

HONDA CB400T

DREAM

THE CB400T is the larger-engined of the two Honda 'Dreams'. It is claimed to be a sports machine, although its size and comfort tend to make it more of a middle-range tourer.

Unfortunately, the test machine we collected from Honda, Chiswick was in a bad state. It had done many miles as a test bike and had obviously been mistreated by other riders. It had also been dropped at some time, for the nearside footrest was bent backwards slightly; the left-hand end of the handlebars, the clutch lever and the near-

side mirror were all damaged; and the frame was slightly out of line. It also took us quite a long time to clean it up enough for our photo session.

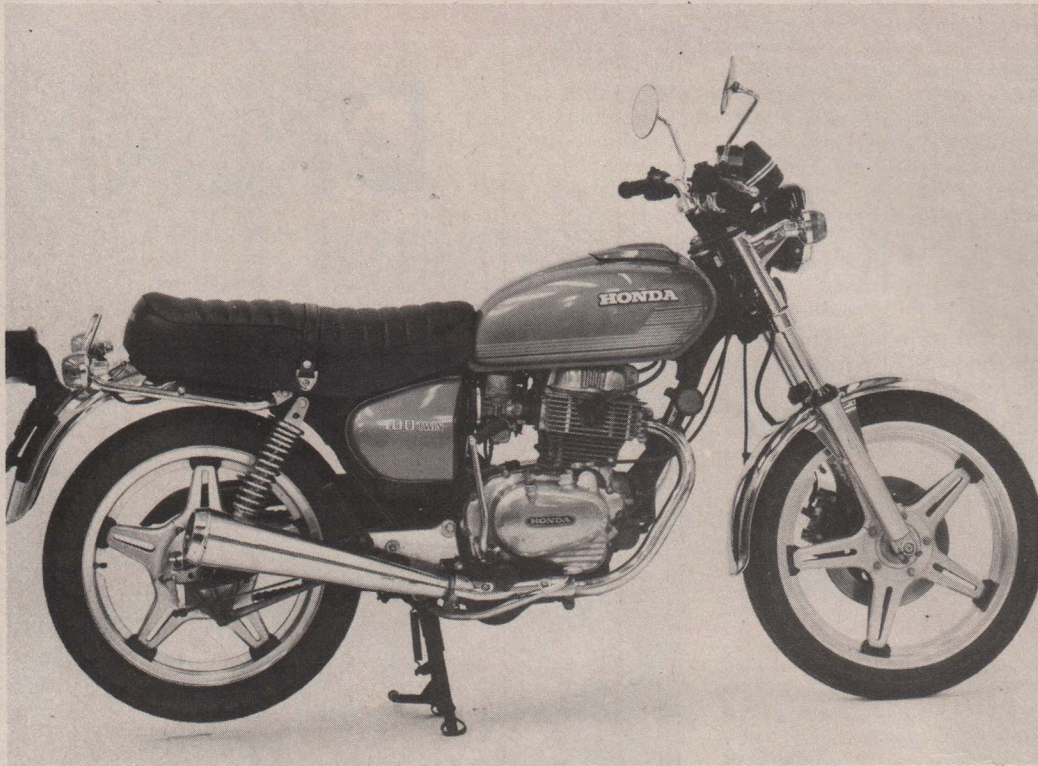
Within three or four miles of Chiswick the speedometer cable broke. An attempt to replace it before joining the M3 motorway

proved negative, and the rev counter had to be used as a rough guide. Fortunately, 1000rpm in top gear was just about 10mph, so when a police patrol car appeared in the mirrors it was fingers crossed, and hope that 7000rpm was close enough to the legal maximum limit. It was.

That cable proved elusive for quite some time. In actual fact we couldn't find a Honda dealer who had a good stock of *any* 'Dream' spares. Our eighth attempt found the last one at a dealers in Hinckley, Leics. We challenged Honda with this spares situation, and they told us that it was the dealers' fault for not ordering the parts, and that 90% of 'Dream' spares were readily available. It must be that odd 10% that everyone wants...

The extra power of the 400, over that of the 250, is hardly noticeable when riding around town, but on a motorway journey, or a long ride in high winds, the extra capacity of the bigger machine is welcome. It also makes carrying a pillion passenger a little easier.





On one journey we had the 400 Dream accompanied by the 250. The 400 easily maintained 70mph into a fairly strong motorway headwind without use of the gearbox. The 250, however, was constantly dropping behind and was in fourth gear more than in top. It had to work hard to stay with its bigger brother.

With the speedometer fixed for our test session at MIRA, it was pleasing to find it very accurate — but the Midlands weather, as usual, was terrible! High winds caused problems with some of the runs, but did help out by drying the track. At one stage the crosswinds reached between 30 and 35mph. However, we carried on and managed some good speeds and times. The prone maximum speed turned out to be over 108mph, although the bike's usable maximum (i.e. the solo figure, with the rider seated normally) is 100mph. We don't quote pillion speeds in our 'road and track' reports, but we did find it capable of about 95mph two-up.

Over the full period of our test the 400 Dream averaged 48mph on 2-star fuel, which gives a maximum range of about 140 miles. We didn't establish the ultimate range of the reserve fuel supply, although our test machine once managed a creditable 36 miles before an open filling station was found.

During our standing start acceleration runs the clutch needed several cable adjustments to keep it manageable. On the road it was light in action and never required attention. It was needed for all downward changes, but could be forgotten going up the smooth gearbox.

As has already been said, our test machine had been dropped at some time or other. It always felt as though the bike was going slightly sideways, and

seemed to take lefthand bends slightly better than righthanders. It took a while to get used to, but eventually riding was adapted to suit, and it was ridden almost as hard as a 'straight' bike. Basically, the handling should be identical to the 250 Dream — which is quite good.

The low-profile tyres gave good roadholding under most conditions, wet roads included, but did seem critical on pressures. If either tyre

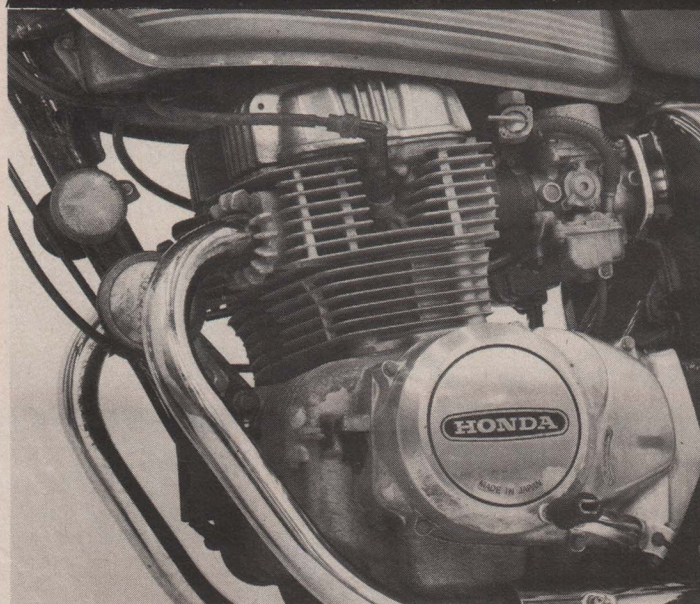
was allowed to drop a fraction the handling became noticeably worse, more so than with conventional tyres. Whilst on the subject of wheels, we noticed that one or two of the plastic covers at the spoke ends of the Comstars were missing. It made them look very shabby.

Comfort is one of the Honda 400T Dreams' best features, and it must lead the field in the mid-range market. One must hope that the sportier-looking CB400N 'Eurostyled' bike scheduled to replace it does not sacrifice this aspect. The large well-padded seat is suitable for many miles of non-stop riding, both solo and two-up. For the rider, the seat tapers well towards the petrol tank, allowing him to tuck his knees in quite neatly. For the pillion passenger, the seat is very wide, and has a grab-rail that extends along both sides as well as the rear.

The footrests, front and rear, seem well placed for most riders, although anyone with very long legs may get cramp sitting on the back. The medium height handlebars were extremely comfortable at all speeds.

Honda claim that their new FVQ rear damper provides a more stable ride, although it never felt any different to a normal unit. Both front and rear suspension units smoothed out most of the bumps encountered on the road.

Technically Speaking



HONDA CB400T dream

ENGINE

The 395cc counter-balanced 360° parallel-twin engine with its single overhead camshaft produces a claimed 40bhp at 9500rpm. It boasts a CDI (capacitance discharge ignition) system which obviates points checking and setting.

Starting was always first time, whether by electric or kick-start, and the choke could be closed within two miles of a cold start.

Air cooled, twin cylinder four-stroke twin. Capacity, 395cc. Compression ratio,

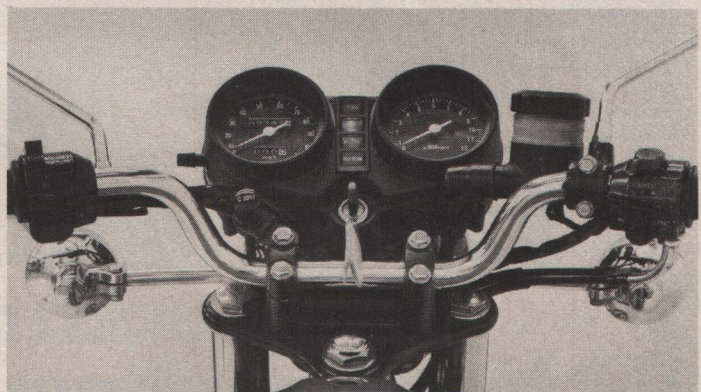
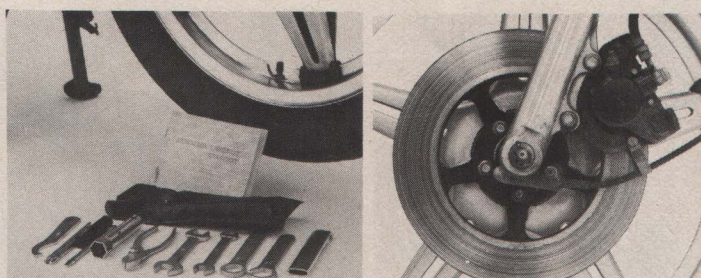
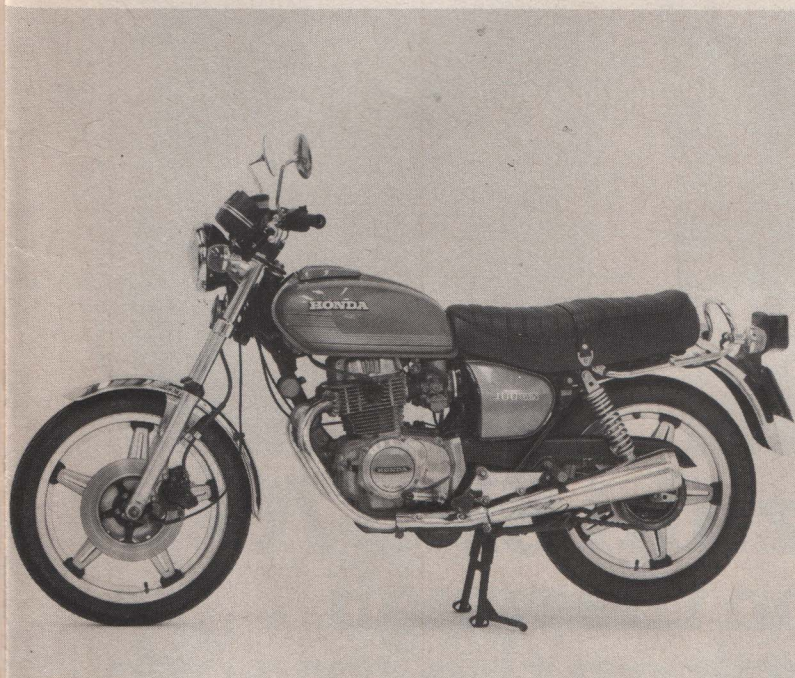
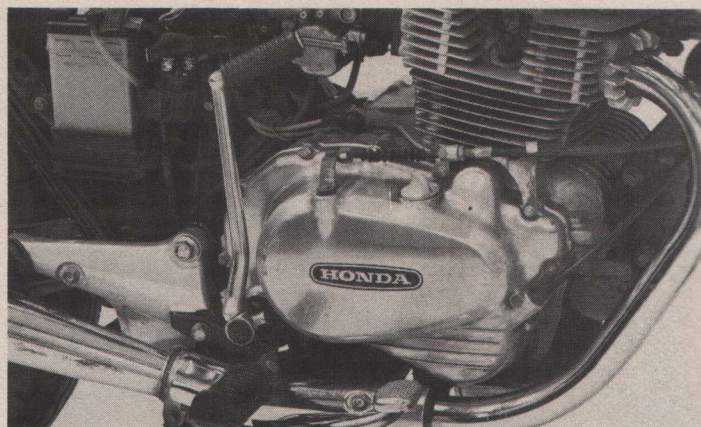
Stopping the 400T is a combination of front disc and rear drum. It works very well in the dry, but there is a long delay with the disc in the wet. Both brakes had a fair amount of feel, but care had to be taken not to lock the rear in the wet.

According to the leaflet on the Honda 400T Dream it has "... as full a range of warning lights and information meters as never was provided before on any machine." We could never find any more than the speedo, rev counter, and four warning lights for indicators, neutral, high beam and

oil pressure, and we seem to remember a few other bikes with that lot, and a bit more. Anyway, they are all easily seen and understood. The switches are all Honda's well-proved type and close at hand and easy to use.

All in all Honda were in to a winner with the 400T Dream, as with the 250T Dream. It is a well proportioned middle of the range touring machine, that is just as at home about town. So why change it? It is now destined to become available only as second-hand: a sad waste of a fine bike.

Geoff Carless



9.3:1. Max power, 40bhp @ 9500rpm. Bore 70.5mm x 50.6mm stroke.

TRANSMISSION

The five-speed gearbox, with its well-chosen ratios, was always smooth and positive, although it did take more readily to clutchless changes moving up the box.

The clutch proved powerful enough for general road use, but only just capable of coping with our punishing standing start acceleration tests.

The rear chain lasted well, and only required one minor adjustment throughout the test period.

Five-speed, constant mesh gearbox. Wet, multi-plate clutch. Ratios: 1st —

19.75:1; 2nd 13.37:1; 3rd — 10.23:1; 4th — 8.29:1; 5th — 6.97:1. Primary reduction ratio: 3.125. Final reduction ratio: 2.312.

ELECTRICS

All the electrics worked well on the test machine. The electric starter turned the engine over more than fast enough to start it.

The headlamp had a good spread of light on both dipped and main beams, and was capable of allowing speeds in excess of 70mph to be maintained on an unlit road.

Battery: 12V 12AH; CDI ignition; Spark plug: NGK BR8ESL; Headlamp: 50/40W; Tail/brake lamp: 8/21W; Indicator lamp: 21W.

FRAME & FORKS

The engine crankcases form part of the frame which allows for a higher than normal ground clearance.

The telescopic front forks and adjustable rear units smooth out many of the road bumps and undulations. The FVQ rear dampers are supposed to give a more stable ride, but there was no evidence of this on our test machine.

Diamond type steel cradle frame. Telescopic front forks. Swinging arm suspension with adjustable dampers.

WHEELS & BRAKES

As with most of Honda's new bikes the 400T is fitted with

the three-piece Comstar wheels. They look good when new, but tend to look very shabby when the plastic covers start dropping off.

The low profile tyres suit the bike almost perfectly, although it remains to be seen what standard tyres will do to the handling. We haven't yet tried one with them fitted.

The brakes work well in the dry but there is a delay present on the front disc in the wet.

Hydraulic front single disc. Internal expanding rear drum. Tyre sizes: Front — 3.60 x 19; Rear — 4.10 x 18.



MAXIMUM & MINIMUM SPEEDS

GEAR	Solo max.	Prone max.	Min.
1	35.54	35.61	4.93
2	52.64	53.01	7.22
3	70.38	70.24	9.77
4	97.30	98.34	11.10
5	100.50	108.69	13.77
6	—	—	—

SPEEDO CORRECTIONS

Indicated mph	30	40	50	60	70
Actual mph	28.80	40.42	50.54	60.13	70.15

ACCELERATION FROM REST (secs)

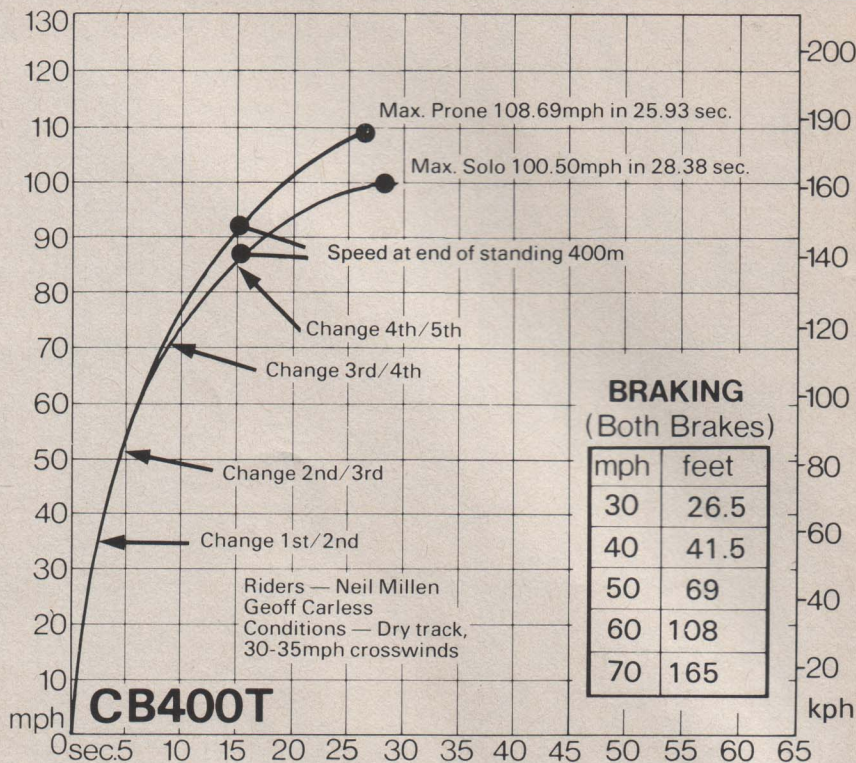
0mph to	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	Max.	400m
Solo	1.92	2.88	4.12	5.49	7.13	8.91	12.09	16.31	21.41	—	—	28.38	15.03
Prone	1.91	2.84	4.11	5.42	7.08	8.78	11.31	14.04	18.98	—	—	25.93	15.00

FLEXIBILITY, Top Gear

mph	20-40	40-60	60-80	30-50	50-70
Solo	7.67	7.65	8.29	7.36	7.46
Prone	7.71	7.59	7.94	7.32	7.28

FUEL CONSUMPTION

mph	30	40	50	60	70	80
mpg	111.2	86.8	71.4	54	39.2	—
Overall consumption						48 mpg



BRAKING (Both Brakes)

mph	feet
30	26.5
40	41.5
50	69
60	108
70	165

Technically Speaking



HONDA
CB400T dream

31.50ins. (800mm); Wheelbase — 54.72ins. (1389mm); Dry Weight — 396lb. (179.6kg); Fuel tank capacity — 3.08gals. (14 litres).

EQUIPMENT

The 400T doesn't have any more, or less, than just about every other bike on our roads. No problems — except for that broken speedo cable. Centre and prop stands. Steering lock. Locking cover over fuel cap. Twin mirrors. Flashing indicators.

TEST DATA

Test figures obtained at Motor Industries Research Association track at Lindley, Warks.

Timing by fully-automatic Hird-Brown photo electric equipment controlling Heuer 1/100 second stop watches.

Terminal speed read-outs by fully automatic electronic speed-sensing equipment accurate to 1/100mph.

Test riders, Geoff Carless — holds Police Class One Certificate and Institute of Advanced Motorists Certificate; and Neil Millen.

Weather conditions — Dry with 30-35mph crosswinds.

GENERAL

Price: £869.00 inc VAT. Test machine supplied by: Honda UK Ltd, Power Road, Chiswick, London.



being just a little larger, although it does give a fairly good range between fuel stops.

Length — 83.9ins. (2131mm); Width — 28.7ins. (729mm); Height — 44.3ins. (1125mm); Ground Clearance — 6.50ins. (165mm); Seat height —

DIMENSIONS

A bike of more than adequate proportions that is ideal for long journeys whether solo or carrying a pillion passenger.

The fuel tank could do with