

Which Bike?

SEPTEMBER
60p

50

EVERY MONTH ALL NEW

AND USED BIKE PRICES



INSURANCE BEATERS
FROM KAWASAKI,
SUZUKI AND
HONDA

COPS ON BIKES IN L.A. AND LONDON

NO KICKS IN TRIUMPH'S
ELECTRIC BONNIE +
CUSTOM
250s

Editor
John Nutting
Assistant Editor
Rick Kemp
Editorial Assistant
Roger Atyeo
Contributors
Dave Minton
Tim Stevens
Bruce Preston

Advertisement Manager
Charlie Harris
Tel: 01-631 1712
Telephone Sales
Jacquie Hancock
Tel: 01-631 1682

Group Advertising Director
Richard Howell
Tel: 01-631 3187

Production Manager
Dick Pountain
Art Director
Paul Carpenter

Art Editor
Jimmy Egerton
Bruce Nicholson

Design Assistant
Sarah L. Castell

Typesetting
Jane Hamnell

Published by
Sportscene Publishers Ltd.,
14 Rathbone Place,
London W1P 1DE, England
Tel: 01-637 7991/2/3

VAT No. 234 6363 1
Company registered in England

All material in Which Bike? is
copyright of Sportscene
Publishers Ltd. and may not be
reproduced in whole or in part
without the written consent of
the publishers.

Printed by Southernprint Ltd.
Branksome, Poole, Dorset
Distributed by Moore Harness Ltd
Corsica St., London N1

Cover Illustration by
Mick Brownfield



Which Bike?

2
New Bike Buyers Guide:
Do you need to know any more?

17
Two-Wheel Gazette:
News and pnews from around the world.

21
New Products:
What's new for you this month?

25
End of an Era?:
Beware, loony legislation is lurking.

27
Editorial Hacks:
The new addition - Z1300 chariot plus Dick's roving CX500.

28
Letters:
You state your case.

33
Last Of The Line?:
Testing the Triumph T140ES - Is this the final gasp?

46
Plain Jane:
Does bigger mean better for the Kawasaki Z440C?

54
On The Job:
Cops on bikes from both sides of the Atlantic.

59
Custom Cruisers:
Laid back two-fifties from Suzuki and Yamaha plus the one that started it all, Cagiva's SST250N.

71
Out Of Court:
Last bash at Earls Court before the Birmingham bazarre.

75
On the Rough:
Dirt readers start here.

76
Gentle Giants:
The ultimate ball breakers? Can-Am 400 Qualifer versus Suzuki's PE400.

86
Off-Road Rambles:
Mumblings from the mud.

88
Kost Cutters:
Quickspin on three machines that don't hurt your pocket. Kawasaki KC100, Honda H100 and Suzuki GP100U.

98
Golden Oldies:
1948 KSS Velocette - from basket case to concours.

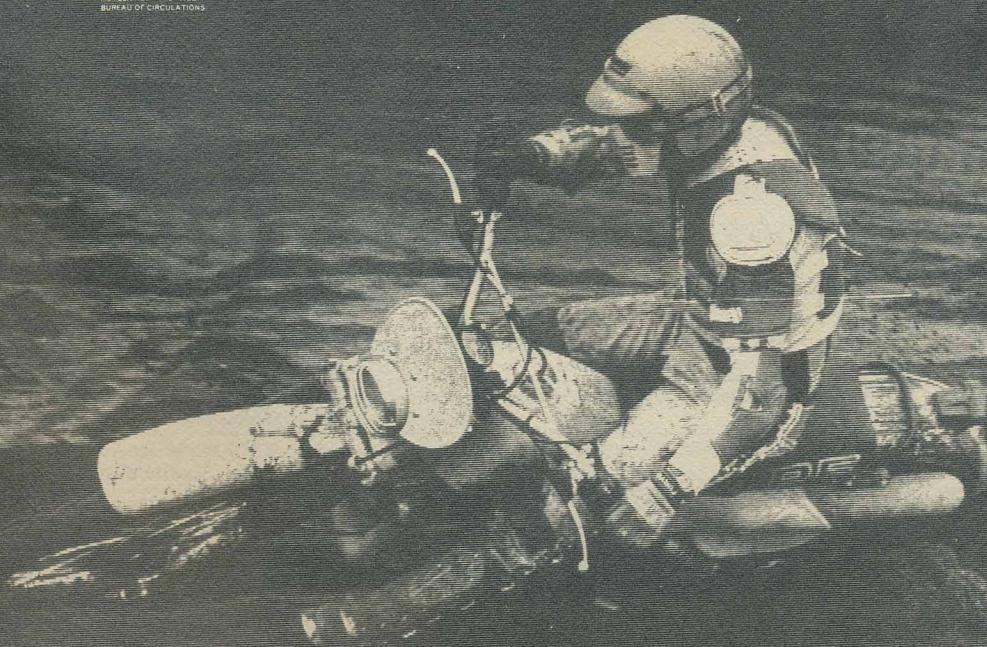
100
The Artful Bodger:
Second in our series of Mechanics for Mugs: dodges to get you home.

105
Help:
Tim Stevens supplies the answers to your questions.

107
New Bike Price Guide:
Pick your price, we have the lot.

114
Used bike Buyers Guide:
Discover the worth of your pride and joy.

120
Back Issues:
We have the tests; this is how to find them.



METROPOLITAN POLICE

Has it ever occurred to you that policemen are real people? That's not such a silly question. Consider how many non-motorcyclists have yet to be convinced that bikers aren't some strange form of alien life – yet even the hard done by rider is apt to consider that coppers don't have much in common with the rest of us.

Our London cop rode Triumphs and BMWs with the Metropolitan Traffic Division for four-and-a-half years before transferring to another branch of the force. Even after covering more miles in that time than most of us manage in a decade, he still exudes enthusiasm for all forms of motorcycling.

Okay, it's easy to sound like an enthusiast while sipping a pint, but unless you're one hundred per cent committed to the sport you don't earn top honours in the arduous Circuit de Pyrenees. He managed it this year, on his own Suzuki PE175 enduro.

That expertise doesn't come easy. Would-be motorcycle patrolmen don't just join up, leap aboard fully-dressed police bikes and start chasing evil doers around the countryside.

After two years of general police duties the opportunity does arise to ride police bikes, but Metropolitan trainees are restricted to Honda CB200s until they've proved themselves. After a rigorous ten-week training course they take a test supervised by the police's own instructors culminating in a class three licence; more than equal to the DoT test.

The class three licence clears patrolmen for relief work, often on the few Triumphs left in the fleet. After some more road patrol experience the fledgling patrolmen are sent to one of the police training schools, the best known being at Hendon, North London.

Another period of advanced instruction and examination leads to a class two licence and the chance to ride BMWs as full-time police riders. At this stage, believe it or not, they still have to obey traffic laws, apart from speed limits when in hot pursuit.

ON THE JOB

You might think that the work of a motorcycle cop is much the same the world over. But as you can see, a California Highway Patrolman breezing along the freeways of Los Angeles meets a completely different sort of customer from his Metropolitan Police counterpart based in London. . . and even runs the risk of facing the gun-toting speedster. Stories by *Chuck Bohon* in America and *David Richmond* in London. Photography by *Patrick Behar* and *Ian Dobbie*.

Which Bike? SEPTEMBER 60p
EVERY MONTH ALL NEW AND USED BIKE PRICES

COPS ON BIKES IN L.A. AND LONDON

INSURANCE BEATERS FROM KAWASAKI, SUZUKI AND HONDA

NO KICKS IN TRIUMPH'S ELECTRIC BONNIE + CUSTOM 250s

Those apparently loony police riders you sometimes see maintaining barely subsonic speeds through town have all passed the police class one advanced test, which is easily the most demanding test of roadcraft and machine handling there is, bar none.

The class two test is roughly equivalent to the Institute of Advanced Motoring test – the class one, says our cop, “Really sorts the men out from the boys”.

Having learned to ride outside the law *safely* expert police riders are expected to

be able to hold 80-90mph on twisty roads, relying on gears more than brakes. They're trained to anticipate hazards, in anticipation of the standard chase technique whereby a patrolman will use his skill to maintain position behind a fleeing suspect and wait for the suspect to make a mistake. They generally do.

That's fair enough as, apart from directors of TV cops and robber programmes, no-one has worked out just how a motorcycle can force a car to a halt! As the majority of class one riders operate in towns where their bikes' manoeuvrability is most needed, they develop a knack of getting through dense traffic with an ease that borders on the uncanny.

They also develop some scathing opinions on the skills of fellow road users, including the two-wheeled fraternity. Most have had some near collisions with maniacal London riders.

Considering the frighteningly large number of teenage dispatch riders on L-plates, his less-than-admiring attitude's hardly surprising. Mind you, in common with the vast majority of police riders, he would emphasise that: “There's no dispute between police and bikers”.

Living in Biggin Hill, Kent, our man spends some of his free time at a local youth club where, with a couple of colleagues, he runs an unofficial rider training scheme. Having attended many accidents involving riders, he takes rider safety very seriously indeed, yet unlike some “safety experts” he shares the view of most experienced riders that training is the only effective way to reduce rider casualties. Many police riders volunteer as instructors as RAC/ACU, STEP and IAM advanced courses.

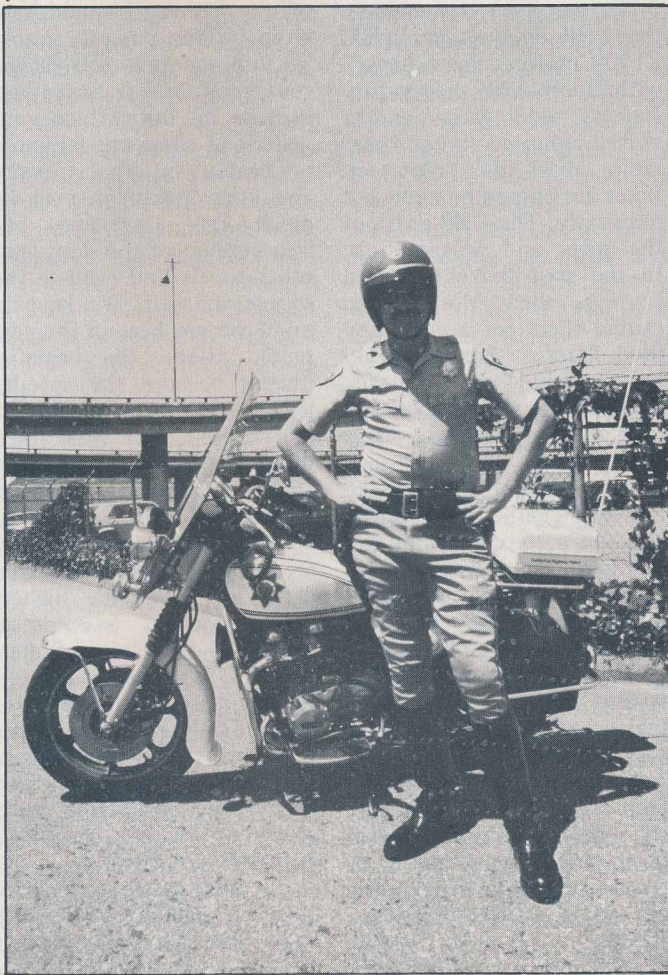
Inevitably there are officious coppers on bikes, determined to enforce traffic laws to the letter.

There are many others, however, prepared to take the time to lecture a Barry-Sheene-replica 17-year-old RD 250 rider on how to stay alive, rather than just issuing a speeding ticket.

So do bike-riding coppers really spend their whole lives issuing tickets to erring motorists? He says not. For a start, the Traffic Division is just as specialised as any of the more glamorous divi-



Standard issue for the Metropolitan Police bike bobby is an R80/7 BMW fitted with the touring fairing from the RT (above) while his Californian counterpart (below) enjoys a Z1000 Kawasaki police model tricked up to feel like a Harley Davidson, complete with footboards and buckhorn handlebar.



sions of the Metropolitan Police.

After some years on the job and a few training courses, that rider you see blasting round the South Circular is liable to be an expert in accident prevention, vehicle examination and accident investigation. His equipment includes fire fighting and first aid gear as in many cases the first emergency vehicle to reach the scene of a major road accident is going to be a bike.

Naturally there is a lot of routine work. In the busy Metropolitan area police riders are directed from job to job, much of the work involving traffic direction. In the outer London area and in the City of London there's a better ration of patrolmen to jobs, so they tend to get more chances to use their initiative. They're very keen on spotting hazards such as diesel spillages and ordering local authorities to deal with them as a police rider's just as likely to be affected as anyone else.

Besides one-a-year efforts such as the Circuit de Pyrenees, many police riders enter for 'Blue Lamp' road trials and one and two day trials which are organised by the police but open to all local riders. The Federation of British Police Motor Clubs has a strong motor cycling contingent and most patrolmen spend a lot of their spare time in the saddle.

Not every police bike is fitted with a white fairing and equipment. Almost since the Metropolitan force acquired its first vehicles, the value of unmarked bikes has been realised, to the discomfort of villains who don't 'think bike'. Seems that the way that bikes merge in with the scenery can be advantageous to the forces of law and order. Bikes used for such work come in all shapes and sizes, but don't worry, they're too busy trying to make life difficult for big time criminals to check their fellow riders' tax discs. Interestingly enough, the bad guys are also realising the advantages of motorcycling. More and more bikes are being used in criminal activities due to their speed and manoeuvrability. Could lead to some interesting all-bike chases through the big city!

There are two other major advantages enjoyed by police

riders over the rest of us poor mortals. Their insurance (for their own road bikes) is usually cheap because of their excellent safety record. And if they do break down at the roadside while on duty, a police trailer's soon on the scene to help out. Mind you, in the meantime the embarrassed copper has to stand around and look efficient; they do have an image to keep up.

Police riders, like all enthusiasts, each have their own favourite machines. Generally they don't bemoan the change from British bikes to German, Italian and Japanese.

"The Triumph was better for town use", said our police officer, "It was more responsive than the BMW and its low down torque made it a pleasure to ride. Also, everyone recognised it as a police bike! But it was less reliable".

Some patrolmen developed a real soft spot for the Norton Commando Interpol — but again it was let down by its reliability. Despite a reputation for unreliability among some road riders, the Moto Guzzi 850 T3 is popular with many police riders, probably for the same reason as the Triumph: bags of torque and that certain character so important if you're going to enjoy riding a bike day in day out.

There's a rumour in road riding circles that some coppers have become CB radio addicts. That's not surprising considering the use they get from their radio equipment.

Besides the obvious advantages of being able to summon help when needed, the radio network ties individual patrolmen into the national police computer at Hendon.

As a result if a copper doesn't like the look of a vehicle he can radio in its index number and within seconds be told the legal owner. Some unmarked bikes are fitted with as much as £2,000 worth of transiever with separate networks for local and long-range work.

Cops are just like the rest of us, although they may handle their bikes somewhat better than average. Many of them join local bike clubs, most of them have their own views on current legislation although they aren't allowed to let those views influence their work, of course, and

nearly all of them are died-in-the-wool enthusiasts.

To put in the hours they do, in all weather conditions and all types of roads you have to be an enthusiast. Being a London-based motorcycle patrolman may be worlds removed from 'CHiPs' and that California sunshine; our boys don't even get the swish leathers commonly worn by their European counterparts — let alone

Right: The sight we hate to see in the mirror. Below: Handset for radio gear is on tank top while the speaker is mounted in the fairing of the Brit BMW.

Harley Davidsons to pose around on. But they do make life just that bit safer for the hard pressed biker, and for that they deserve our co-operation.

Let the police motorcyclist have the last word: "We're people with mortgages and bills — like anyone else — and people just don't realise that". Now that's a sentiment that any misunderstood biker can sympathise with. . .

CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

Some say it's the best police organisation in the world. Everyone's heard of it, that's for sure and the image that pops into your mind when you think CHP is that of a motorcycle officer in his natty tan uniform and gold and blue helmet cruising the Southern California freeway system on his white Kawasaki Z1000 Police Special.

And that's funny in a way, because the CHP has only about 500 motorcycle officers out of a total strength of 10,000 men. But of those 500, 275 are based in Los Angeles so maybe the image isn't entirely wrong. The CHP's motorcycle force is concentrated in L.A. for one reason: traffic.

"Our mission is to ensure freeway traffic flows as smoothly as possible", a motor officer told me. "In Los Angeles, surface streets are not even in our jurisdiction". Regular city streets are handled by the Los Angeles Police Department, which also has a large motorcycle division.

To carry out its mission, the CHP employs Kawasaki Z1000 motorcycles equipped with floorboards, heavy-duty frames, saddle-bags, and a swivel mounted motor roller radio abast the solo seat. Bikes are chosen on a low bid basis only. The CHP puts out the specs and accepts bids. In the past the patrol used Harleys, then Moto Guzzi outbid them for a year they used Guzzis, then Kawasaki held low bid for two years, Suzuki had it for a year and now they are back to using Kawasakis.

The major difference between earlier Kawasakis and the present machine is a sturdier frame which helps eliminate high speed flexing, a major problem on older Kawasakis.

The swivel mounted radio is also designed to increase high-speed stability. The highest mounting of the heavy radio mast was always a problem and now, by mounting the radio by a forward swivel so it can swing freely in or out on turns, the motorcycles are much easier to ride at speed.

And the patrolmen do

ride them at speed. "Whether or not to continue a pursuit is up to the individual officer", one CHP motorcycle veteran told us. "If there is a patrol car in the vicinity we are supposed to turn over the pursuit to him, but often the car can't keep up. We use Dodges, and with the big bar lights on top, their maximum speed is about 100mph.

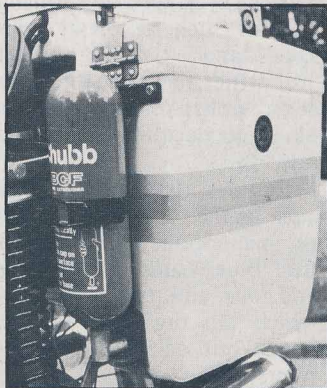
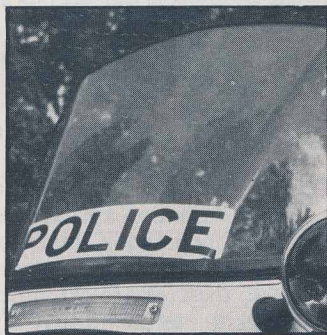
"Our bikes top out at about 110 — the old 900 Kawasaki could do 120 if you could keep them under control. Still, often a 110mph bike can catch a 120mph car because we can negotiate traffic better," the officer said, and went on to relate a recent incident.

"The other day I was pursuing a Pontiac Firebird on the San Bernadino freeway and he was pulling away from me at 110. He was probably doing over 120. This was a perfect case where only a bike could have caught him. Right, he could go faster than me, but he had to slow for traffic, and I didn't. He'd come up on a couple of cars, and have to slow, change over three lanes to go past them. I didn't have to slow. I could go right through traffic. So I got him".

"Now if he'd have gone off the freeway I would have given up the pursuit, simply because it's just too dangerous, not only to myself because on the surface your lights and siren are far more noticeable on the freeway and your braking has to be much less aggressive, but also because of the danger to other traffic and even to the speeder himself. We keep in mind we are here in increase public safety. We begin a pursuit because the speeder is a danger to other drivers, and himself. But what he is doing is not so grave a crime that he, myself, or others should die for it".

And death or risk of injury are very real for CHP Officers. They have the highest death rate of any police agency in the United States. Not only do they die on traffic accidents, but they also get shot. "You never know who that guy is you're stopping, or what he may have just done, or whether he is crazy on drugs or what", explained an officer.

In most cases people who flee us just do it because they have too many tickets or an expired registration, but



Just the job for lugging around sandwiches and extinguishing the occasional inferno.



The pride of the force — years of training go into every patrolman you see on the road. Could you manage this bike at hairy speeds in dense traffic or twisty roads?

you never know." In addition to the ticket book, handcuffs, and baton, the CHP officers carry a .38 calibre revolver, loaded with US Treasury-Dept-developed controlled expansion bullets, something like the old dum-dum, that mushrooms on impact, and so has tremendous knock-down power. But as one officer said, "I really don't know how effective it is, because in seven years on the force I've never used my revolver, and I hope I never have to. I also hope nobody ever shoots me too. Again, we're on the freeway to assist people, not to get in gun-fights. We'll let the people on TV do that".

The motorcycle officer's personal gear consists of a tan short-sleeve uniform patterned after that of a horseman, the pants with a reinforced seat. The black boots are knee-high pull-over type with laces at the ankle for support. The helmet is a Bell open face. "We tried full face types, but they presented a communications problem", an officer explained. "You'd have to take it off, whenever you approached the driver you stopped. We used hand mikes too, rather than helmet mounted boom types for much the same reason. It's easier to get on and off the bike and talk to people without unplugging yourself."

An officer is typically assigned a new motorcycle every two years. That motorcycle is his personal mount. He rides it to and from work and sees that it is properly maintained. He doesn't wrench it himself, the central division of the CHP has two full time mechanics to see to that.

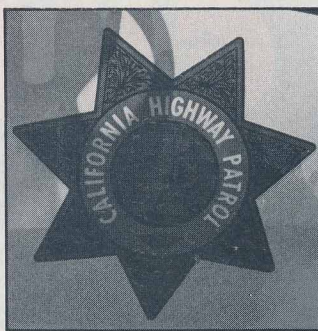
LA Central is heavily motorcycle. Out of 109 officers total, 47 are motorcycle patrolmen and four more are motorcycle sergeants. A patrolmen generally averages about 25,000 miles a year, including going to and from work. The day is divided into a morning and afternoon beat, in which an officer will do a four hour shift patrolling an assigned section of the freeway, from two to seven miles long. The more heavily trafficked the freeway, the shorter each beat will be. Motorcycles are assigned in greater numbers to the more congested freeways. When traffic is jammed up only a bike can get

through to the scene of an accident or the traffic blockage. During the four hours an officer typically puts 150 miles on his bike. On their patrol they are not greatly concerned with speeders, unless the speeding is blatant or reckless. "The speed limit is 55 but most people are doing 60 and 65. You can't ticket everyone".

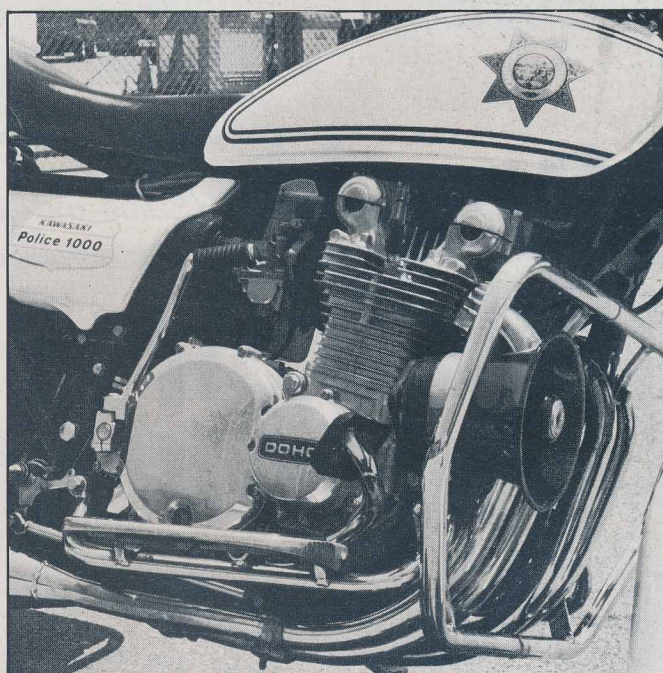
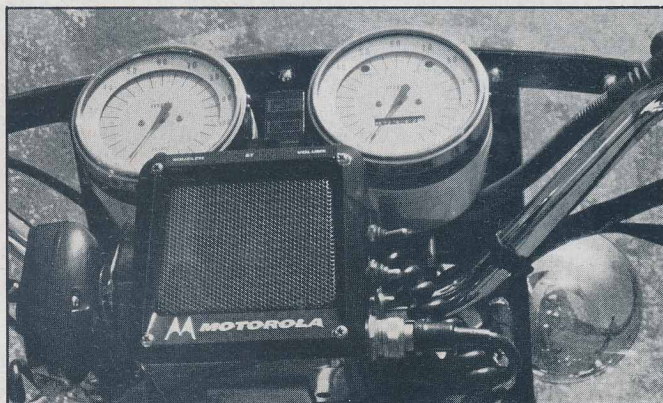
The CHP does not use radar and most officers seem opposed to it. "If we used radar we would become speed cops and nothing more", said one. "We'd do nothing but write tickets". That's not what we're out there for".

All the CHP motorcycle cops are volunteers. Most were bikers before they joined the force and become motorcycle officers for three reasons. They like bikes; they like the extra pay motorcycle officers get, and they like the prestige of being a motor officer. They are a small elite who have gone through a social training at Sacramento HQ and later on the highways. They are highly skilled, and proud of it. A motorcycle officer makes \$2,210 a month including \$129 extra "skill pay". A sergeant \$2,567. Pretty decent pay by any standards. Plus of course they get their own personal motorcycle. They also get a \$250 uniform allowance, but as one officer pointed out, "My pants cost \$77.50, my shirt \$25, my jacket \$180, my boots \$174. And I need more than one uniform".

A few years ago the CHP was planning to phase out motorcycles entirely, but in the last couple of years that has changed. "Before", explained an officer, "bikes weren't just cost effective. We had a lot of accidents, bikes require a terrific amount of maintenance, wore out quickly, and the amount of money they saved in gas was insignificant. But now a lot has changed. Gas is becoming a major cost factor. We are producing a much better, more skilled motor officer who is decreasingly involved in accidents. In 1980 for example, our goal was to have only 35 accidents. By the end of July we only had eight. We used to always go over our goal before. Since we started using imported bikes, our maintenance costs have just about vanished. My Kawasaki has 50,000 miles on it and has never needed repair. Three



Left: Eureka! It's Britannia on the CHP crest. Below: Yes, two speedos. The right one can be set to give the maximum pursuit speed in a chase. Bottom: If the poor Kawa isn't lugged down by enough weight already, the Police model gets crash bars, a wah-wah siren, footboards, spring saddle and Harley-type foot controls.



sets of points and plugs, and oil change every 3,000 miles, and a few sets of tyres and that's it. It still has the original chain on it. When we ran Harleys, at about 15,000 miles they needed a valve job. Then about 10,000 miles on they needed a lower-end job and then a few thousand miles after that valve job. Maintenance on them was killing us. The Harleys were unreliable, vibrated terribly and were slow. But you can't say all bad things about them, you could push a disabled car off the road with a Harley. Try that with an imported bike and you'll bend the frame. I know, I've done it with a Harley and bent the frame on my Kawa

trying. But since we've been using imported bikes we've been doing super. Other than the weak frames you just can't say anything bad about the Japanese bikes."

Before I left I asked the CHP motor officers who they thought made better drivers, automobile steerers or bikers. "No question, motorcycle riders are much safer. They are more alert and generally more skilled and that's whether they are driving on a bike. We found the same thing true with our own officers, and on the street, percentage wise, we ticket fewer bikes than cars."