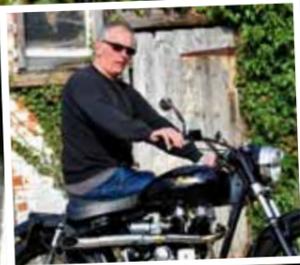


WORDS: BRUCE MACONCHIE PICS: KINGRAT



LIL' BLACK BEAUTY

Just because the term 'bobber' is taken by many folk these days to be a hardtailed Sportster, Triumph or XS650, that doesn't mean that it's always been so...



I've always had a love of motorbikes. I've had all sorts and crashed all sorts too, as the numerous scars and the metalwork in my neck will vouch for. I've built/modified many bikes over the years including Z1s, Z650s, a John Player Norton, and numerous others.

A very dear friend, Todd (who's no longer with us), got me into Royal Enfields at least 30 years ago; he owned a Constellation, a KX and numerous Bullets. I found a 350 Enfield in a garden being used to prop up a hedge, bought it, did it up and rode it, and since then, I've had a soft spot for the marque. I was an Enfield dealer for a while and also ran the family car sales business (that'd been in the family since 1972) with my father, before, due to health reasons, we sold the

business and I decided to carry on building bikes.

The first bobber I built was due to be shown at the Royal Enfield Big Day Out at Redditch, but I was unable to ride it because I wasn't well enough to cope with the long journey. I left the bike at home and went in the car, and on my way home I called in at the shop and my father told me someone was interested in buying the bike. I sold it, built another and sold that, and that's how I started

IT MAKES ABOUT 30BHP, WHICH MIGHT NOT SOUND A LOT, BUT IT BARKS ON REALLY NICELY

building Enfield bobbers. Five years later, I've built a fair few now, but I still don't have a bobber of my own...

Most of the bikes we build are to order; customers decide what they want (and not, I must stress, what we think they should have) and they're all built



SPECIFICATION SHEET

Original Year, Make & Model:

1997 Royal Enfield 500 Classic

Engine:

1997 Royal Enfield 500 Classic, iron barrel, gas-flowed alloy head by Paul Henshaw, 32mm Amal Concentric carb, K&N air-filter, modified crank by Paul Henshaw, dry clutch, belt driven primary, four-speed Albion gearbox, one-off exhaust

Frame:

1997 Royal Enfield 500 Classic, side-mounted number plate, bobbed rear end

Sharp End:

3x19-inch black powdercoated wheel with stainless spokes, standard Royal Enfield brake/forks/yokes/master-cylinder/switchgear, braided stainless brake lines, Western pull-back 'bars, single speedo

Blunt End:

One-off mudguard struts, Spartan Engineering trials swingarm, Hagon shocks, 4x18-inch black powdercoated drum brake wheel with stainless spokes

Tinware:

Modified Royal Enfield Electra front mudguard, modified stock petrol tank, one-off custom seat with fabricated panel to take indicators, modified custom rear mudguard

Electrics:

Modified loom, single standard headlight with peak, one-off rear light set into mudguard, modified Royal Enfield side lights used for indicators

Paint:

Black by Vince Simmons

Powdercoating:

Wheel rims

Polishing:

Engine cases

Engineering:

Crankshaft, cylinder head & bore by Paul Henshaw

Thanks To:

"Sam for being patient while we built his bike; Paul Henshaw for the engineering on the engine; Vince Simmons for the paint work; Alan Charlton for putting up with me; Norman, my father, who has always be supportive; Paul Roberts for PR work; all our loyal customers; & the wife who makes a smashing cup of tea..."

to be ridden. Alan, my business partner, and I enjoy building these bikes as no two are ever quite the same.

This one, Sam's, is based around a '97 500 Classic and has been built to be quick and easy to ride. The engine runs an iron barrel with a gas-flowed alloy head, a 32mm Amal Concentric carb with a K&N air-filter (with one-off cover by us), a modified crank and dry clutch with a belt-driven primary, a four-speed Albion gearbox, and of course, the one-off exhaust. It makes about 30bhp, which might not sound a lot, but it barks on

really nicely. We also polished it for that old school look.

The idea behind our bobbers is simplicity, as it should be on all bobbers really. So we don't change the bike dramatically, just modified to be in keeping with the bobber ethos. The frame's been shortened to make it a single-seater, and the wheels rebuilt with stainless spokes after being powdercoated black. The running gear is mostly stock, apart from the Spartan Engineering shorter trials swingarm and the Hagon shocks, but it's in the bodywork, the actual look of the bike, that we've done the most work.

Starting at the front, there's a modified Electra (electric-start

IT'S COMFORTABLE TO RIDE, IT HANDLES WELL, AND IT DEFINITELY HAS THE GRIN FACTOR, DOESN'T IT SAM?



model) front mudguard. The fuel tank is a modified long-range one that's had its bottom cut out and a box welded into it to take the electrics and keep the space under the seat just that... a space. And the seat is equally as clever - it's a one-off with a fabricated panel below that holds the rear indicators unobtrusively. The indicators, front and rear, are modified Royal Enfield side-

THE REAR MUDGUARD IS A CUSTOM ONE THAT'S BEEN RE-WORKED, CUT AND SHUT, TO GET IT TO SIT JUST RIGHT

lights - look good, don't they? The rear mudguard is a custom one that's been re-worked, cut and shut, to get it to sit just right, and we made up the little fin that holds the one-off rear light. They've all been drowned in a deep, deep black with a little bit of pin-striping, and of course, the 'Indian' logos are a wry nod to where it was made.

Of course, that brief resumé doesn't really do justice to the amount of work that actually went into it, but suffice to say, Sam loves it. It's an easy bike to ride and the motor spins up really quickly. It's comfortable to ride, it handles well, and it definitely has the grin factor, doesn't it Sam? ☺

AND...

Bruce Maconochie Custom Classics are based in Oxfordshire and their phone number is 01235 847345.