

Historic Vehicles Consultation Response

A great many MAG Members ride historic classic motorcycles and many more have a deep and genuine interest in the classic scene. MAG was key to winning fair treatment for classic motorcycle owners in 1996 when continuous VED was proposed, i.e., that all motorcycle owners would be required to tax their vehicles even when they were off the road, and it was MAG that supplied to DVLA the idea of a statutory declaration which became the SORN system.

Whilst it is true that many classic vehicles are laid up for months at a time, often only being used in the summer, with some only ever transiting to and from shows. That is not an absolute, however; we know many motorcyclists who use historic vehicles daily. Whatever their frequency of use, however, all value their lifestyle and culture tremendously.

It has been mooted that classic machines might be converted to run using battery electric motors. Here it should be said that there have always been those who, with varying degrees of skill and success, have modified machines by swapping one engine for another. The best-known examples are the Triton (Triumph engine in a Norton Featherbed frame, NorVin (Vincent engine in a Norton frame) and TriBSA (Triumph engine in a BSA frame.) We have even seen machines with extra engines such as a twin-engined Triumph that was doing the rounds of the shows in the 1980s and 1990s. There is little doubt, therefore, that somebody will fit a battery electric motor into a classic machine sooner or later. However, it needs to be recognised that such exercises are nothing more than individuals showcasing their own engineering skills by doing something new; it is **not** indicative of any general appetite for converting classic petrol-powered machines to battery electric. Most classic machine owners value originality and such modifications as they do make are usually aimed at improving reliability. By way of example, a factsheet is attached on a 1950 649cc Triumph 6T Thunderbird detailing a variety of such modifications.

It is also important to recognise that the historic vehicle sector is served by thousands of small businesses, many of them run by people who were made unemployed by the decline of UK manufacturing and who are now self-employed. The bike that is the subject of the spec-sheet is a classic example of work done by such independent businesses. It is also an example of motorcyclists' propensity for recycling and repurposing, something which the Government should be encouraging and facilitating.

MAG's position, therefore, is that –

- The waiving of the Roadworthiness Test (MoT) requirement is fair, proportionate, sensible, and the waiver should not be tightened or removed. Classics are invariably maintained to a high standard and ridden with extreme care, mostly by very mature riders.
- The VED waiver is likewise fair, proportionate, sensible, and should not be tightened or removed either, given the relatively low number of road miles travelled.
- Historic machines should be permitted to use the roads unfettered and indefinitely.
- Forced electrification is totally unacceptable.
- No unnecessary regulations should be imposed on the sector.



6T Thunderbird, Registration JUG 85E

The engine is from a 1950 Triumph 650cc Model 6T Thunderbird. The frame is from a bike registered in 1967 and thus has conventional rear shocks, not the 1950 Triumph sprung hub. The front forks are late model Triumph T140 Bonneville items. The lower yoke is original, but the top yoke was made from scratch. One-inch stainless steel handlebars sit on three-inch custom-made stainless risers. The front hub and disc are Suzuki and the calliper Kawasaki, making an excellent front brake. The front wheel now has a 21-inch rim. The rear brake drum has been adapted using Peugeot car parts, so this is a bike with a hydraulic drum rear brake giving better stopping power than the original – functionality first. The electrics have also been upgraded from 6 volt to 12 volt, allowing for a more powerful headlight. Power is generated by a reconditioned dynamo and the ignition timing is electronic. One-off custom footpegs are fitted along with a one-off single seat. The primary drive is by belt, replacing the original single pushbike type chain, which was prone to breaking, usually destroying the primary case into the bargain. The belt means less vibration, less noise, smoother power delivery, longevity, and safety. The primary case is a new remanufactured item. All the engine plates are all custom made as are the exhaust pipes. An aftermarket Morgo oil pump is fitted for better oil delivery and engine lubrication. The carburettors are AMAL MkII Concentrics. These are non-standard for the engine's year but deliver better fuel economy and smoother engine running. The cams are one-off items made by PJT Dynamics for more efficient fuel use and reduced vibration. The tank is an original early 1950s Triumph Thunderbird item with all authentic fittings except for the parcel rack. The clock is a Smiths Magnetronic. The tail light is a copy of those used on Vincents and the number plate was made by Jepson's of Sheffield, the UK's oldest number plate manufacturer. The Triumph Thunderbird was tested at 100mph on a flying lap at the Montlhéry track near Paris in 1950. None of the mods are aimed at making it go faster; the reality is that it's an old engine and needs treating with care. All the focus has been on building a comfortable and reliable bike with classic looks that is able to cope with modern traffic. The engineering was done by Tim Ollett of PJT Dynamics in Leven, East Yorkshire. The paint is by Andrew Parnaby of Unit 10D, Marston Business Park, Tockwith, near York. Parts were sourced mainly from Wylde's and Wooster's of Leeds. Where possible all parts and labour were sourced from self-employed people running owner-managed businesses.

