

Peter Goodman, son of Eugene, is now Works Director of Veloce Ltd., having taken over from his father. In a riding career interrupted by the war and foreshortened by a serious crash at Strasbourg in 1947, he made a meteoric climb to stardom at home and abroad. He is seen here demonstrating the classic style in the 1947 Junior T.T. (he was fourth in the Junior and third in the Senior)

Belgian G.P., it did not in fact have any international status and was no more than a bit of good fun hatched out by the Fédération Motocycliste Belgique and out Sunbeam M.C.C. to get the Continental circus going. The circuit was no more than 1½ miles to the lap, the straight was a mere 400 yards and the average width 16ft, while the surface was variously constructed of asphalt, concrete and paving stones with pot-holes and manholes thrown in. Few riders got into top gear on the circuit.

It has an important place in the story for Peter Goodman for, apart from the race whetting his appetite for Continental racing, the F.I.M. timekeeper, Monsieur Lamot, accorded him the record lap of 61 m.p.h., achieved when chasing the five-hundreds on his three-fifty to finish fifth in the Senior Race. Gaston Lamot was later to become his father-in-law, "But I didn't know him when he put me down for the record lap," he adds quickly. Before international road racing got going there was a lot of fun to be had on the short circuits at home—at Olivers Mount, Scarborough, Cadwell, Abridge,

Anstey—in which Goodman came up against the short-circuit stars like Tommy Wood, who was usually a hundred yards ahead before anyone else had the clutch in. There was Shelsley Walsh hill-climb where he won the 350 c.c. class and earned the comment "outstanding". An ex-Isle of Man Velocette was not always the ideal machine for short circuits, but he had a successful season—he was usually placed—and, like many other racing men in those days, turned to trials in the winter.

#### After racing . . . a winter's trials

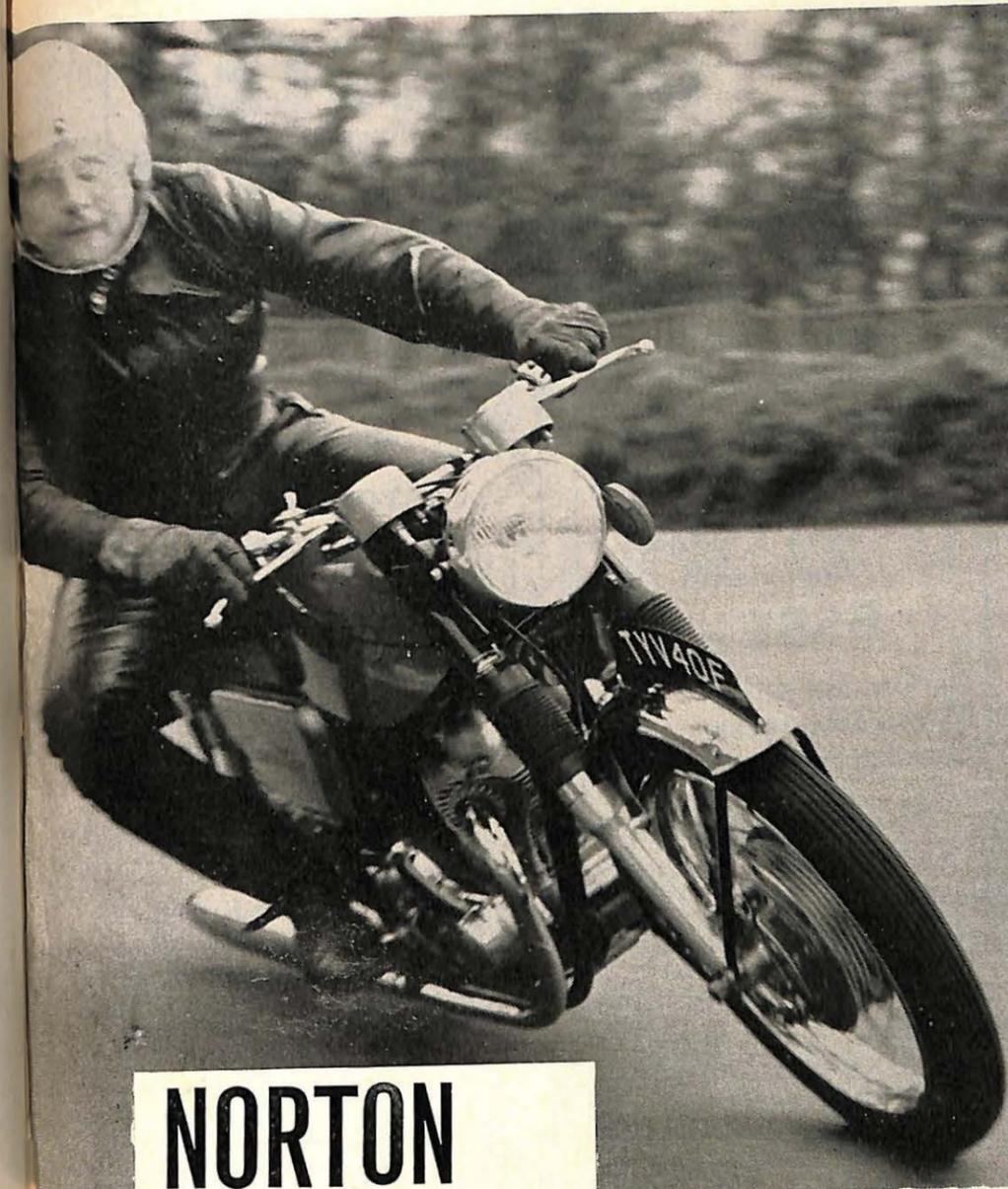
Riding a modified Velocette MAF model, the war-time version of the MAC, he won a first-class award in the Kickham and nearly got a ride in the British Experts, but was ruled out over a technical impasse. If the G.P. du Zoute had been a real international G.P. he would have been eligible for the Experts, but the fact that his entry had been accepted for the Manx discounted it.

In 1947 road racing was back to normal

with the Isle of Man T.T. and the Continental grands prix. Goodman was fourth in the Junior T.T. despite running out of petrol and having to coast down the Mountain on the last lap, and was a brilliant third in the Senior only half a minute behind Artie Bell, with whom he tied for fastest lap at 84.07 m.p.h. This was the first time he had really come up against the might of the Nortons in the Island and of this race he recalls: "I really lost the Senior on the first lap. I was number 69 and Harold Daniell (the winner) was number 72. He caught me a lot quicker than I expected and had Ted Frend with him. When I saw Harold in the pits filling up on the seventh lap I thought I had a chance, but he passed me again by Ramsey."

"Was the Norton faster than the Velo?" "Oh, no. The Velo was faster up the Mountain and I caught him again. He was just faster through the twisty bits. He told me that he nearly hit me from behind when I slowed for Windy." Peter Goodman is no line-shooter.

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## NORTON 745 COMMANDO

IN the 18 months or whatever it is since the Commando was introduced we had ridden perhaps five miles on one. And finally when we ran one to earth at the old Woolwich factory we could only have it for a week because of a long-standing arrangement to loan it to the men at *Motorcyclist Illustrated*, who had the idea of riding it from Lands End to John O'Groats in a day, dawn to dusk. (This is not meant to be a "trailer" for the next issue of MCI, but we mention it because it seems an entertaining idea.)

*Test outing on the Commando at Brands Hatch. This model has covered 12,000 miles at home and abroad*

So we had TYV 40F for seven days, though by the time these words appear we should have it back for an extended test and more thorough evaluation. Perhaps you will take this as a progress report.

The fact is, it is a very nice bike. With the B.S.A./Triumph three, the Honda CB 750 (read M. R. W.'s comments elsewhere in this issue), and now the Commando there are three big bikes we should be very happy to own. Any one of them, or all three. There is no question of putting the Commando last in this short list because it is the cheapest or possibly the most conventional, engine mounting aside. Its engine was designed years back—in 1947, probably a year or two before that, if you count the all-iron 497 Dominator as its direct forebear. That accounts for the unfashionably long stroke, 89 mm. to 73 mm. bore, which pushes

## The best old-fashioned Big British Twin on the market

piston speed a shade high and keeps maximum r.p.m. down to a moderate 6,000, which is rather tame compared with the designed-yesterday, high-revving engines of the other 750s. But the power response of the big twin has a lot to be said for it. Instant, hard, always there, whatever the gear. No need to get the tacho. needle past 5 thou before the power comes along. So you can say that it is simpler to drive than the others, and we should estimate it is as fast, perhaps faster, over a 100 miles of mixed roads . . . though its top speed is short of the others by maybe 10 m.p.h. That is, 115 to 125. No question of needing five or six speeds with this sort of power; there is tremendous torque from 3,000 r.p.m.

And the rubber mounting of the engine? Well, it's done the job. The old-time Atlas, which had the same engine more or less, and was not much slower, would swell your wrists and melt the gristle in your joints. A monster to take you from 0 to 60 in seven seconds and make life a purgatory. Now, in the Commando, that old 745 engine seems r-e-f-i-n-e-d. A little shake at tickover but nothing unpleasant, a sort of insulated shake like you have in a B.M.W. at tickover, and even some vibration above that, but diminishing, up to 2,500-3,000 r.p.m.—and from then on there is no vibration. (Well, to be cool and precise, detached or pedantic, there's probably a little—there must be—but it's so slight, the sort of feel you get through a car's steering wheel, something working away at the far end of rubber joints.) Yet paradoxically the bike feels solid and taut, has an all-of-one-piece feeling—more so than the Norton twins in pre-rubber-mounted times.

You can see we like the Commando.

The riding position is first class. High seat, low flat handlebar, high footrests: it all goes with the good looks of the bike which make the threes and the Honda seem staid, impressive mainly through sheer weight and size rather than fine line.

Third gear whistled us well past 90, top (in favourable conditions) to 110-112, all to a muted *whoom* from the exhausts. The gearbox was superb (we have never ridden a Norton with a bad gearbox), the diaphragm-spring clutch light and positive. No oil appeared outside the engine, not more than a pint was used in 300 miles.

But wait till we've covered a thousand or two miles on it and we'll give all the facts. As we said, this is a "progress report".