

# Ted Parkin living life to the full with his Scott

Three gallons of petrol and a pint of 'R'

(And I've got the right money and everything!)

(But you would need to know about 80's punk music to understand this.)

As the early morning sun streams through the bedroom window thoughts turned towards a "bijou thrassette" I had to visit a friend camping at Invermoriston anyway and as this was well on the way around my favorite 150 mile bike run I can kill two birds with one stone. What is more, if I reversed the normal direction I could hit a high speed, tourist free route alongside Loch Ness and try the Rep flat out!

So a quick breakfast saw me ready for the road at 8 o'clock sharp. Fast as a blast for me.

I heave UE out of the shed. Check for loads of petrol and oil, tog up and settle into the bike. This is a heavy machine, 330lbs. A solid feel transmitted to the rider as you sit in it. Hands falling naturally onto the slightly dropped handlebars at just the right angle. Long, quick action throttle waiting to open. Brakes checked, the AM4 linings gripping the wheels. Left hand resting on the soft rubber grip, fingers curled around the reverse clutch lever. Flood the carb, opening the Binks slightly. Retard the ignition. Shut the choke and ease the kickstarter over what little primary compression there is. (Needs new rings?) Press smartly down with hope but not much expectation from the race tuned engine.

Shhhhhhhrrrrreeeeeeiiiiicccccckkkkk!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Lordy, Lordy someone sure does love me as it starts first prod. Curling smoke whipping away in the chill morning breeze confirms the oil circulation. I don't mind this pollution although the neighbors aren't so sure.

This bike is a treasure, it needs looking after.

I rev it a while. Blip the throttle and flash to the gear lever while the revs soar. "Made It" as I thrust the lever home and catch the engine on its merry way down. No throttle stops on late 20's 3 jet Bink's.

Ready to go. Ready to rock. Ready for fun.

Revs up, smoothly feed in the clutch as the engine falters. Whip it in and rev again. A nice smooth take off as I turn left onto the minor roads heading for Forres. Open the choke. The bike accelerates up to around 40 and I think about second gear. Rev and flick on the throttle/gearlever combination settling for low speed and low revs as I wait to clear the village.

"Must fit a speedo to this" I think and relax while the last of the low houses rush backwards. The road clears. So I squeeze open the throttle and let it have its head.

Checking that the Pilgrim pump is behaving itself as all good pumps should and that it's "1 drop every 4 gurgles" is steady and constant. Scott paranoia here of course as with such a tuned engine a loss of lubricant would be catastrophic! Roger had told me that he used to put oil in the petrol and I may try this later but for now there is that confidence inspiring tinge of blue to the exhaust and the lovely smell of Castrol R on the morning air. Engine warm now, "Ere lad how's about tryin' top gear then!" I do as she tells me, top gear it is. Clutchless change into top and I am transported back to the Isle of Man at TT time. Those days when two strokes were taking over. Those days when I wouldn't be seen dead riding one!

Into the realms of too much speed for my courage! Smooth engine shrieking it's delight into the morning. And it is a delight. And such a privilege. The years of effort and thought which Roger Moss has poured into this machine seemingly, this morning, for the sole purpose of my enjoyment.

"Got to be in the low 70's" I think. "Check the oil" still pumping away. This gives me another 5 minutes worry free riding. (I'm sure I'll relax one day!) Forres. A96. Smooth, fast road. The roundabout looms and I leave it in top to see just what will happen. Flick left to set it up. Clip the inside of the central reservation. Then lean right feeding in the power, letting the grunt heave us upright and onto the straight. A hitchhiker looks askance at the bike attracted no doubt by the noise as we accelerate away like a rocket from the town. More gas feeds the engine. Smooth power slingshots us past lorries, caravans and cars on their way to work.

But we are on our way to play.

I ease back the throttle after clearing the traffic and think about the route. There will be works traffic going into Inverness along the A96 so decide to take the Auldearn/Culloden road at the turnoff. Quiet and twisting now, hills and dales. Scott country. Over the byroads. Past Culloden Battle site, now a major tourist attraction but too early yet for the sightseeing buses to start their daily grind out of Inverness. The Moray Firth shimmering in the sun. The A9, its commuter traffic stretching towards the town as it passes over the Kessock Bridge. I drop off the moors in second gear feathering the throttle and weaving through the cars towards the centre of the town. Interested stares from soon to be desk bound office workers and sniggers from children on the buses taking them to school. I care not cause' the west road to Loch Ness is only 5 miles away!

Oil pumping well as we clear the town, settling down and flick into top. Over the Caledonian Canal with its swing bridge. Past the crematorium and off we go! Climbing up into the hills and the fresh air of the lochside road. Traffic light at this hour and I let the bike have its head.

Lets estimate the speed at around 70/75. Fast enough to cover the ground at a reasonable rate but not too fast to have to concentrate too much on the riding. I mean, its a bit pointless riding in fabulous scenery and not being able to enjoy it! Power to spare of course, Titch Allen reckoned "over 90" in the Second Vintage Roadtest Journal and I see no reason to doubt it.

Five miles before Drumnadrochit the twisty bits start and I can play with the gearbox flinging it into second and flicking it into top with gay abandon. Roger not only tuned the engine but incorporated a quick start worm into the clutch operating mechanism so changes are a delight! The brakes squeal the tyres as we drop into the tight turns approaching the village. There is a particularly tight right hand drop just before Urquhart Bay where, on a good day, you can thrash along at 80 and swoop with the bike laid over at impossible angles to get the maximum thrill and fright in equal quantities. As this happens to coincide with the place where a local Piper entertains the tourists a bit of Scott scream comes in handy as light accompaniment to the yowl of the pipes! Hard to tell the difference I suppose to the Japanese and brings about a whole new meaning to modern pipe music!

We accelerate along the straight and shut off the screams just as we hit the 30 mph speed restriction. Into second and the engine braking helps us drop down to a more legal speed just before the sharp 90 degree left hand bend. I usually try and scrape the exhaust here but today, luckily, glance up to see three motorcycle policemen on their BMW K1000's sitting by the side of the road. So I shut the throttle, sit up quickly and smile sweetly. The epitome of the middle aged sensible rider! They acknowledge my presence and don't attempt to follow.

So now I'm a real good boy and stick to the speed limit. A slow tourist bus is in front and I line myself up for a flash overtaking maneuver. No! Wait for the cars coming down the hill. Leave it in second and wait. The cars thin and I see a gap. Wait. Wait. Here it comes. When

De! Da! De! Da! De! Da!

Police! My heart hits my boots as I snap shut the throttle and slow down.

De! Da! De! Da! De! Da!

OK! OK! OK! I'm moving over and glance quickly back.

It's a fire engine struggling to overtake the tourist traffic. Sighs of relief as I willingly slow down. The bus pulls in and the red monster overtakes us all the firemen giving me the thumbs up together with a "Come on" sign. Ever the opportunist I tuck in behind. We float up the hill and around the Urquhart bends. Nothing in front and nothing behind. And there is nothing like having your very own road clearing vehicle!

We pass through the bends with élan and they signal me to overtake. Bizarre Eh!

A blast from his siren and I am away up the road!

Six miles to Invermoriston and I make the best use of the handling, leaving it in top gear. The front fork was dismantled at the same time as the engine mods, "reworked with all new high tolerance bits to enable the rider to experience the fork action as the maker intended"

I experience it to the full.

The frame can handle this power easily. No twitching or sliding. No clashing around bends frightening the poor rider here. Just smooth handling. You can't see the forks working of course so I suppose its a case of out of sight out of mind and you can get on with just enjoying the ride. All is not a bed of roses of course! As a quick look immediately under the saddle will prove. That large dent sitting there is a consequence of over enthusiastic leaping of humpbacked bridges and ditto with a similar one under the front fork spring.

Still one has to experiment with the "flight envelope" as it were and all in the name of science? And if you believe that you must be even more gullible than me!

Invermoriston.

Scream it round the hairpin bend and accelerate away over the stone bridge. Just manage to get it into top when!

Camp Site.

Shrieking on the over run. Blipping into second then first. Turn left and kill the motor.

Seventy miles from Hopeman.

One hour and five minutes.

Fun!

If you like that sort of thing!

Well, my mate was here with his girlfriend and welcomed me with steaming hot coffee and a plate of bacon, scrambled egg and mushrooms! It's just like a hotel but with the added attraction that the midges are not flying this morning. Mind you Kevin told me (and showed me the scars) that they were flying well last night.

There have been some really learned men try and sort out the midge menace in Scotland. I have seen golfers, sailors, mountaineers, in fact anyone, size and sex falling foul of these insects. There is NO cure. Insect repellent can work if you don't mind smelling like an Eskimo! I don't mind smelling like anything but as I reckon that there is nothing you can do then, as Bill Tilman said, "If it is inevitable, accept it!"

I personally try not to be on the West during June to September, or if I have to be there try and go when it is raining or blowing hard! Finding these weather conditions is quite often not a problem!

Still! Breakfast was over and I relax and talk about family problems. Kevin had just gone through a 3 year divorce, almost making the Guinness book of Records for payments to solicitors in the process and was relaxing lots! Quite liked the Scott and loved the noise!

So after a couple of hours and having arranged to meet Pam for lunch. I decided to treat the assembled Scott fans to a screaming departure. Unfortunately, it is a sad fact of life that the chances of a Scott starting first kick is inversely proportional to the amount of

bystanders watching. So no chance here then and sure enough, a good push was required before I could pollute Loch Ness once again. Off onto the road and I really cane it in all the gears to give a bit of aural entertainment to the populace. I await reports from that area with trepidation.

My fave place, Fort Augustus, hoves into view so I run into the petrol station to top up. Top up! We are just about empty! Should have known of course, so out with the Barclaycard.

But now comes the fun part. Where we used to fly down this hill with my heart in my mouth (see Vol 1) today we climb and I am looking forward to the challenge.

I've never had gear selection problems with this bike before. Not in the mechanical sense of selecting the gears of course but in deciding which one to use. Top is too high. Second is a bit revvy and fast, using first seems a bit daft to scream up this lovely hill. So I settle on second with a quick flick into top on the flatter sections.

We burst over the summit like a cork from a champagne bottle followed by the fizz and bank to the left flat out in second around the tight bends of the Lochs. Flick right, flick left as usual and scatter the pebbles on the Loch edge. Living dangerously now so I decide to knock it off a bit. It's too heavy to lift out of the water. No traffic and no helpers. Best part of the season now finished. Glasgow holidays over. English holidays only just started and tourists thin on the ground. In fact so thin that the petrol station in FA had only one good month to date and were seriously considering selling the place. Don't know what's happened round here. Used to be thick with the blighters at one time. I remember when I rode the 1914 Triumph outfit round here we were almost mobbed in FA when we arrived!

Photo halt in the by now hot sun!

One of the best in the West for the picturesque pic!

On its stand. Position myself. Artistically set it up when, Midge. You can't believe it can you! You can't even see the little bastards! So I rush through the photo's, start UE up and head for higher (and windier) ground. Loads of that around of course as we brest the rise at the top to see the mountains, lochs and glens arranged before us. Camera's out. Pics taken. No Midge! Hallelujah!

But it's got to be around 11 by now and Pam will be in for lunch at 12 so I clog it homewards. Through Whitebridge with its pretty General Wade bridge (all the better to subdue those nasty Highlanders!) and on into the rolling glens towards Inverness. Little traffic and 1920's roads so I get down to playing boy racers for a while. Crank over for the bends. Crouch down with my body weight on my thighs to take the humpbacked bridge. Clang! Keclang! As the forks bottom on the front mudguard and an instant later my bottom bottoms on the saddle which bottoms on the rear mudguard! Hang on! Shouldn't that be Clang! Keclang! Clang! Almost lost a Clang there!

I approach the sweeping left-hander just before the A9, barbed wire fence to my left, steep wooded bank to the right and going really fast. I know I'm not going to make this.

Too late to slow and a branch on the safe line! Nothing I can do but lay it down and hope for the best.

The front breaks away and the bike skids to the left as we hit the branch. Whap! Whap! The tyres ride over the log and I start the inexorable slide into the bank. A frantic touch of rear brake slows us and enables the front tyre to grip as with a bound we are back on two wheels and pointing in the right direction. IE away from the trees.

OK! OK! OK! Enough of this and we settle for sanity and life! I don't even respond when a Wally in a white Peugeot won't let me pass but drop back demurely until we reach the A9 dual carriageway where I rev the Scott in first, let the Peugeot race ahead tyres spinning as he flashes into second and third gears, his passenger's head nodding like a toy dog in a rear window as I nonchalantly knock off the revs and take the exit 50 yards further on!

This is my turn off pal! I don't race cars! It's illegal!