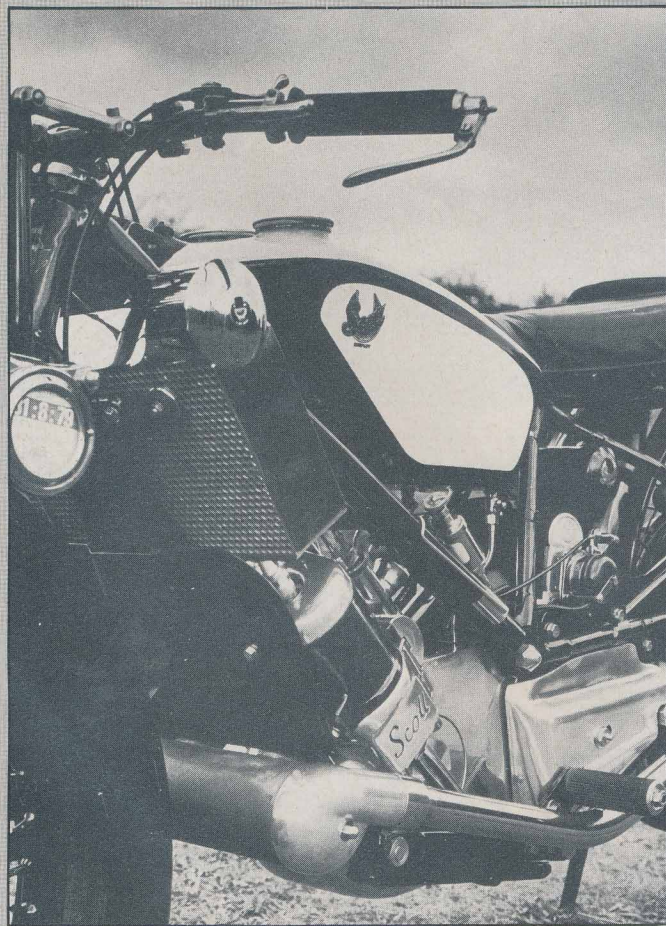


the time, the Flying Squirrel Tourer. When it was first made it cost £66 (the 600 was £2 extra) and for another £7 you could have had the De Luxe model with deeply valanced mudguards and a number of other refinements. That did not include a headlight, of course. *That* would cost extra and could be either magdyno by Lucas, BTH magneto or acetylene, depending upon how much you wanted to pay. Our model did not have any of them. You had to pay extra for other things, too. The chain oiler from a reservoir behind the engine and serving the primary and magneto chain, air cleaner, steering damper, Scott silencer as opposed to the Gold Medal version fitted as standard, speedometer, horn (bulb type) and a host of other parts that did not come as standard could add 50% to the cost of the bike. The version as built had few of these but it did have the most superb road tax disc holder, nickel plated. A work of art.

The end result as restored by Jim Best is a bike fit for

a king. It was no startling performer, managing a honest 70mph, but not much more without tuning, but it was the manner of its going that gave it such majesty. Finished in black frame with cream tank and black inset it will go down in history as one of the classic motorcycles of all time. Not, as I have said, because of what it did but because of the way it did it and the way its maker, Alfred Scott, sold the idea.

Lest we be considered to be wearing rose tinted spectacles let me conclude by mentioning one or two of its less-than-perfect parts. The oiling system was positive by a Pilgrim pump, but the plain fact is it was a lousy system and Jim's Scott uses a petroil mixture and a hand pump to give the occasional squirt to the big end. Then there is the Amal-Binks three jet carburettor. Jim professes to have got his working acceptably but most who have them throw them away and fit something more efficient. It is not all perfection but it really is an attractive motorcycle, isn't it?



Jim Best's pristine Scott is a fine example of what a dedicated preservationist can achieve, although the bike is not actually factory stock. Spares are still available for most Scotts, but the complex radiator has to be hand-made and would set you back £160!

THE PROOF OF THE POUNDING MOTO GUZZI V50

HONDA CX500

Charlie Harris and Eric Silberman assess the performance of two little shaftties during a year of ownership.

HONDA

Unlike my friend's V50 which has a good thrashing on the continent, the CX500 can offer no exciting fables of high-speed jaunts from Marseilles' red-light district back home to where the Mafia hold court in darkest Bedfordshire. All, or rather most of its progress has been from the depths of rural Reigate to (gay?) debonair Rathbone Place and *Which Bike?*'s West End headquarters, a daily trip of some sixty miles. That's meant a total of 6,000 miles spread over nine months and there follows a nail-biting, breath-taking report on how the bike's coped with such an arduous task.

Firstly, with hand on heart, I can say that my commuter express has not used a drop of oil in all the miles that it has been thrashed — no, none at all! Also the radiator hasn't seen any extra fluid, neither have the brakes been adjusted, not one single bulb or switch has failed, either. But what has amazed me most, that in all these months the machine has been used, is that I have constantly ridden with the headlight on and it is as bright today as it was when it was brand new.

The engine is really loose now and performs magnificently except for slight vibration around 65mph which affects the mirrors with annoying regularity. (This could be something to do with the tappets which, it seems, open up after adjust-

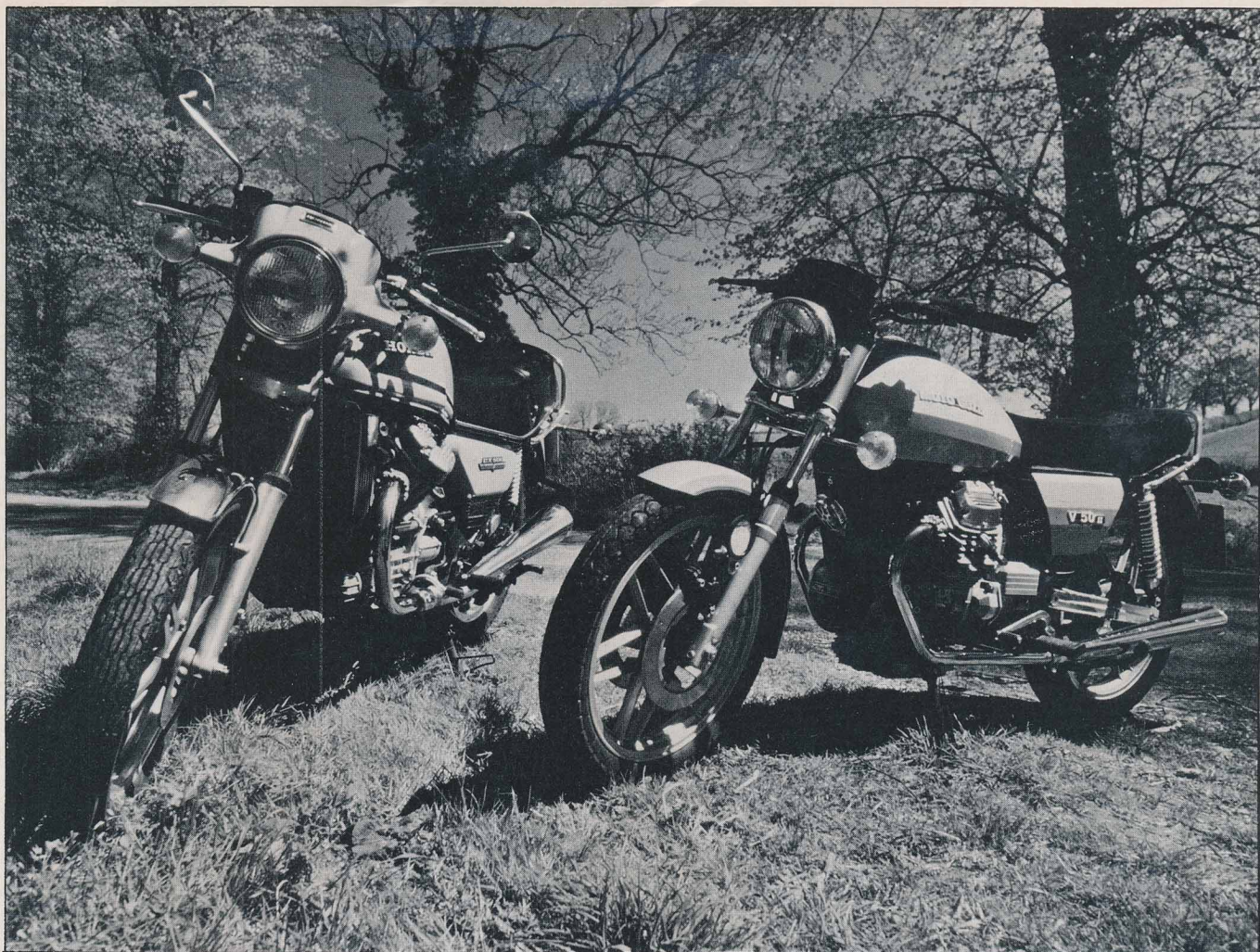
ment). The only real luxury I have allowed myself is a pair of Avon tubeless tyres and what a difference they make, especially in the wet. The original Bridgestone "grip-less specials" sent the fear of God into me every time it rained, but that could be a little unfair, has anyone else been skating in Trafalgar Square, homeward bound on a wet Friday night? I'm sure that all those that know that particular piece of evil will understand!

Those that ride a CX in slowish traffic usually remark on how heavy the steering is and how white lines and ridges effect the handling of the bike. But when I changed to the Avons the handling was transformed, the steering was so much lighter than before and this, of course, made for easier manouvering and greater safety. So much so in fact that I hardly regard even the thickest of white lines as a hazard any more.

Braking distance has been improved in the wet, with the rear wheel hanging on where before it would have locked up, but grabbing a hand-full of twin discs up front can now be done with great confidence.

Whilst on holiday, various riders used my personal smoker, including former Editor John Nutting, who can be very hard on test bikes but even he failed to burn out the clutch after pulling continual standing ¼ miles at Santa Pod; other bikes might not have been so robust!

Over the last 18 months,



many machines have come my way, either because they were too valuable to park in the street over-night or purely for the fact that I fancied a bit of a 'pose'. The only trouble with exotic machines parked outside my gaff is the continual "what'll she do mister" or "I have been thinking of buying one of these" comments every time I step out of the door. It all gets very boring.

However that wasn't the case with the slowest but most economical bike I borrowed, a Batavus fully automatic moped. The Batavus managed 160mpg and the journey took 1 hour 20 mins, but car drivers gave me a little trouble because sitting on the dual carriageway at such a slow speed and so low to the ground they regarded me, if at all, as being of little consequence (*are they alone in this?! - Ed*) and frequently came far too close for comfort.

I went to the other extreme on the BMW RT1000 and the Moto-Guzzi G5, neither really suited to heavy comuter traffic, and of course a job they were not intended for. So here we are

back to the Honda CX500 which has proved to me without doubt the best allrounder for general use. The advantages as I see them are as follows: The shaft-drive reliability, of course. High seating position enabling the rider to see at least 3 cars ahead. Superb lights front and rear. The most tractable engine I have yet come across, and for overtaking very quickly the engine will streak up to 10,000rpm in the gears, taking the rider away from any potential danger quickly and easily.

I was asked if there were any improvements that could be incorporated in the CX, and of course there are. I would start with the gear-shift, which in constant traffic means one is having to go from 5th down through neutral and then to 1st and 30 seconds later repeat the whole process again, and an unnecessary one at that. Why don't bike manufacturers copy car-type gear changes, whereby you can cruise up to traffic lights in 3rd or top and just slip the thing into neutral and go straight into first gear?

I would also like to see

permanent side lights fitted to the bike along with a reflector facing out sideways from each of the spokes on the wheels, anyone who drives a car at night in dark, wet and congested traffic will know all too well how easy it is to miss a rider who is pulling-out from a road junction. (*Huh? - Ed*).

Finally, I would like dual operating brakes like the Moto-Guzzi, but with more sensitive controls instead of having both brakes working from the foot pedal have them from the front brake which is easier to use, has more finesse and is immediately to hand.

In summation I would say the CX has been perfect for the job I have used it for and has never let me down in any way whatsoever.

Charlie Harris

MOTO GUZZI

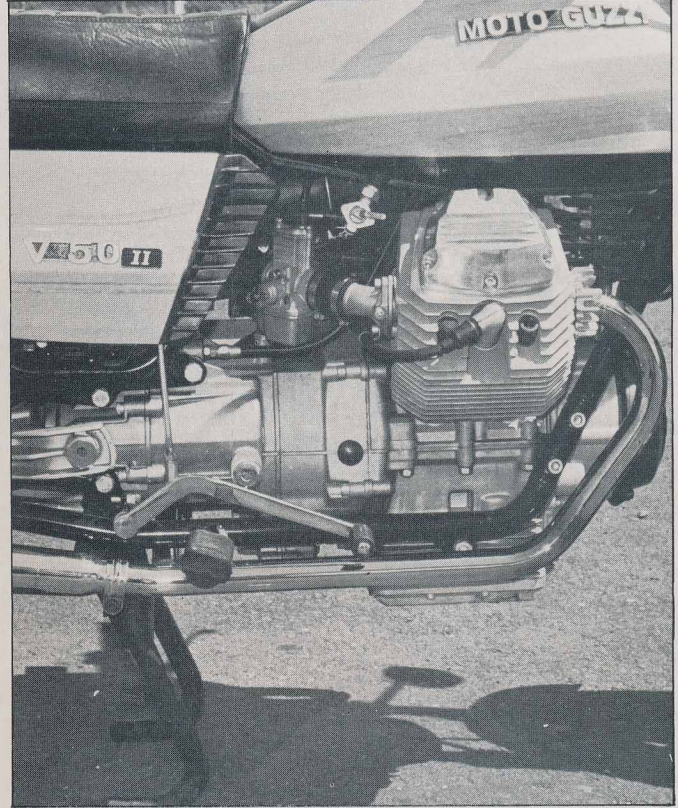
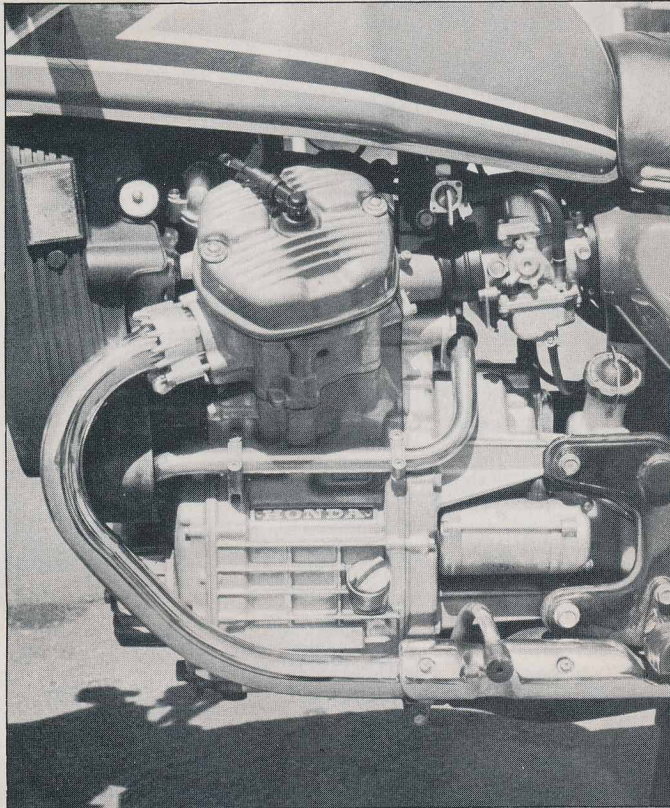
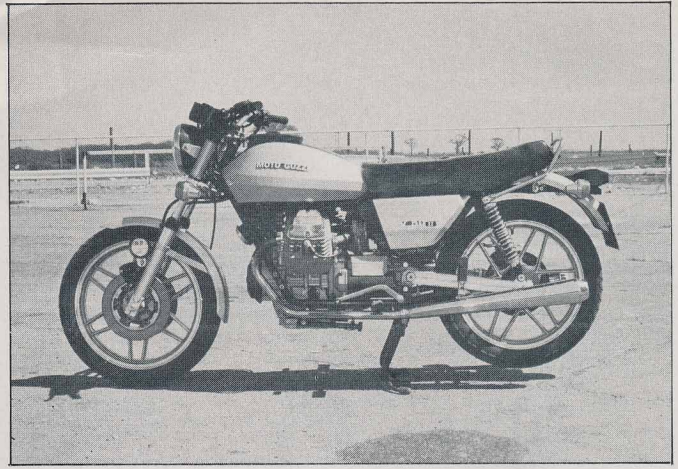
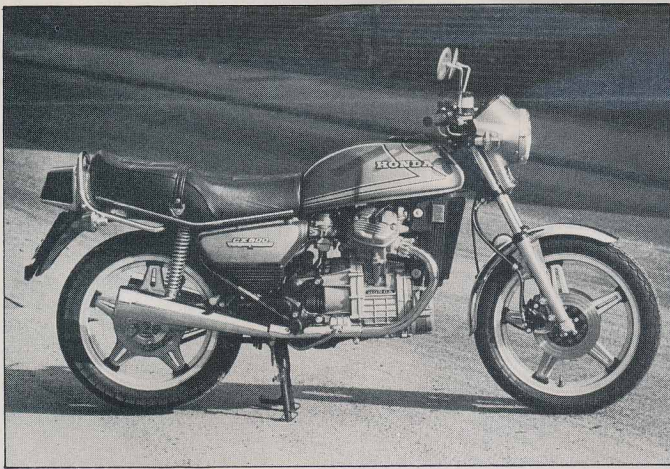
Moto-Guzzi's 500cc V50 is, on paper at any rate, an ideal touring machine with its combination of shaft drive, simple engine and low weight to make up for any deficiencies in the power department. To put this theory to the test. I recently took it on a two

week tour of France, Switzerland and Italy.

Setting off from Calais, courtesy of Townsend Thoresen, the bike seemed unaffected by the additional burden of a pillion passenger and 60 pounds of camping equipment and luggage packed onto a Hi-Way rack and panniers, although getting the bike onto the centre-stand proved awkward because the bike was very precariously balanced when on its side stand and would also drip oil from a breather pipe in this position.

Two days out from Calais saw us arrive at Lucerne in Switzerland, the bike having behaved impeccably, cruising at speeds of up to 85mph for hours on end on minor French roads (the Autoroutes are very expensive) with temperatures sizzling into the high eighties.

Leaving Lucerne where I contrived to drop the bike, fortunately with no more damage than a bent brake pedal, it was time to head for the Guzzi's motherland. The St. Gothard Pass is an impressive masterpiece of road building as it blasts its way through and over the



Alps; the rarified atmosphere and steep climbs making themselves felt as the machine struggled to reach the top. It was during the descent into Italy that an old fault recurred — oil on the rear disc.

Heading for Lake Como the heavens opened, releasing an almost tropical downpour but thankfully the original archaic metal plug caps had been replaced with rubber ones after failing on the return trip from the Isle of Man TT, and the well water-proofed electrics never displayed any of their infamous Italian temperament.

The roads around Lake Como resemble a permanent Mad Sunday with every form of motorised two-wheeled transport hell-bent on getting nowhere fast. . . and first! Everything from moped-kids

with their feet on the bars to stripped-down scooters with side-saddled signorinas riding pillion, and occasionally cruising majestically through the crowd an Italian superbike, a rare sight even on its own home turf.

From Como it was off to the French Riviera and some serious cafe posing in St. Tropez where Honda's CBX was *the* machine to be seen on. Another port of call was the highly over-rated Monte Carlo; a sort of Birmingham inner ring road, plus sunshine.

The journey from the South of France to home, 50 miles north of London should have been a leisurely two day affair but once again the weather turned nasty; gale force winds and torrential rain making a night under canvas a depres-

sing prospect, so the entire 850 mile trip was tackled in one twenty-two hour stretch. This was the only part of the journey where I felt the need for a more powerful machine, and more padding on the seat, as the bike was blown all over the road and had to struggle against a strong head wind.

Like good wine the Guzzi is improving with age. Over 6,000 extremely varied miles, the motor has loosened up nicely and the gearchange become smoother. The only modifications from standard have been the aforementioned rubber plug caps, the fitting of a Cibie Z Beam to replace the inadequate headlamp, and treating the engine to a set of gold tipped sparking plugs which seems to have cured the occasional hiccup that would occur after pro-

longed town riding at low revs.

Most of the faults have been trivial ones, like three blown stop lights and the side stand vibrating itself loose (cured with a drop of Loctite). More serious was a vicious front wheel wobble at 85mph but this was easily cured by inflating the front tyre to 31psi.

Moto-Guzzi are obviously aware of the problem as later models now arrive with a ribbed front tyre. The long running problem of oil leaking onto the rear disc has now been cured once and for all (I hope) and as far as oil consumption is concerned, the Guzzi has proved quite abstemious, using only a pint and a quarter on its 2,000 mile European jaunt.

Eric Silberman