

GOOD VIBRATIONS



Former club president and Good Vibrations editor, Bevin Jones, is about to light the fuse on his recently restored BSA 441 Victor. This is one astonishingly tidy machine.



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David Clark sent us this shot from Sammy Miller's museum after a recent visit there. It's a four cylinder 50cc racer *made in England*. Amazing machine, indeed, it's an amazing museum.



A couple of shots from the INOA International Rally in New York a couple of years ago. These machines had been shipped over by the UK contingent for the event. Don't forget, Buffalo Wyoming this year, July 15 to 19.

FULL CHAT

How come there's so much talent? Have you ever asked yourself that question? I don't mean in the general public, but in our club, the BMOC. We have members who spend countless hours, months, or years rebuilding a motorcycle better than when it came out of the factory - perhaps an equal mechanically, but very often notably better in the visual department. Hard to do for sure, but when they achieve their goal it presents inspiration and a real joy for the rest of us mere mortals to ogle at.

Other members build bikes from scratch - not hard to imagine the work overload here: late nights, maybe with a hot cuppa or beer or three, and maybe a bacon sarnie. Snuffing out the candles well into the early morning hours, falling into bed exhausted only to wake first thing with your project still on yer mind. "You're burning the candle at both ends", me old Mum used to say. Many continue to drive themselves like this, using up every available bit of free time to build their dream. Some members are quite happy getting an "old barn" find to just run, or to just polish once in a while the aged patina of their favourite steed. Whatever capabilities they possess it certainly generates a deep sense of satisfaction upon completion.

Building a bike to one's own design and satisfaction surely has to be one of the ultimate labours of love. When it actually looks perfect, handles and goes well, that must be self-gratification to the max. Engineers over the years spend countless hours perfecting their dream, so to get it to a state of one's own satisfaction first time round is nothing less than mind-boggling. There are members in our club who perform these amazing design feats, and then put the bike to the test on a race track or a strip of salt against others with the same dreams. These two appear to differ only in that the racing version is always up for improvement in the name of speed.

We are, I believe, very fortunate to have been born at a time when goods and services were not quite so available as they are today. Growing up in the 50's and 60's made many of us very resourceful, it made us innovators - not necessarily by choice, but rather from lack of funds. Taking a part from one machine to make it fit another, stumbling across scrap heap finds, scrounging from a neighbour or mate, or seeing a part on your mother's washing machine that with a little bit of modification (read files and hacksaws) would quite well do the job - all of this was a tremendous training ground for the amateur engineer. In my very early teens, my Dad would buy me "Practical Wireless" magazine, and from articles in there I constructed a crystal set, and, hey, it actually worked! Future articles gave instructions on building a one-valve short wave radio. When it was finished, I ran a 100ft aerial down the garden, and a ground wire down to the earth from my bedroom window, then I hooked up the batteries and - hey presto - Radio India came in loud and clear over the headphones. Not only was I hooked and excited by this very satisfying achievement, it also gave me the sense at that time of my life that "anything is possible". My point here being that the info was out there, you could easily allow yourself to be steered in that innovative direction, and you

could actually go to a store and buy the components required - not quite so easy today!! That was life back then, and life today is a little different. You may be able to go to a store and for a little money buy that crystal set/short wave radio, already assembled and ready to go, but will it generate that same sense of satisfaction?

Also in that aforementioned era, many bike magazines would publish articles now and then describing how to modify or adapt a certain part for your favourite ride. Many people achieved their dream with a little hard work and a lot of ingenuity.

These days, you can go to your favourite motorcycle dealer and buy yourself the "appliance motorcycle", all covered in plastic with engines you can hardly see, which will run for maybe 200 thou with not a wrench in sight. Great on so many fronts, but what a mate of mine in the UK describes as "plakky plush". On the other hand, we have a club full of members who lust after grubby fingernails and bacon sarnies, so hence the British bike part of life! We also have a bounty of young enthusiasts looking to get their hands dirty and experience a little bit of that "old time satisfaction". At the club level this looks really good and should give all of us a sense of pleasure, for when that time arrives there will be young enthusiasts stepping out of the shadows to acquire your machine. Maybe our first step should be to invite them to join our club, so that they too can experience the joys of grubby fingernails and bacon sarnies. In the meantime keep acquiring those bikes, building them, racing them, or just polishing them, but most of all, stay predominantly BRITISH, and sing "Rule Britannia" to yourself while yer riding - that's a must!

Stay upright, safe and visible,
Dave Woolley
President



RESTORING A 1936 NORTON MODEL 18

Steve Snoen

<http://www.norton850.com/1936norton.htm>

for more pics click here

This whole story started with a garage visit to Bevan Gore Langton, in Victoria. BMOC member Alan Comfort had arranged a garage visit to several people's garages on Vancouver Island. Bevan has a very impressive collection of old bikes (a huge under-statement!) and I really liked his 1946 Norton Model 18. An inquiry was made but no, he did not want to sell.

Ok, fair enough, I subsequently posted "wanted" ads in several classic bike clubs newsletters. After a two year search, a 1936 Norton was found in Edmonton, Alberta. The owner, a 72 year old gentleman with at least a dozen valuable bikes in his collection, was willing to sell but at a price. I was tired of searching, a bit too eager to buy, so I paid too much but the deal was done. Finding parts for pre-war vehicles is not easy, so the fact that the bike was complete and in running condition was a major point.



(left) At home with the bike. It was complete and in running condition, however, experience from other bikes has taught me, the only way to deal with such an old vehicle is to

dismantle everything and build it up again from scratch. Who knows what it looks like inside?

Case in point: the oil tank. After draining the oil, a lot of sludge was clearly visible in the bottom. It is no exaggeration to say the sludge was half an inch thick and the bottom-most one-eighth of an inch was like cement. Yikes, why did previous owners not notice this? Hours were spent cleaning out the hardened deposits.

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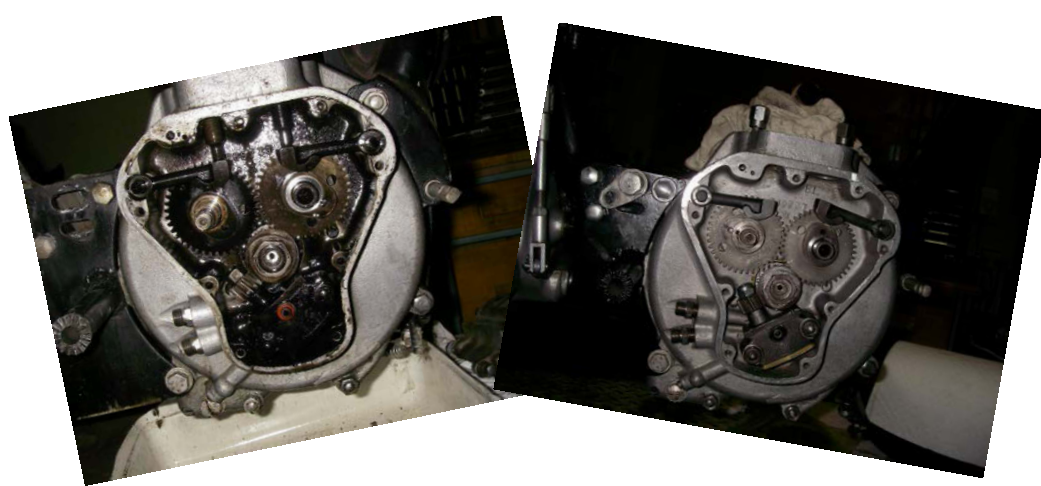
The bike was completely dismantled down to the crankshaft. New bearings and bushings were installed everywhere. The tires had lots of tread but the rubber was as hard as nails and no readable date codes. The bike has standard 19 inch rims, so getting new tires was no problem.

Both sprockets were completely worn out. The teeth were badly hooked and some were even missing. The rear sprocket is part of the brake-drum, similar to the Norton Commando but the size is different from the Commando. So an inquiry was made to RGM in the United Kingdom. "Yes, we have one in stock. Do you want the front sprocket too?" Yes, I did. Impressive, considering these are brand new parts for a three quarter century old vehicle. God bless the British. There will always be an England.



Repairing cooling fins. A total of twelve cooling fins were broken and new ones had to be welded in place. A friend of mine at work did an excellent job and for free!

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Incredibly dirty timing chest. The soot was baked into the aluminum. Same sad story inside the crankcase. Hours and hours were spent with a nylon brush and dish-washing liquid.

After the clean up. A new oil pump was installed. Old pump was v-e-r-y worn.

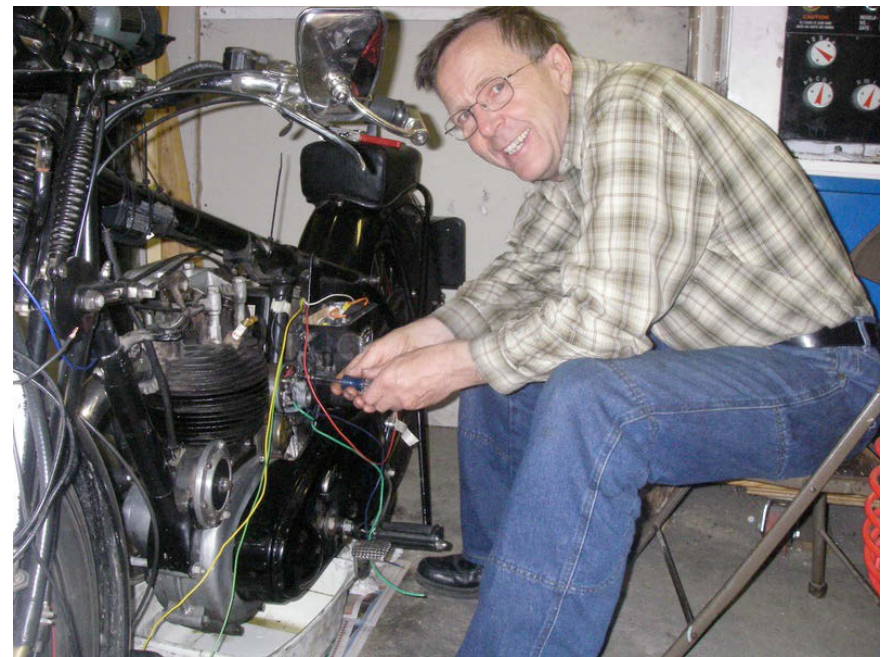


Cylinder head finished. I installed new valves and guides, supplied by the Norton Owners Club in the UK, but the guides failed in short order. James Comstock (Colorado) was then enlisted to help: custom made valve seats and new valves and guides installed. My bank account squealed upon paying the bill, but so far the head has been working perfectly.

The bike came with this spark plug. I have never before seen a plug that could be dismantled. The bike actually ran with this plug. A real curiosity and it is now retired from active service. One happy note about the bike: the magneto was in good shape. Dale Baston from the local Classic Club helped install new ball bearings (paper cupped bearing races and all), however electrically all was in order. A very healthy spark both hot and cold, made for easy starting. Hallelujah , a hard to start bike is a pain in the rear.



Crankshaft bolted down, ready for nut removal. A hydraulic press was then used to break the flywheels apart. The flywheels and connecting rod were sent to Phillip Radford (Fair Spares) in California. He installed a new con-rod bearing, new small-end bushing and supplied a new piston. Crazy expensive but that is the way it goes.



This is fun! Making new wiring harness. The electrical system on this bike is very simple. A modern electronic regulator makes it simpler yet.

The old 35 watt dynamo is visible between cylinder and battery. It has the old-fashioned "cut-out" and is the three-brush variety with half-resistor. In the 1930s this was quite a common method of regulating, but is today recognized to be a very poor system. The dynamo was rewound (by Douglas Wood, Pennsylvania), modified to two-brush type and a modern electronic voltage regulator installed. I decided to use a more "modern" dynamo (long type, on the left) from the 1950s. All of 60 watts on tap as opposed to 35 watts from the original.



The end result. The bike looks the same after restoration. The difference is that now I know everything is as good as my knowledge and experience can make it. If something fails, I can only blame myself.

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SHOULD YOUR BIKE BE ON THE WAGON?

Robert Smith

Ethanol is beguiling stuff, especially when flavoured with juniper berries and served ice cold over an olive. And while we've been drinking it mixed in various forms for at least 10,000 years, it's only recently our motorcycles have also taken to quaffing it. So is it good for them or not? What about the impact on your bike's fuel system? Should you avoid ethanol-blended gasoline completely?

First, a little history. In the beginning, gasoline consisted mostly of two "alkane" hydrocarbons: n-heptane and iso-octane. The more iso-octane in the mixture, the more resistant the fuel was to explosive combustion, allowing higher compression ratios and, therefore, better thermal efficiency. Pure iso-octane has an octane rating, by definition, of 100, hence the "octane rating," but oil fractionation produces less iso-octane than n-heptane, so higher octane fuels used to cost more. In 1921, Charles F Kettering at DuPont discovered that adding tetraethyl lead to gasoline increased the "octane rating," and TEL became the octane enhancer of choice.

It wasn't long before problems arose. In 1924, 17 refinery workers died "violently insane" from severe TEL poisoning; then later, children living near highways started

showing up with mental problems, which were eventually linked to lead levels in the air. (Leaded gas also contained alkyl bromides which reacted with lead during combustion to form volatile lead bromide, which went out the exhaust.) As a result, TEL was banned as a fuel additive in most countries.

Around the same time, smog levels in major cities became a concern. Smog is most usually caused by the action of sunlight on the mixture of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and unburned hydrocarbons from auto exhausts, and in sunny California cities it's literally a killer, especially of the elderly and those with breathing issues. That led to a number of innovations designed to reduce smog, like catalytic converters (to convert CO to CO₂), "California canisters" to capture excess fuel vapour, and a call for oxygenated fuels that would promote more complete combustion, producing less CO in the first place.

The first octane booster/oxygenator used widely was MTBE, methyl tertiarybutyl ether, but that was implicated in groundwater contamination and soon dropped. Since then, all kinds of chemicals have been tried. Some gas companies have used methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl, but MMT isn't good for catalytic converters, and has health concerns. Benzene and toluene are also commonly used as octane enhancers in higher octane fuels (toluene is also the main ingredient in "octane booster" additives sold in auto parts stores), but they don't oxygenate—and benzene is also carcinogenic.

What the marketplace was looking for was an additive that was an octane booster as well as an oxygenator while also being environmentally responsible and with no health issues. Ethanol seemed to be the answer. As a gas additive, it reduces CO emissions and increases octane rating.

Thanks to genetic modification, crop science and farm subsidies, the US has, until recently, produced more corn than it can eat—which is why corn ends up as additives like high fructose corn syrup, as an ingredient in American "beer," and as cattle fodder. Fermented to ethanol, corn seems to be the perfect fuel: clean, green—and not dependent on imported oil. In the US, 10% ethanol fuel, known as E10, is now the default option, and E15 will be in US gas pumps any day now.

So ethanol is good, right?

Well maybe, but only if your vehicle is designed for it. Environmentalists have also pointed out the "inconvenient" evidence that it actually takes more imported oil to grow the corn (in the form of oil-derived fertilizers and pesticides) and ferment it to ethanol than if the oil had gone straight to the refinery. E10 may reduce smog (the jury still seems to be out on that) and certainly increases octane rating—but its energy content is lower than straight gas, so you burn more.

The ethanol in E10 gas also makes it hygroscopic, meaning it attracts moisture. E10 will hold as much as 0.5% water in solution at 21C, and its proponents claim this makes it useful in preventing fuel line freeze-ups by keeping water in

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solution. Unfortunately, when the temperature drops to 0C, as it sometimes will in Canada, E10 will only hold 0.3% moisture, so half the water separates out (“phase separation”). Then you have liquid water (or ice!) in the bottom of your gas tank.

There’s a pretty good chance that the E10 gas you pump into your tank is already saturated with moisture, and there’s now considerable evidence in the US that “wet” E10 is causing major corrosion problems in gas lines and fuel pumps on many newer vehicles. Both Mini and Lexus have reported fuel system issues with E10.

Bad news for our steel tanks for sure: but it gets worse.

Many modern motorcycle gas tanks are rotational moulded from polyamides, usually Nylon 6. Nylon 6 both absorbs moisture and allows it to pass through (its moisture vapour transmission rate, MVTR, is higher than many other plastics). When Nylon 6 absorbs moisture, it swells, and thin sections in, say, a moulded gas tank can distort. Ducati and Aprilia use Nylon 6 gas tanks manufactured by Acerbis, and Ducati has been quietly replacing gas tanks on Multistradas, Sport Classics and some Monsters on which the owners claim their gas tanks have swollen and distorted. Ducati’s stated position is that ethanol is an “additive” to gasoline, and prohibits owners from using E10 on pain of voiding their warranty.

And it’s not only Italian bikes. Both my Triumph Sprint ST and my BMW R80GS Paris-Dakar have nylon gas tanks—there’s no signs of any problem yet, and both of them have seen plenty of E10. Mohawk (now Husky) gas has had 10% ethanol in its premium grades for at least 20 years, and I know the ST has seen plenty of it. That



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said, the newer nylon tanks, like the one on my Aprilia, seem noticeably thinner than the older Beemer and Triumph ones.

Meanwhile Bombardier Recreational Products in the form of its Evinrude watercraft subsidiary, has warned owners not to use E10. There are also anecdotal reports that E10 gas can cause deterioration of fiberglass gas tanks, which are commonly used in watercraft—and on some old British bikes! This is a guess on my part—but I wouldn’t be surprised if some of the gummed-up carburetor issues many older British bike riders suffer from might be due to dissolved resins from fiberglass gas tanks!

Can you avoid ethanol in your gas? In the US, it’s almost impossible to find non-ethanol fuel. In Canada, the situation is a little better, and the last information I have is that Shell’s 91 octane and Chevron’s 94 are always ethanol free. Steve Gurry tells me that Esso and Petro-Canada’s 91 is also ethanol free because it comes from the same refineries, but at least Shell states their ethanol content right on the pump. Some other gas stations also show a yellow label advising the ethanol content. You can always ask the gas jockey, of course, but don’t expect a knowledgeable answer.

And for more information, go to www.pure-gas.org.

Overall, I think I prefer alcohol in my glass, not my gas tank. Cheers!

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JONATHAN HILL'S BOOK REVIEW

"Stealing Speed"

The biggest spy scandal in motorsport history

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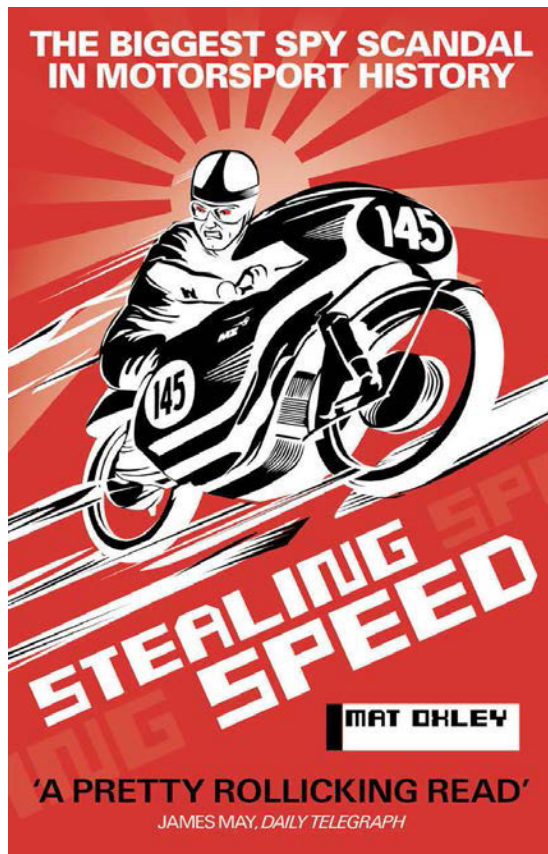
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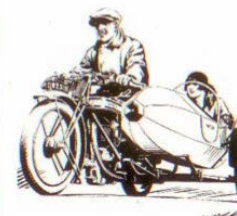
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The remarkable true story of how one of Japan's biggest motorcycle manufacturers stole a former Nazi rocket scientist's engine secrets from behind the Iron Curtain to win the motorcycle power race and conquer the world. Written by Isle of Man TT winner Mat Oxley, *Stealing Speed* is a breathtaking tale of racetrack heroics and Cold War skulduggery. This book is about two men and their motorcycles: one who chose loyalty to MZ and lost, but died a happy man; the other who chose betrayal and won, but ended his life a broken man. Walter Kaaden was the loyal engineer whose ingenuity unlocked the unknown potential of the humble two-stroke engine, unleashing almost double the horsepower of a four-stroke. Ernst Degner was the tough racer with three ambitions: to be world champion, to get rich and be



Learned scholars of mechanised bi-wheeled locomotion that we collectively are, we have very kindly been sent this book review by Jonathan Hill. Jonathan lives in Dorset, UK, and has been a motorcycle enthusiast for many years. He started riding at 16 on a 150cc James and progressed through a variety of bikes eventually touring Europe on a 750 Norton. He was a regular competitor in one day trials and was even part of a support crew for the 1972 ISDT in Massachusetts. He has been a VMCC member for 40 years - and he collects old cameras by the way.....

free. Raised as an orphan in war-torn East Germany, Degner became Kaaden's favoured son at MZ and an Iron Curtain hero, the man who was going to give the Communists their first motorsport success over the West. In Japan Suzuki's racing involvement was becoming a laughing stock as their machines were both slow and unreliable. What they needed was MZ's secret technology. The man sent to obtain this was Cambridge-educated Jimmy Matsumiya, Suzuki's fixer in Europe. A covert meeting was arranged during TT week and Degner accepted £10,000 and a place in the Suzuki team in exchange for drawings, information and crucial engine parts. When Ernst Degner, the GDR's star rider, was poised to win the 1961 world title he defected to the West, taking MZ's secrets with him, while his wife and children were drugged and smuggled through the Berlin Wall. Within months Suzuki and Japan were on their way to ruling the world of motorcycling. Degner was now rich and free, but his life took a downward spiral. Branded as a traitor by the Communists, he suffered horrendous racing injuries and later died in mysterious circumstances. With very informed descriptions of the race meetings, plus riders' opinions and impressions of works machines of the period, this wonderfully written and researched history book is in a league of its own.



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At our March 14th meeting, we received a presentation from Vaporblast Canada by proprietor, Kevin McDiarmid. Vaporblast is located in Chilliwack and offers Vapor Blast cleaning, Ultrasonic Cleaning, Degreasing and U-Do-It Sandblasting. Kevin is a vintage bike enthusiast and has several British Bikes, so he understands our interests.

Vapor Blasting is new to Canada although it has been well established in the UK restoration community for some time. The process uses a slurry of fine blast media in water which is applied to the work-piece at moderate pressure. The advantages of Vapor Blasting in comparison to conventional sandblasting are:

- The slurry acts to wash the parts, rather than abrade the surface.
- No media is embedded into the surface being cleaned, particularly important for engine inside components. The equipment filters out any broken media to prevent surface erosion.
- No metal is removed in the cleaning process.
- The process tends topeen the surface, reducing porosity.

Kevin presented several examples of cleaned and part-cleaned components. The aluminum parts were very impressively finished with a brighter, more natural appearance than conventional blasting. One item he presented was a carburetor which had been cleaned with the rubber fuel hose attached – and the hose was cleaned without damage – so this is evidently a gentle cleaning process.

Ultrasonic cleaning involves submersing the work-piece in a tank of fluid that is energized with hi-frequency sound – typically 38 KHz – well above that which can be heard. The process is effective in reaching into passages and blind holes and is well suited to carburetors.

Vaporblast Canada’s services can be viewed at: www.vaporblastcanada.com

Ian Bardsley

Summary of Panel Discussion on Finishing – March 14

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 - Filling: surface must be electrically conductive: weld, braise, JB Weld for small areas must be fully cured!
 - Very hard to remove – sensitive areas must be masked
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 - Best suited to frame & inconspicuous parts due to “plastic” appearance
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Fine Print

The West Coast British Motorcycle Owner’s Club (aka BMOC) is a registered not for profit society dedicated to the preservation, restoration and use of British motorcycles. Our newsletter, Good Vibrations, is published sporadically and is intended to inform and entertain our members. Articles appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the BMOC. Technical and other information contained in this newsletter should be treated with a measure of common sense, as we cannot vouch for every word written.

We welcome all contributions from our members; ‘want’ ads and ‘for sale’ ads are free to members and non-members. They must be limited to motorcycles or related items. ‘For Sale’ ads are printed with the good faith that the seller’s description of the goods is fair and accurate. The BMOC assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the advertisements.

Articles, reports, photographs and ads may be Emailed to: p.dent@dccnet.com
Visit the BMOC website, BMOC.ca for a full colour version of the Good Vibrations and the latest event calendar.

cover photo: Steve Snoen with his fabulous Norton Model 18

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