

CYCLEX '69

Being another name for the Brighton Show

WHILE this title might not appear at first sight to be a suitable name for the "1969 International Cycle and Motor Cycle Show" at Brighton, it is distinctly better than the ungainly title actually used, and just quoted. The larger machines, which gave the show its distinctive flavour, are all aimed squarely at the American market where a two-track vehicle is a cycle—a *cycle*—engine or no.

Brighton's a long way from anywhere but London, and is relatively more inaccessible to the north than Manchester is to the south. The drawing power of the show can best be indicated by pointing to the 7,000 paying customers arriving on the first day and comparing this with the 15,000 drawn to Earl's Court at the last show there. All the stand space was taken, and the Bill Hannah Ducatis had to be shown at Redhill Motors, a mile away. The only Ducati to be seen in the hall was the Monty and Ward desmodromic racer, at £399. As the Show started on the Bank Holiday Saturday the dealers were not in general able to come to the opening day, as their shops were open for the Bank Holiday business. Thus the real business of selling to the trade will not really get fully under way until the middle of the week, and the crowds were almost exclusively the motorcycling public in the early days. Good local publicity had been obtained, and a local bank had taken a stand to provide banking services; even the traffic wardens seemed tolerant, and went to considerable trouble to have announcements made to allow people to move their machines from the yellow lines that were apparently in force on the Saturday.

local National Car Parks' multi-storey garage was adamant that motor cycles should pay the same hourly rate as cars.

Inside the exhibition hall the prime feature of interest was undoubtedly the Honda CB750, rotating majestically 10 feet above the worshipping crowd. Much has been written about this machine, and the only new information available was—the price! Late in the afternoon an announcement was made by Jim Harrison that the 750 would sell at £649, thus settling rumours of prices ranging from a ludicrous £500 to B.M.W. heights of over £750. No such announcement was made for the gleaming new CB450 five-speed, but it was established that this machine would sell at £399 before the first day ended. The interest shown in the 750 would lead us to hazard the opinion that over a 100 of these machines will be sold in the next nine months; and the sustained demand for the older model, allied to the considerable improvements incorporated in the new model, no doubt helped to lower the asking price of the (now) middleweight Honda. The tiny C90 trial bike also shown on the Honda stand appeared to be almost invisible. Two hits, one miss?

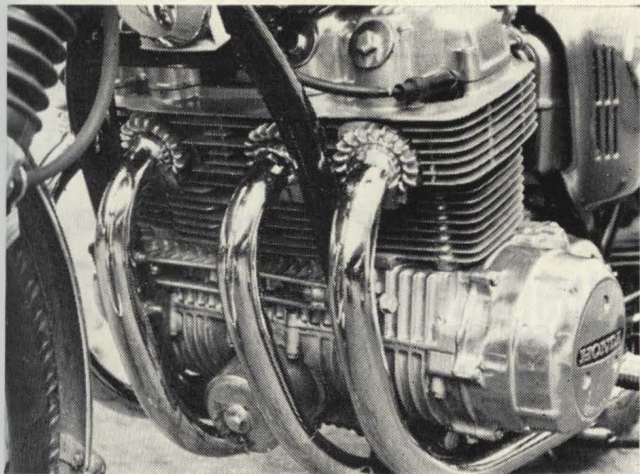
Immediately opposite, the Yamaha stand displayed their new models. The 350 was the subject of much interest, but the 180 c.c. YCS-2 looked like becoming the Yamaha hit of the show. At £250 this machine offers all that a novice requires, at the right price, and with low (sub-250 c.c.) insurance rates. The electric starter, rev-meter, wipers, and polychromatic blue finish enable it to meet Honda and Suzuki competition at a somewhat higher price. Alan Kimber's bulk ordering of 200 c.c. Suzuki Invaders last year was obviously a very wise move, and has helped to keep the Suzuki contender's price well down. This sub-200 c.c. market obviously has great prospects, and at home a new 175 c.c. B.S.A. Bantam has been introduced to keep this classic in the picture. Yamaha hope to keep their 250 sales going by the price drop made possible by omitting electric starting from the YDS-6, as £300 appears to be a real sales barrier. (The TR2 production racer is in "full" (i.e., racing) production in Japan, and may be equal to demand by mid-1970.)

Far out at the other end of the scale, the B.S.A./Triumph threes were definitely the most studied British machines. A sectioned engine on the B.S.A. stand was the subject of much investigation, and the announcement of Yvon Du Hamel's feats on the Rocket-3 lent considerable force to the display: 123 m.p.h. average over 230 miles on a completely standard Rocket speaks for itself. This and other speeds were set at Daytona on April 3, just before the Show, and as the ambient temperature was 82°F it is evident that the middle cylinder is adequately cooled. The track temperature was 112°F, which reflects the adequacy of the Dunlop K81 tyres used on the big B.S.A.s.

The K81 is original equipment on the threes, and is also factory-fitted to the Norton Commando. It is approved for continuous use at 130 m.p.h., and has good wearing properties. Avon's GP is the only competitor, and it is interesting to compare the tread compounds. The Avon Safety Mileage uses 65 per cent. natural rubber, the GP uses 45 per cent. and the Dunlop K81 has less than a quarter. True racing tyres have a negligible proportion of natural rubber, and provide a basis for comparison. By their different routes the two tyre companies seem to have reached a practical limit on overall tyre compound improvements, and now concentrate on tread patterns. Dunlop's continuing racing experience is no doubt of much assistance in this, and racing would be in a sorry state if Dunlop were to pull out; one can only hope fervently, that the knowledge, publicity, and "image" gained by racing pay their way.

The Norton stand contained much of interest to all: the

The general atmosphere of goodwill was not universal, though: the



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Commando S, with its metal-flake finish, high pipes, and radical styling made a dramatic "come-on". Unfortunately we were unable to ride it at the test day before the show, so cannot report on the efficiency of the modifications. However it is evident that the extra power of the S came mainly from decreased silencing losses; the wide bars were ludicrously inappropriate to such a fast machine. In American conditions it is likely to be extremely popular, the more so because of the continued development of the basic Commando. The basic "Fastback" remains one of the best styled motorcycles available, and although this is not usually apparent, it was the most improved machine in the show. The earlier models vibrated harshly at low r.p.m., and had very poor ground clearance. Although only these two things have been altered (together with the use of an extra frame strut), the difference made to the machine is phenomenal. The Gus Kuhn production racer was also on show, looking very purposeful (the Kuhn catalogue is worthy of mention for its clarity) and a police version of the basic machine was held up to show the perils of underestimating the future mounts of our hard-worked police force. A vast amount of police experience has been poured into the "Interpol" (as it is named), and is probably Neale Shilton's biggest weapon in his sales armoury.

Queries at the Lucas stand elicited the reluctant opinion that quartz iodine vapour headlamp units could be used successfully on the Commando, a point of considerable interest to all long-distance riders.

Nearby, the Suzuki stand seemed strangely quiet and unfrequented, with an oddly subdued atmosphere. Re-organization often has a noticeable effect on a firm, and Suzuki do not seem to have recovered their zest yet.

Upstairs on the Velocette stand, the earliest available delivery date seemed to be November: it is with a slight shock that one realizes that the portly and expensive Velocette has now (by comparison with other makes) become cheap and light. A black and gold Thrupton gleamed ("We use the best black available from our supplier"), and drew a steady stream of covetous interest. If only an air-cleaner was fitted . . . However, something might well be under way here, I was assured. The American distributors called for the "American styling", and had limited success: the parent factory suggested selling the European models and now the sales are definitely improving. Black and gold Thruptons to New England, and blue and silver to the West. Apparently, coral pink is no longer listed as available to American Thrupton buyers!

The accessory industry had several new offerings. Although Mitchenall Bros were not showing, Screen and Plastics had a large range on display including a very Avonair styled moulding for 250 c.c machine. Churchgate Mouldings now offer a slightly wider fairing than their "perfection" style, and this includes a flare for better foot protection. This style should have better sales than the last, as it is far more practical, without losing its lines. By redesign of the headlamp shield and housing they have held the price at £19 10s. Honda owners will be glad to hear that Wicks have brought out a range of nylon-lined Honda cables, which can be replaced in sections where junction boxes are required, and which sell at a very competitive price.

Ian Kennedy now sports one of the longest lists of Triumph Norton accessories one can find, and has still not won his fight for permanent premises. His treatment by the local planning office has at last called in the interest of an M.P., and maybe he will have more success in future. The violent violet frame of a Triton display attracted many violently contradictory opinions, but there was little disagreement on the excellent workmanship.

The insurance companies were more active than usual, and when little tickets with basic premium rates and the "D.A." emblem could

be found on almost all the vehicles in the show, it was no surprise to find Alan Kimber at the back of it, gathering in market research information by means of free insurance competition. Uncharacteristic of insurance companies, and extremely refreshing; perhaps we can hope for an equally flamboyant and effective approach to passenger insurance when the time comes?

It came as a slight surprise to find so few competition machines on

show: the Honda CB350-based machine (purchased by Bill Smith) the Greeve "Griffon", and the Puch Dalesman M 125 being almost an exhaustive list. The tiny Dalesman trials machine, selling for £19 attracted much interest with its low price, low weight, and comprehensive equipment. The 125MX may well be only the first of many 125 c.c. class scramblers, a move that could be strongly reinforced by the growing popularity of schoolboy scrambles. Any overall picture of the show must reflect the swing to large road machines, and the loss of emphasis on the commuter market. A rather strange feature is the lack of trade support for pure competition machinery. The inescapable conclusion is that the show is a "dream shop" for potential customers

rather than a balanced representation of motorcycling as it is in this country. This makes for a well attended, and interesting show—but for how much business? not until the dealers have come, and the April 15 Budget gone, will we be able to answer this question. M.R.W.