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BIKE

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BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING BIKE MAGAZINE

From Swaledale to Senegal

RIDES OF A LIFETIME

Bumper special issue

Triumph Tiger 1200

New earthshrinker tested

PLUS
120,000
miles on a
Tiger 800

**Honda Africa
Twin to the
Arctic Circle**

Mopeds conquer Yorkshire

WW1 battlefields on
Triumph T120 & Scrambler

**DIY
TRAVEL
TIPS**

HELLAS RALLY:
Adventure bike
nirvana

Round the
world KTM



South America's scariest road

**PLUS
INSIDE**



Bobbers test
Harley-Davidson v
Indian v Triumph



Enfield, Norton,
CCM, Triumph,
Ariel factories



**4000-mile
Fireblade
road test**

INSIDE

The British bike industry

Expansion, fresh ideas and eye-watering investment - it really is a boom time for British motorcycling. *Bike* peeps inside the growing world of the British bike...

By Mike Armitage **Photography** Simon Lee, Mike Armitage, Pakawat Wipatakanok



GOING FULL CIRCLE

Based in Redditch, Royal Enfield's first powered two-wheeler was in 1901. In '55 they joined Madras Motors to form Enfield India, making 350cc Bullets, and changed name to Royal Enfield in '99. Now, fifty years after the UK factory shut, this new R&D centre has opened in Leicestershire.

ROYAL ENFIELD

Research and development centre back in the UK



ALL ABOUT THE BIKES

Just a lift? Look again. Wide, deep and with an aluminium checkerplate floor, the lift between the upper office level and the lower workshop level in RE's tech centre has been designed for shifting bikes. There's a wide space between the desks where bikes are parked, for studying and trying prototype parts, such as accessories. There's frequent bike traffic between the departments. It's all pleasingly hands-on.

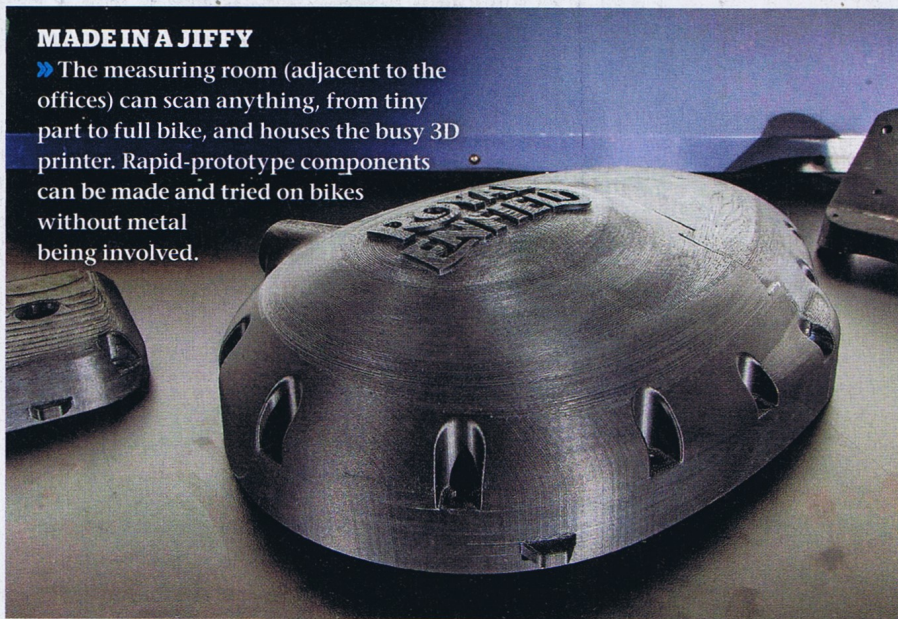
DETAILED HISTORY

RE know their history is a draw for customers. They also know quality in the Enfield India era didn't do favours for their reputation. Current bikes are miles better than older ones, but the R&D centre means new models will mix modern tech and attention to detail with tradition. Look at the care and attention in its door handles.



MADE IN A JIFFY

The measuring room (adjacent to the offices) can scan anything, from tiny part to full bike, and houses the busy 3D printer. Rapid-prototype components can be made and tried on bikes without metal being involved.



SMIFF, SNIFF, SNIFF

The dyno cells are in a separate building that also holds the emission testing 'shed'. This sealed state-of-the-art area is equipped to measure evaporative emissions – hot bikes can be taken straight from the dyno and fumes coming off precisely measured. RE can prove they're testing to the correct standard and almost self-certificate. And the pipework threading round the building is craftsmanship of the highest order.



NOT A LEAKY SHED

The main chassis workshop does everything from trying one-off bolts to building fully-adjustable prototype test mules. Bike lifts drop down flush, all the extraction is under-floor, and the tools and equipment are top class. The rather mucky trade-plated Himalayan is fresh back from abusive off-road testing in Wales.

'Royal Enfield are looking backwards, forwards and sideways at the same time'

360° VISION

RE are looking backwards, forwards and sideways at the same time. They're taking inspiration from bikes such as this 1965 Continental GT, employing the latest tech and design methods, and they are also very aware of the growing custom scene – the bikes in the background were built in the tech centre, and the wall art is from the Wheels & Waves festival.



Described by the workshop manager as 'like coming to work in a sweet shop'

Spotted in the in-tray for one of the five chassis design teams



QUALITY LITERATURE

We nosed around the UK centre the day before its official opening to the world's press, and saw it as-left by staff. The choice of reading matter indicates serious taste.

A WORLD OF INSPIRATION

The ID (industrial design) studio is where folks with cool clothes and crazy hair turn the designs into reality. Inspirational shots range from classic bikes, racers and customs to cars, phones, boats and coffee machines.

CAREFULLY SELECTED

Yet more attention to detail. King Dick were chosen as the tool supplier for the main chassis workshop as they're the only tool company still under British ownership.

