

SOME - PEOPLE



PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN CURWOOD

GEOFF HAYMAN USED TO have a hard time getting to work. His commuter scooter a few years ago was a Velocette Thruxton, for many *the* classic big single: 500cc of thundering, close-ratio street racer that would whump up to 70mph in first gear, Geoff recalls, but didn't take kindly to being pushed through the morning rush-hour traffic.

"The Thruxton was a lovely bike but riding it to work was knacker the thing out. You were in first all the time, slipping the clutch to 20 or 30mph and it just took too much concentration. You had to be in neutral before you stopped or you'd never get it in, and you'd sit at the lights holding in the clutch with all this steam coming out of it . . ."

All of which was no doubt annoying but hardly seems enough to send Geoff running for the cover of a motorised French pushbike that produces a grand total of 0.8bhp and sips fuel at a

SO SLOW, SO FRENCH

What makes a man turn his whole business over to machines with a top speed of 23mph?

rate of 200 miles to the gallon. And not only does this man ride in to work on a Velosolex these days but he . . . actually spends his whole life *selling* the things too.

You recognise the Solex — it's what absolutely everyone rides in France, from 14-year-old schoolkids to elderly matrons (though no further than from home to the shops, I should think). A bicycle frame with no suspension 'cept a sprung saddle, a 49cc stroker engine dangling over the front wheel and driving it through a stone wheel rubbing on the tyre, pushbike-style brake blocks for a front stopper and a top speed of a shade over 20mph.

In fact Geoff's transfer from Velo to Velo was not that sudden — he put in many miles on a variety of bikes in between. And

his main interest in the Solex is financial: if you don't recognise the bike you can't have stopped off at Geoff's Mota-Vation shop in London's Old Kent Road in the past few months. The secondhand Hondas and Yams that held the floor before have all been replaced by rows of identical gleaming black Solexes.

On the first floor there's a room packed full of every conceivable Solex spare part; out back in a big shed there's a pile of little devils in various forms and states of disrepair — from normal models to hinged-in-the-middle Pli-Solexes and even a Solex with shaft drive — and down in the basement there's an 'R&D room' where Geoff developed the metal petrol tank that he's banking on being the key to his Solex-selling

successes of the future.

It was the plastic tanks the bikes are now fitted with that got Geoff into the Solex business in the first place. Before he took over Mota-Vation (after passing the first-ever bike engineering course at Merton Tech and spending a few years working in local bike garages) the shop had imported Solexes; then in 1973 the sale of plastic-tanked machines was made illegal and the former owner lost interest.

Geoff found he was getting inquiries for spares and so on from the thousand or so Solex owners he reckons there are in the country so in 1976 he nipped over to France to buy some spare tyres and pistons and also snapped up a heap of spares from the previous GB stockist, Harglos of Birmingham. Not much happened on the Solex front for several years except for some spares and repairs; then in early '81 Geoff made the bold move back across

the Channel to buy five bikes (with plastic tanks, legal over there) and leave cards with several dealers asking them to send him any old-style metal tanks they came across.

A few of these started arriving in the post and the resultant bikes sold easily — after a story in *The Observer* inquiries flooded in and Geoff saw his chance for a killing. A few false starts and many hours in the basement later he ended up with a supply of well-finished aluminium tanks — cast in Sheffield, painted by himself — and from then on it was just down to a few not-so-simple details like getting lights and number plates sorted out to comply with British laws.

The first batch of 50 bikes arrived last July and with their new tanks fitted, they disappeared pretty quickly, followed by a further 30-odd. With 150 more due in around now Geoff has devoted the whole business to Solex selling, spending all his time on paperwork, sorting out mods (always a good idea) and regulations, servicing Solexes and

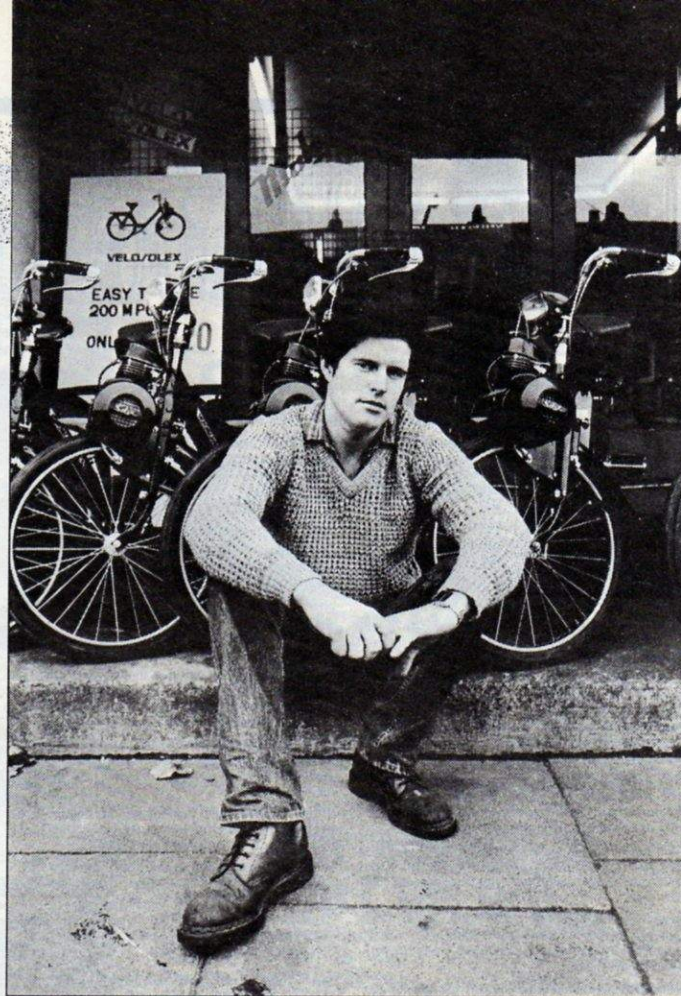
talking to prospective dealers.

He really is incredibly enthusiastic about the whole marque, mainly because of their reliability and cheapness. 'I'm a motorcycle man and normally I wouldn't entertain the idea of a Solex but I just can't over emphasise the reliability of the bikes. They run on a petrol mixture but all the bearings are needle-rollers and even if you forget to add the oil the engine runs for about ten miles before nipping up, then you leave it to cool down and it's good for another ten miles with no damage.' And with prices like £17 for a crankshaft with crankcases and £7.20 for a piston with con-rod and bearings it's hard to deny that spares are cheap, however silly the bikes may seem.

So next time you jump over Park Lane and Mayfair, pass GO, collect your £200 and end up on the Old Kent Road, just resist the temptation to go buying little green plastic houses. For an extra twenty quid you could take a

Chance on a brand new Velosolex.

Roland Brown



ANYTHING GOES



LONELY female — 21 — own machine, seeks company in Aberdeenshire. Come on there must be someone interested. Letters and photographs to Box No. 110, c/o Bike magazine.

I WISH myself a happy 21st 11-1-83, as no one else will remember. Sad, eh, never mind. Heres to the Katana and our next summer together on the lonely road.

JOHN Walton (Southport). Happy birthday (19-12-82). Rideon '83. When you getting the LC? Luv you — headbangerette. P.S. Hiya Redline (Tinny).

DEB. Today's a celebration day (12-1-83), hope our song remains the same, keep on rockin' and rolling, whole lotta love, Harry. P.S. I love you — xx —

TIM — YOU MIGHT NOT THINK OF ME as 'yours' anymore but you never owned me in the first place. Don't you think I have suffered enough! Forgive & Forget PLEASE! I want you. Love, Paula.

MUFFIN — HAPPY BIRTHDAY, 7/12/82, only one left now, eh? Here's to summer, the BM and funny money — Love, Scruff.

FOR SALE: RICKMAN SPORTS FAIRING Type 2 to fit CB 550F, black, £400 o.n.o. Phone 01-599-7169.

GAY BIKER (27), loves macho bikes, leathers, slim, heavee parents, seeks friend (25-35) and or leatherclub, 30 miles Preston. Tim.

MALCOLM! Get your arse in gear and write! MZ176 is going well, and balls to all you lonely male bikers — buy a doll! Ernest.

NELLY BELLY! — Cecil P. again, got a yoshi for your GSX yet? Wiggy's got a 400J but still won't burn my L.C. Must meet to scratch sometime. Cloive, get outta ya tin box will ya. P.S. Whitesnake at Leeds? — Phil.

IAN — "Living without you, living alone this empty house seems so cold, wanting to hold you, wanting you near. How much I want you home." All my love, always & forever. LA.

SUZUKI GSX400F — black, top box, crash bars, good condition, £875. For sales. Chris Nash, 2 The Garretts, Fairford, Glos. Telephone Cirencester 713060.

RACING OUTFIT, easily converted for road use. Complete less engine. £400. Tel. 061-491 2932, could deliver.

WRECKER of my Moto Guzzi. Yes you at 931 Neuadd Cwrt Mawr. Season's greetings for our fifth on Dec 3rd (1st). Still loving you, your very own Bonnie poser.

GOODY/GL1000! Will ride again, roll on summer. Benny — cars suck, but Cortina MkIV 1300's shit on Minis.

TO K.K. — Thanks for the company this year - you're a great pillion rider kid! I still love you like crazy despite the odds — Love, the Honda King.

HELP! Girl (16+) needed to escort 22 year old loony with bent 400/4 to pubs, rock gigs, next year's TT etc. Prefer Nottingham area, but distance no real problem. Phone Steve on Nottingham 611763 after 7 or weekends.

NICE GIRLS wanted for sitting on faces. Suitable applicants must like bikes, drunk males and riding age 16-30yrs. Phone Aberdeen (0224) 684861 or 681574.

THIS IS DEFINITELY my last appeal to all you sensible young girl readers of Bike magazine. If you don't smoke or drink, are unattached and preferably live in the W Midlands, write to Peter Box No 109, c/o Bike.

YOUTH 19, into bikes and sex, seeks teenage mates anywhere, Ala Jon, 149 Leicester Road, Thurcaston, Leics.

GREASEBALL — who's still hitting that front brake and landing on his arse, watch the jacket my Italian friend, keep selling those pork chops — CX Piper.

FOR SALE! 750 Honda shocks £10. 1pr leather gauntlets £3. Loads of old mags £20 the lot. Honda 175 bits £2. Honda 750F1 P regd, genuine low mileage £450 ono. Details tel (0568) 3518.

LONELY DUCATI OWNER, wishes to leave a female pen-friend (18-25), while spending 6 months on the Paradise Islands, in the South Atlantic (Falklands), minus one beloved bike. Yeh!! It's boring 'ere. All replies answered. Write:— Ducati Ken, 129 Battery, RA, BFPO 666.

WANTED. Complete set of Bike, Which Bike and Motorcycling mag. Must be mint. Good price paid. Phone Doug 061-747 7607 (Manchester).

MANDY — (Boadicea; Ventnor Winter Gardens). Got to see you again; Steve (Fox).

BIG HEARTED Dorset biker (22) and Suzuki 550 seek girlfriend (17-25) for genuine friendship and outings. Write to: Nigel, 17 Brampton Road, Oakdale, Poole, Dorset BH15 3RE.

SIXTY COPIES early Bike, mainly 1978 and earlier, including first two issues. Offers to: Ware 66844. All in excellent condition.

LOONY BIKER, female (17), seeks fella (19-25), not into slim, beautiful etc. (usual drive!) female for runs, rallies, friendship — please!! Write to: Row, Devonshire Cottage, Amotherby, Nr. Malton, N. Yorks YO17 0TG.

THE TRANSATLANTIC races are dying, long live the Mayday Run, 2nd May, 1983. 5th successive year. Same place, same time. Timbo Team Fad Muckers OK.

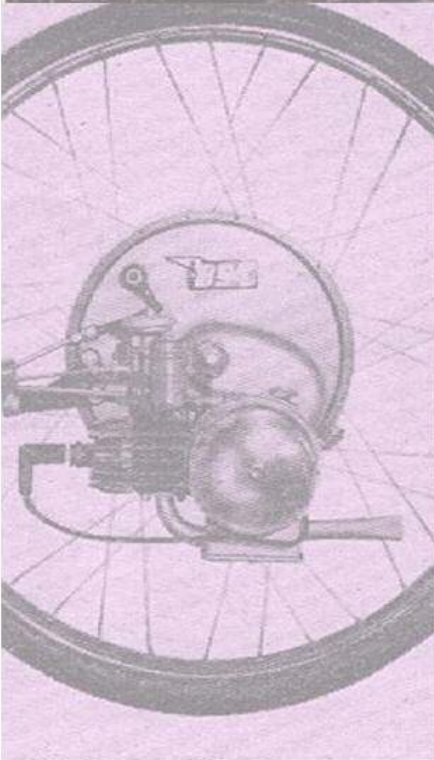
WANTED. Bike magazines, all pre-1976, in good condition and fair price. Also Cycle, Cycleworld and Superbike wanted. Phone: Tim Gooderson, Farnborough (Kent) 53971.

HAPPY XMAS to all in the earth-shattering, all conquering, universal Jawa owners club. Yo Ho Ho Hic, 3-wheelin' Captain Morgan!!

RORY BROWNE, firemen are better than wiremen. GS1000's piss on Z900's, Watty. PS. Catshit's good for the feet — 061-653 4017.

WANTED: PERSPEX NOSE CONE for nose cone type fairing. For sale: B31 engine £60; also, two Mountain Mice fairings for G50, Manx 7R, £20 each. Graham, 24 Aber View, Connahs Quay, Desselid, Clwyd.

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