anatomy tell you what's been happening. But you can tolerate a lot if a bike does some things superbly. The MV does. It's also different, and it's rare. Two essentials for many enthusiasts, Fred included.

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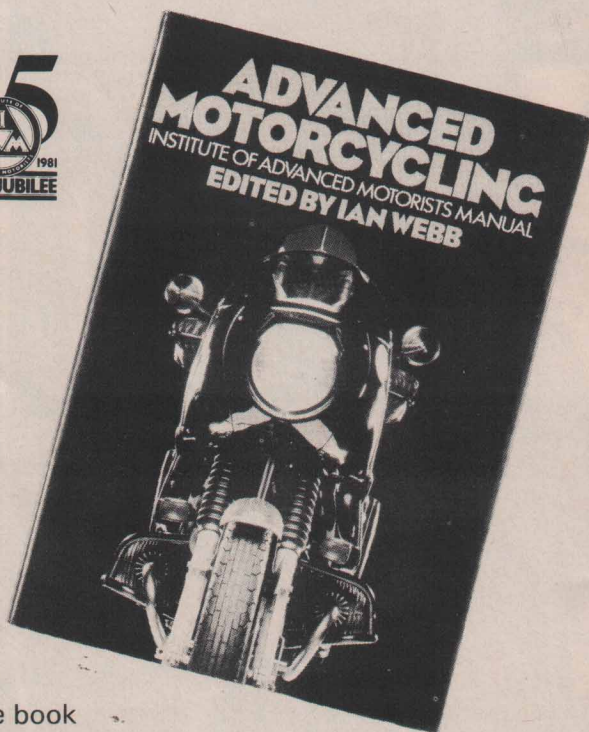
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