

# TAKING A BULLET FOR THE TEAM

It's clear that the latter day single cylinder Royal Enfield, as produced in the factory in Chennai, India, is gaining something of a cult following here in the UK.

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The recent resurgence of bobbers and brat style bikes has undoubtedly helped its cause, as has the Brit biker's perennial fascination with classically-styled cafe racers, beautifully proved by Paul Roberts' gem that you see here.

While the general motorcycling public may not have latched on to the fact that the air-cooled, 26bhp, four-stroke single is actually capable of being a fun bike, it'll only be a matter of time before more people realise that the various restrictions brought in by the bike licensing system, perennially-rising insurance and fuel costs and increasing victimisation of people who want to ride fast, will lead to an obvious conclusion. Buy a smaller bike, with less power, and ride it to its full potential: you'll get just as big a buzz as that gained from a larger, more expensive machine, both in terms of running costs and initial investment.

Obviously, Bruce Maconochie is a huge fan of the Indian-built machines, given that he's the main man at Oxfordshire Royal Enfield. This latest build of Bruce's is somewhat less 'bobbery' than the previous ORE bikes that you've seen in 100% (#158 and #160), but no less of a custom bike.

While Bruce built the bike at the ORE headquarters in Sutton Courtenay, a green and peaceful village in the Thames Valley, it actually belongs to Paul Roberts. And, although Paul gave Bruce a brief with regards to the direction of the build, it was just that; brief. Essentially, Paul wanted a minimalist cafe racer, with some modern detail. Aside from that, Bruce was given a clean sheet (or *carte blanche*, as they might say in a French coffee house, although we're talking about an English caff here) and free rein to do whatsoever he deemed suitable.

Given that a stripped-down, '60s-style pseudo race bike was the intended end result, the first job was to totally strip the 2008 model Bullet Electra X (the one with the electric start, but running a carb rather than the newer fuel injection) down to its constituent parts. The frame had the standard rear end, plus any unwanted bracketry, swiftly removed, and a bespoke subframe was created to support the equally one-off seat unit. While the Enfield Bullet frame isn't as svelte as a true custom chassis, nor does it have the clean and purposeful lines of the factory's production cafe racer, the Continental GT, it can still be

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# SPECIFICATION SHEET

**Engine:**  
2005 Royal Enfield Bullet Electra X single, internally standard, wrapped bespoke exhaust, Dell'Orto PHF32 carb, Ramair air filter, 28bhp.

**Frame:**  
Original Bullet Electra X single downtube, lightened and with all extraneous bracketry removed, bespoke rear subframe.

**Front end:**  
Rebuilt 19" Royal Enfield wheel, Avon Roadrider 100/90 x 19" tyre, standard forks, yokes, disc, calliper, master cylinder and switchgear, Hitchcocks fork brace, clip-on bars, aftermarket clocks, overbraided brake line, rubber fork gaiters, bar end mirror, aftermarket headlamp shell.

**Rear end:**  
18" Royal Enfield wheel, Avon Roadrider 110/80 x 18" tyre, standard disc and callipers, standard swinging arm with bracketry trimmed, one-off seat unit housing battery and all other electrics, recessed Bantam tail light.

**Miscellaneous:**  
Stainless aftermarket petrol tank, modified loom, standard ignition switch, aftermarket indicators, sidemount number plate, aftermarket rearsets with carbon fibre heelplates, standard sidestand. All work by Bruce Maconochie at Oxfordshire Royal Enfield.

**Paint and finish:**  
Not a lot of paint. Powder coat on wheels and fork legs. Polished tank, top yoke and engine cases.

**Thanks to:**  
"Alan for help with the wiring; and Paul the owner for giving me a free rein!" Bruce Mac."



## WHILE THE ENFIELD BULLET FRAME ISN'T AS SVELTE AS A TRUE CUSTOM CHASSIS, NOR DOES IT HAVE THE CLEAN AND PURPOSEFUL LINES OF THE CONTINENTAL GT, IT CAN STILL BE IMPROVED

improved – and have a significant amount of weight removed as well! A set of aftermarket rearset footpegs were fitted, with some carbon fibre heel plates adding some up-to-date bling. Oh, and that lovely little sidestand is actually the standard RE one!

Thanks to the weight loss, it was decided that the standard brakes would be up to scratch (they're actually pretty competent on the standard bike, anyway), and using all the original rolling gear would save a lot of unwanted hassle and expense. The wheels were powder coated black (and shod with modern, grippy rubber), as were the leading axle fork legs and bottom yoke, while a set of fork gaiters help to 'chunk up' the front end. At the rear, the standard swinging arm and shocks were retained, although the swinger has been tidied up with any unwanted bracketry removed, and a slim one-off chain guard fitted.

Back at the pointy end, the standard bar mounts were removed from the top yoke, as clip-on bars were being fitted, although it still retains the clock and ignition switch binnacle (odd word, binnacle, sounds like a discarded barnacle) but not the original headlight and sidelight arrangement. The front end was stiffened up with

the aid of an aluminium fork brace from Enfield specialists Hitchcocks Motorcycles, made all the more necessary due to a lack of mudguard or, more accurately, a lack of mudguard brace.

Of course, the first thing that everyone sees and comments on is the fuel tank. An aftermarket item, of uncertain origin, it's of an ideal size for the diminutive Enfield, where many commercial alternatives would be too big. Although the one-off tail unit is equally small in stature, Bruce and his wire-weaving sidekick, Alan, have managed to squeeze in not only a Bantam tail light, but also the battery and other electrical components! The electrical bits that you can see include LED indicators, front and rear, and standard switchgear, all essential items if Paul is going to race between cafes in busy traffic or at night...

The engine remains internally standard (for the moment) with just a wrapped one-off exhaust and a RamAir air filter, although as the motor and the gearbox are the only things that haven't been modified, that state of affairs won't last for long. First in the queue is a 535cc big bore kit...

But, in truth, the performance of the Bullet is already much improved over standard,



mainly due to the fact that the modifications have succeeded in removing some 45lbs of unwanted mass. It's little wonder that it now handles like a dream, steers accurately and quickly and stops on a twenty pence piece. It would stop on a sixpence, but Paul's yet to see one lying in the road. The only problem, according to its owner, is also a result of the weight loss: "My arse is in a dreadful state as the original shocks, a bit stiff in the first place, are now simply not fit for purpose. It's like being repeatedly kicked in

## IT STILL RETAINS THE CLOCK AND IGNITION SWITCH BINNACLE... ODD WORD, BINNACLE...

the crack by a bloke with steel toe caps. A set of Hagons is currently on the way. And a gel seat is on the cards, too."

And, once the painful posterior problems are eradicated, this little beauty will be carving Cotswold corners at each and every opportunity! ❖