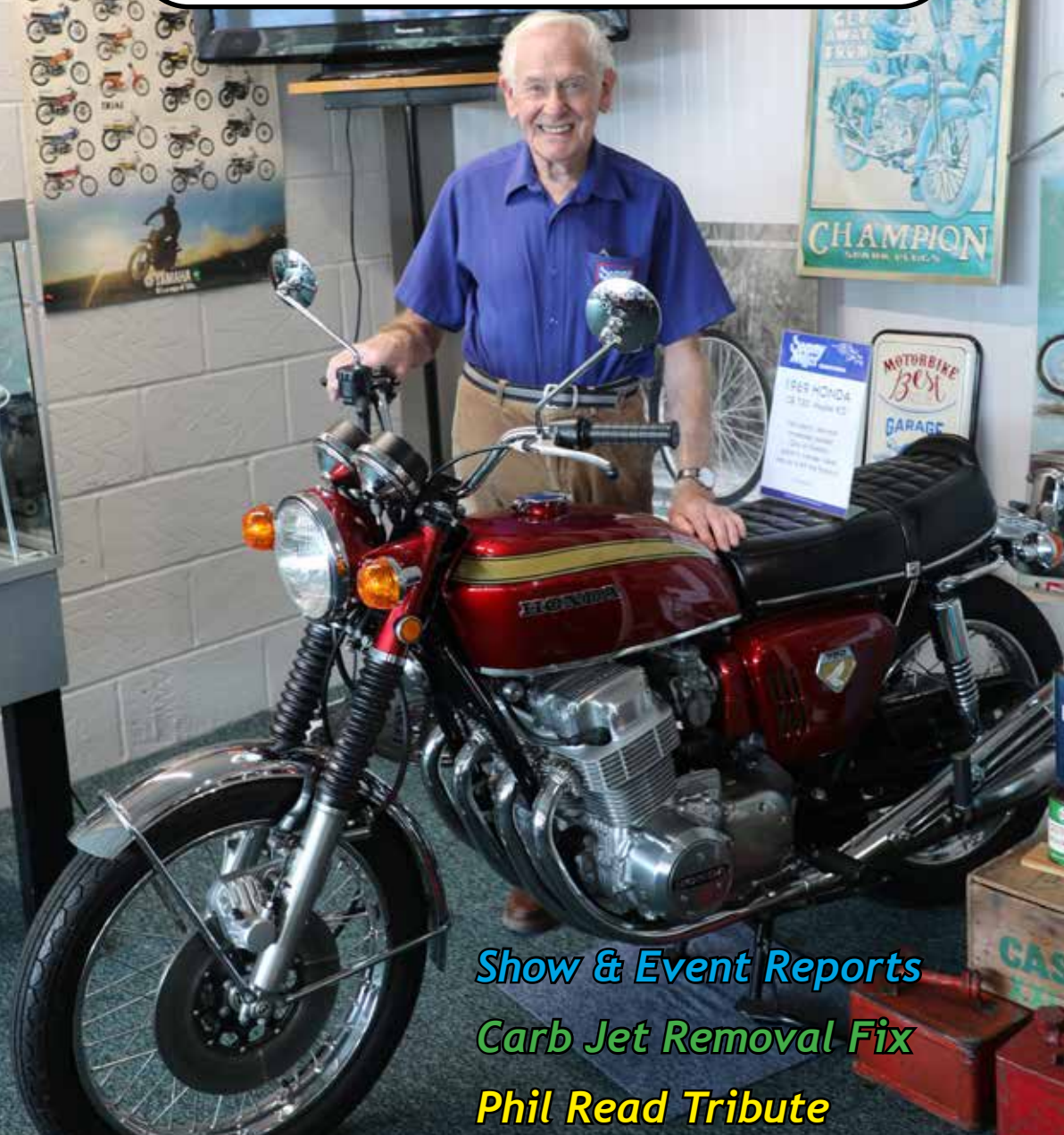


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Just Add Fuel!

'Unmolested' the advert on eBay said. *'All original and totally untouched'* it went on. *'A light recommissioning is all that is needed, just add fuel'* the ad tempted. And before you could say *'matching numbers'*, I had clicked the very dangerous *'Buy It Now'* button.



Yamaha DT175 DT 175 1974 all original and totally untouched *NOW SOLD to Nigel*

A few days later, a 1975, US import Yamaha DT175B arrived at my door, and I realised that there may have been some degree of poetic license used in the description. The photos had not done it justice. The forks, handlebars and front mudguard were all bent and the compartment where the battery should have been full of straw as if demonstrating its provenance as a 'barn find'! The tank was rusty inside, the tyres were perished, and the instrument glasses were cracked. But on a positive note, the engine had good compression and all the gears engaged. I had wanted a lockdown project to keep me busy, and now I had definitely got one!

All the way from Missouri to Poole in Dorset, via the importer in the Midlands - I finally got my hands on the bike that I first had when I was an impressionable 17-year-old, albeit a US model and blue instead of red.

I'm sure it's a familiar story amongst the members who hit sixty and then want to recreate their younger days and start to dream of re-acquiring bikes from their youth. I started riding on an FS1E but having seen the recent crazy prices coupled with the fact that I did not particularly want to re-live buzzing along at 46 mph when all I wanted to do was go faster back in the day.

I decided that the best course of action



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with the DT was to see if I could get it running first and, if the engine was sound, then I could set about using it for the summer of 2021 and then start a restoration in the winter. But first I had to navigate the UK registration application process, which, as it turned out, was reasonably straightforward as I had the Nova and the title, so I soon got this off to the DVLA early in May 2021. However, this was in lockdown and there was a four-month backlog, so any ideas of summer riding had pretty much evaporated!



While I was waiting, I turned my attention to getting it running. First up, drain and replace the oil from the engine and the oil tank, and inspect the fuel tank for rust and the carburettor for sludge. Both were so bad, I ended up taking them to

G. Arnold Motorcycles in Poole to have the tank cleaned and lined and the carb put through the ultrasonic cleaning process. I then had to work out why there were no wires ready to connect to the new battery I had bought. Bearing in mind this was described as ‘unmolested’ it seemed odd that there was no positive or negative feed.



However, having got this sorted, with a bit of help from the VJMC Facebook forum, I was ready so give it a try. Add fresh E5 petrol, a new spark plug and a hefty push from my 21-year-old son and we were in business and the motor spluttered into life after its 25-year hiatus. It revved freely but died under load which was soon put right by replacing a damaged carb float.

Before riding it on the road, I needed to do something about the tyres which were capable of holding air, but very perished and a long way from safe, so they were replaced. This was not without its challenges as the first front tyre I ordered, based on the model type and year, was a 21 inch. I later discovered that for some reason, the US models had 19-inch front wheels and sourcing one of those was a bit trickier but eventually found one on eBay. Another quirk of US versus UK spec was that the shock absorbers on the US bike had the separate oil dampers which I wanted to replace with plain shocks as on the UK spec. However, the ones sourced

from Yambits were slightly longer (not an issue) but the locating lugs did not fit in the frame brackets, so I ended up returning them and cleaning up the old ones and making do.

While I was waiting for the UK registration to come through, I started to source some bits that were missing such as a plastic side panel and an OEM key which were found on eBay in the US and an exhaust tail pipe which was found by a very helpful VJMC member, via Facebook. Both clocks were faded, peeling and the glass on the rev counter smashed, so I decided to go to the significant expense of getting them reconditioned by speedo specialist Aleck Lewcock who did a great job and returned them to as good as new,



maintaining the original mileage count. The next job was to get the front mudguard sorted and remove the kink. My first attempts to do this using a hot air gun failed miserably, and I made it worse.



Again, having consulted with the VJMC Facebook group, I was recommended to Wicked Coatings in Wareham who could repair and repaint. Finding the right silver colour was not straightforward and having asked the question and got several different answers, I went with a near match from Wicked's own paint range. While I was at it, I decided to get



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the rear mudguard and rear light bracket done at the same time and I was very pleased with the results. Wicked also blasted and painted the exhaust system for me using a heat resistant paint treatment called Cerakote. I thought I might as well get some chroming done while I was still off the road such as the luggage rack, exhaust grill, gear lever and cable guide and got a good, although slow, service from DorsetWare in Poole. So, the DVLA finally came good, and she is all UK registered and ready to ride. I pieced all the restored bits back together and we are ready for a summer of two stroke riding, before a complete strip down during winter 2022 (probably!). Don't ask me how much it's cost so far, needless to say, I'm sure I'll never get my money back, but that was never the point. The grin on my sixty-year-old face says it all!

Credits

- Adam at G. Arnold Motorcycles
- Lyle at Wicked Coatings
- Yambits
- Aleck Lewcock Speedos



- DorsetWare Chroming



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