

# WORCESTER AND HEREFORD ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS



October 2025

## EDITORIAL – JIM ROLT

Hello all WHAMmers..

I have a good varied newsletter for you this month, with plenty of different bits from our own members.

I was able to get to the monthly Natter Night at the Falcon, in Bromyard this time; we were treated to a most interesting talk on suspension, with lots of questions and answers from the assembled gang. Do try to come to these, they are on the last Wednesday of the month, arrive at 7, and don't eat too much beforehand as there are chips and sandwiches on tap, more than we could eat by a long chalk... and... it's all free! What's not to like? And a big shout out to Donna and the team for organising these events for us and making sure it all runs smoothly!



Our content in this issue includes:

[Chairman's report](#), including feedback on the recent Wales Weekend, featuring mixed weather.

Chief Observer Richard with a timely article on [winter preparation](#)

Dan Freeth contributes again with his thought process on [deciding on a new bike](#)

Occasional contributor Ian Barnard offers us some thoughts, including [riding gear alteration](#), [bike servicing](#), and [new bike tests](#) you will find interesting

Tony Reusser's stunning Honda 400F restoration completes with [road test and tune up](#)

How about YOU? Anything you'd like to share here? I'd love to include it in the next newsletter, email me at [whamnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:whamnewsletter@gmail.com)

Thanks!

Check out WHAM events here: <https://www.wham-motorcycling.org/events/>

Jim Rolt, Editor

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## CHAIRMAN – TONY DAVIS

Hi all.

Welcome to October. September was a blast, some great Sunday rides and a couple of events that were, once again, a huge success. Firstly, our Slow Riding Day at Hereford, I was unable to make it this year (its the first one I've missed since WHAM started back in 2007) however, as expected, all went really well. I understand there were a couple of showers but not enough to spoil things, thanks to everyone who got stuck in to the organisation and set-up.



Next was our Weekend away in Snowdonia. I think we experienced all 4 seasons this weekend, mixed weather on Friday, torrential rain all day Saturday and fabulous wall to wall sunshine on Sunday.

Friday's route took us up to Lake Vyrnwy where the plan was to stop at the Visitor Centre for lunch, however when we arrived the cafe was closed so we headed for the Lake Vyrnwy Hotel where we had a surprisingly reasonably priced lunch in beautiful surroundings, I think I'll make this one a more regular stop in future. The route from here to the Hotel in Betswy-Coed is brilliant, a great mix of country lanes and sweeping mountain roads which were mainly dry.

Saturday was anything but mainly dry.... the weather was perfectly aligned with the forecast, i.e. heavy rain all day. It really did not spoil things though, there was so much rain that it washed the roads making the surface clean and predictable. As you will know, if you keep things smooth and take the edge off your speed it can be great fun riding in these conditions, especially with the kit that is available these days to keep you dry.

Sunday was such a massive contrast to Saturday. The skies were clear, no more rain and you could see for miles and miles. It's not often you get weather like this in North Wales but when you do its spectacular, the scenery takes some beating even by Alpine standards. The first leg of the ride was actually quite tricky, the overnight rain had been so heavy that there were huge streams running across the roads in the mountains. These streams had brought rocks and silt down off the hills which set my traction control and ABS lights off a couple of times. The solution was to slow right down and appreciate the incredible views, no hardship at all. The second leg was a fitting end to a great weekend. I cant wait to do it all again next year. Thanks go to Duane Sanger for organising the accommodation and Friday's dinner.

We returned to our regular club nights in September and had a decent turn out for our Speaker Carl from [CBS performance](#) . Carl has set himself up in his workshop in Worcester providing a much needed service to local bikers including suspension advice and set-up and servicing. Following the number of dealers that have shut in the last year I think he will do extremely well. Next month we are having a visit from a Guy who makes heated visors, more info will be posted on the [events page of our website](#).

That's all from me this month, take it easy on the autumn roads, see you on a ride out soon.

Tony.

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### Fundamentals 3...

Content, content, content, demands our trusty Editor Jim. And I scratch my head and think “quite what now?”

Ridin’ and machine (semi-tech) bits and bobs is what I guess I’m charged with and so I thought a few prompts, reminders, and maybe something(s) new, perhaps in order, as we hurtle toward Winter...



1. Now is the best time to buy new tyres. You do not slip off on worn tyres during the balmy days of summer. You do that when it’s damp and cold. Whilst tyre manufacturers are out to sell you as many of their rubber hoops as possible they do know a thing and their advice re generally changing before the legal limit is reached is good advice.
2. ACF50 (other products are available). Gently wash of that road grime, hose it down with a hose, if you use a pressure washer avoid anywhere bearings exist, dry the bike off, and liberally spray the ACF on baby! I was dubious, but it makes every other winter clean a doddle and prevents your fasteners furring up like a left out mouldy tomato.
3. Dry your USD forks. Fashion has dictated that the ‘action end’ of the forks is now positioned where all the road crud will fly. It takes literally seconds after each ride to wrap some paper towel or thin cloth (soaked in light oil/WD40) around your forks and dry them off and put a little coating on them that repels the water that might start eating away at your chrome. Forks are not chromed like they were in 1990! You’ll also have less opportunity to have your fork seals fail.
4. Use a trickle charger. I’ve used one on the ‘then new’ battery on the Crossdresser since July 2019. The battery still holds a perfect charge and I’m sure trickle charging is why. Batteries hate cold weather and so if you’re not going to use the bike either charge or take the battery into somewhere warmer than the garage. Obviously NOT your sock drawer though.
5. Clean/dry your brakes before storage. Wet pads on wet discs stick and provide a home for surface corrosion. Not ideal but not terminal either. You can buy fancy pants bike specific ‘hair dryers’ to dry them out. What you can also do is take the bike back out for a quick spin, if it’s dry, the mere action of using the brakes will dry them.
6. Avoid condensation. We can’t all have carpet lined heated garages, but if you can run to a cover, or a shed, maybe with a heater on frost setting, you will avoid the dreaded corrosion that seemingly reduces a gleaming bike to a problem festooned heap of dull metal by the time spring comes around.
7. Polish your exhaust – you may not be out every weekend now, and so now is an ideal time to take the exhaust off, take it into the warmth of the kitchen, and with some autosol, get

it back to showroom condition. This will mean winter grime does not have the chance to take hold. DO NOT ask permission from anyone to do this. Ask for forgiveness; just don't get anything on any carpet, they don't like that.

8. MPOWDERS – now becomes an absolute pre-ride must. Do not go out skipping anything in the colder months as it will come back and bite you. Waiting for recovery in the cold is tedious.
9. Lube (no not 'that kind' Mr Chair) – anything that would benefit from a little squirt of something sticky should get it now. Footpeg joints, stand mechanisms, chains, gear linkages, handlebar levers; they all benefit more now than ever from a coating in whatever it is they need (see owner's manual)
10. Stripy Disco Trousers – buy some! It's WHAM's Christmas doo on the 19th December and Donna has it all in hand. Book an overnight at the Falcon, buy some new attractive strides, and come party hearty with you mates!

Yours in sport

Richard H

Chief Observer

WHAM

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## CHOOSING A NEW RIDE - DAN FREETH

### BMW GS comparison and parting with a 'loyal friend!'

After 5 years ownership of my second GS, a 1200 triple black, I have recently made the difficult decision to change it.

My 1200 GS had 11,500 miles on it when I bought it in March 2019 from Cotswold Motorrad. I have had many happy hours of riding pleasure and clocked up 50,000 miles on it. I felt very comfortable in all situations and it was a very reliable bike, annually maintained with a full BMW service history as per the schedule, It never let me down. I had to rebuild the rear suspension a couple of years ago (a common issue) but other than that, it was pretty much faultless. I did meticulously clean it after every ride (mainly due to my OCD) and it remained in very good condition (sorry Tony....!). Everyone was always complimentary about its appearance so thank you all, that was appreciated.



I tend to ride in the 'brisk group' on a Sunday morning meet, and I was always able to maintain the pace on the 1200 GS without too much issue. However, with it out of warranty for 3 years and having clocked up 50,000 miles, the risk of looming higher bills for maintenance was a concern for me.

Having been given the green light from 'the boss' to do something about it (and also as it's my 40th birthday later this year!), I deliberated for weeks about what to do (sorry and thank you to Ade and Tony having to put up with me going over and over it for the past month over our breakfasts!). I have also apologised to my wife as I think I drove her mad too!

I didn't know whether to keep the 1200 GS and run a second bike alongside it to spread the mileage, or to swap the GS for something newer with fewer miles - either a 1250 or 1300 GS - you should always have a GS in the stable...!

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I initially put down a deposit on a beautiful Triumph Thruxton to run as a second bike, but following discussion with Ade, and his description of it as a 'clown bike' (sorry Jim....!) [**Ade is apparently aware of my history, see photo [on the first page](#).. Ed**] I pulled out of that deal - it was the right decision for me.

I was then in discussion over a PCP deal on a GS 1300, but couldn't make the figures work on a part ex for my triple black.

Following that I had a go on Ade's KTM 1290 super duke on a ride to Crossgates - thanks Ade. It is a lovely bike. Very quick, sounds fantastic and looks the biz! However I felt it rode a bit stiff and it wasn't hugely comfortable for me. I did find a really nice special edition one for sale, and nearly went for it - but the idea of running 2 bikes and the costs involved - tyres, insurance, servicing, tax etc didn't work for me.

I decided to make the difficult decision to not be sentimental and to part ways with my triple black for something newer, with less miles and within my budget.

Although I took a bit of a hit on the triple black as part ex (I have learnt that high mileage is as much of an issue as condition with bikes for good part ex prices) I was happy with the deal on my new one.

I have gone for a 2019 1250 GSA with 10,000 miles on the clock. I liked the colour scheme as it was completely different to my triple black and is a rare colour (given how many GS's are around!). Being a GSA is also a first for me.



Last Sunday - the day after I got it - I took it out on the Baffle Haus run. Again, I rode in the 'brisk group' with Ade and Andy Peckston on their 1290 super dukes and Tony on his 1000 XR (and Andy Chambers on his 1000 XR on the route back). I felt the 1250 GSA held its own... although I can't lie, there were moments down the Skenfrith road that I wished I had bought a 1290 super duke!

The GSA definitely handles well - much better than you would expect for a bike of that size. It definitely tips in quicker than the 1200 (due to its longer rake I believe). I think it will handle even better when I fit my 'go to' tyres - Conti trail attack 3s - they are brilliant in all conditions.

I personally don't think it's massively quicker than the 1200 (maybe 3rd and 4th gear are a bit stronger) and the gear box is still a bit clunky, although downshifts on the blipper are definitely smoother on the 1250.

It is overall a very quick bike that is lovely to ride. Wind protection is better on the GSA, although I might still add an after market screen deflector due to my height. The seat was definitely more comfortable on the 1200, as Tony and I always say it's the most comfortable seat ever on the 1200 triple black GS! I may end up changing the seat for something more comfy in due course on the GSA.

The balance and control of the bike is better than I expected (not top heavy at all), and testing it out on the slow riding day in September will be interesting. I really like the larger tank (I always thought I never needed it) but less need to fill up at service stations is always a bonus. I also think it gets better mpg than the 1200 due to the more modern shift cam engineering.

The addition of a TFT dash is also welcome (probably due to my nearly 40 year old eye sight deteriorating...!?). I also think it sounds better than the 1200 and is definitely smoother in power delivery than the 1200.

Overall, I am pleased with my new purchase, although I will miss elements of my 1200 triple black. I can't wait to use the GSA for what it's made for - covering long distances - and I plan to take it on a trip to the south of France next May. In the meantime, a trip to Snowdonia in September will be a good initial test!



Anyway as I write this on a beach in Royan, it's time for another dip in the sea.....!

Thanks for reading. See you all soon.

Dan Freeth.

## SOME POINTS OF INTEREST – IAN BARNARD

It's not often I put pen to paper but a number of things have occurred in my biking world recently that might be of interest to the membership.

I had bought two pairs of Rukka pants that where the regular (C2) leg length. On the bike they are about right but when walking about they dragged on the floor and were starting to fray. I was recommended to try [Hideout Leather in Saffron Walden](#) and duly contacted Kate, the owner. She said it would be no problem and quoted initially that it would be no more than £400 for the two pairs to be shortened. An appointment was made and two of us rode to see her. After taking the necessary measurements she revised the quote to just £270 which also included a third pair of Goretex inners that came with one of the pairs. I added £20 for postage to me and three weeks later received them back. The finish was top class with no way to tell that they had been altered in any way and I have no hesitation in recommending Kate and her staff. I would add that the site is also a shop that carries a large selection of biking kit, both leather and textile much of which is produced on site as bespoke kit.



Now I seldom ride these days in heavy rain but, because I had made the appointment with Hideout Leathers we had to go and rode some 60 miles each way in very heavy rain, about four hours all told. I was wearing a spare pair of Rukka "Cosmic" pants that I bought in March 2014. On arrival at Kate's and after getting back to base it was evident that the seat and crotch area was damp and the pants were leaking. Now Gore offer a lifetime warranty on their product stating "Guaranteed to Keep You Dry". I found a number for Gore, which was in Germany, and spoke with a very helpful agent who took me through their processes after asking a fair number of questions. Such as; have the pants been washed and proofed regularly, do you use a heated seat, are there

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any tears etc. I sent over a lot of photos and was then asked to send the pants to their unit in Burnley for evaluation. After a fortnight the verdict was that the pants were “irreparably leaking” and I was given a full refund of the purchase price plus the postage cost of shipping them to Burnley. This was £704.94. To say I was pleased is an understatement and it was so nice to deal with such a decent company.

## **Bike servicing at Wollaston**

This week the bike had to go in for an 18000 mile service. Just oil and filter and to change the fork oil. A week before, I had an issue with the bike, and asked Steve Nash at Wollaston to road test it and give his opinion. He thought that the exhaust flap could be sticking and he agreed to get the mechanics to check this at the service. In the event I thought it ran OK across to the dealers but when I got the bike back they had fitted a brand new set of front pipes under warranty. A great result as the old ones needed cleaning. These are listed in the BMW accessories catalogue at £1450.

## **Road Test possible new bikes.**

### **F900XR**

While the bike was in for service I took out a 2025 model F900XR to see if it might be suitable as a replacement for my R1250RS. I quickly realised that it was a bit too tall for me but managed to ride it a little over sixty miles. My impressions were that it was quite a nice bike with good handling and quite a comfortable ride, notwithstanding the very hard seat that almost all owners complain about. The gearbox was very slick with the quickshifter being smooth both up and down. Unfortunately the clutch, which is cable, still had the same issue that I found when I last rode a bike with this engine, namely that the lever goes through a notch halfway through pulling the lever in which I don't like and is well known as well. The engine had a reasonable amount of power but had this annoying sound like it was chug chugging as you accelerated which also gave some vibration to the bike. I guess I have been spoiled with the larger boxer bikes and this one did not have all the features that I am used to. I am a bit of a nerd (no really) and was intrigued to know how you could manually turn on the headlight if either, the automatic system failed or it was not dark enough to trigger the auto and it was considered that a headlight would be more noticeable than the DLR light. I asked as the light switch which is on the vast majority of BM's is missing on the current F900XR. No one at the dealership could tell me the answer short of stopping, entering the menu and unchecking the auto DLR. Overall the bike is not for me.

### **R1300RS Sport Test**

As they had a demonstrator I asked if I could take it out for a test which I did. This bike was an automatic so was my first ride using this system. Let me start by saying the technology for the ASA is very clever and well done. My opinion is that a learner or novice rider would really benefit from this but, unless you are looking for a twist and go scooter, this would not be the way to go. If you put the bike into auto it pulls away very smoothly and starts to go up the gears but the up changes, particularly under a bit of power are very obvious and the bike wants to get into 6th gear

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very early when most normal bikers would be still happy in 4th. Of course you can press the gear switch, as it now is, and drop the gears down but you might as well have a clutch or use the quickshifter. In manual, again it is very slick, but no different to the quickshifter. To pay around a £1000 for this kit is certainly not for me. As an aside, I use the cruise control a lot when riding and, of the three ways that are available to switch it off, i.e. pull the clutch, close the throttle past the stop position or touch the brake, I always favour the clutch as I just have to move it a tiny amount to cancel the cruise. On the ASA version there is no clutch so you would have to either close the throttle right down or flash the brake lights to following traffic. Of course I have left out that you could slide the cruise switch to off but that is still nowhere near as easy as touching the clutch.

The bike has a similar forward leaning position as the old RS with the footpegs perhaps a little further back. The handling on this bike was let down a bit as the front tyre was a bit low on air but it was not dangerous. The engine was smooth but not a huge improvement to my 1250 and the gearbox was equally smooth.

The riding position can be altered by speccing the High Handle Bars but when we put an R with these bars beside the RS with stock OEM bars the difference was only half an inch and really made little difference. It is also the case that if the bike is ordered with OEM bars they can't be changed for the high bars without swapping over to a new headstock and is very expensive.

The Sports "performance colour scheme of red white" and blue costs an extra £3,205 and you still have to pay extra for a centre stand, Nav prep and alarm. If you want "Riding Assist", though I can't think why you would, it adds a further £770 taking this version over £20,000 and you can't spec luggage with this version.

The slightly cheaper version can have luggage but when you add the rear rack for the top box you lose the very nice rear light and plain indicators for no rear light and the tiny three way stop/tail/indicators. All things considered this bike is not on my list either.

Ian Barnard

### Road Test & Tune-Up



What a summer it has been! Superb weather for everyone but especially for us bikers.

I thought you might be interested in some feedback on the 600 miles I've put on the Honda since getting it back on the road.

Firstly, it's not all been "Honda plan sailing" but more on that later.....

My shakedown runs gradually increased in length as confidence in the bike increased. I'm pleased to say there were no breakdowns so no calls to the RAC for a lift home, so thanks to Soichiro Honda, your standards of engineering have stood the test of time.

So, what's it like to ride a 70's bike today?

The short answer is wonderfully analogue. A proper ignition key, light weight, Manual fuel tap, Analogue instruments, Standard centre stand, Proper mudguards, No fuel gauge, Manual choke, No water cooling, No gear indicator, no self-cancelling indicators, no traction control, no different engine maps, no modern performance brakes, rear pre-load suspension adjustment only, rubbish lights.

So having grown up in the 70's, it was wonderful to revisit the dynamics the bikes had then. Yes

really, they were dynamic! If you came from any British bike at the time these Hondas were a revelation. I was luck enough to have both a 550 & 750 four back in the day, so with this 400 I have now completed the set. How lucky am I!

Okay let's get going: The electric start has never been a problem, a kick start is available for those who want a bit of exercise before they ride! Steering at low and high speeds is delightfully light. Look where you want to go (as our old dear friend Alex used to say) and the Honda just does just that. In fact, to begin with it's very easy to over steer, with too much steering input, but it didn't take long to adjust to a more precise measured input. No need to counter steer its so light.

Frames of that era had a bad reputation for poor handling. That was the case with the more powerful bikes when pushed to their limits, but not so with the 400/4. Yes, it's suspension is basic, so it's best to avoid poor roads surfaces, but the Dunlop TT100 tyres work really well, tracking straight with never a hint of lost traction.

The engine in the real gem 37BHP at 8.5K, it's enough to have fun, really. The pick-up is smooth, mid-range rpm 2K-5K is steady. Between 6K-8K there is a pleasant step up in performance as the engine gets on the cam with an associated wonderful 4-cylinder Honda howl! The red line starts at 10K but I'm giving the last 2K of revs a miss, after all it is 49-year-old.

The gearbox: I almost forgot to mention it; it's so vice free. No false neutrals. Very easy to find neutral and the gears just snicked in up or down the box. Perfect.

As the bike does not have a Slipper clutch, as many bikes of this era didn't have, and if you were unaware and rather clumsy with the clutch release (after the braking phase of course!), then it might be possible to unweigh the back tyre and momentarily lose grip! However, one of the skills developed in 70's was a quick blip of the throttle to get the engine speed up to the rear wheel speed, negating that potential issue.

The brakes. Yes, it has some just! The rear drum works well enough. The front is firm at the lever thanks to new master & slave units, but you can squeeze the front brake lever as hard as you like but with a single calliper and a stainless disc, it won't make much difference! The moral of the story is to always use both together, but fine tune your anticipation!

So, in summary I'm really enjoying the step back in time, but it does make you appreciate the technical progress that has been made in the last 50 years. The only thing that today's designers need to address is bike weight & the lack of proper mud guards, in my humble opinion!

I said at the start that it had not all been plain sailing!

So, what have the challenges been? I've concluded that all revolve around modern fuels! I've been using ethanol E5 rather than E10. I'm told Ethanol fuel start to go off after 3 to 4 months!!

I've had the 4 carburettors off 4 time now (which I can now do in my sleep) but would have preferred not to do so!

The problem has been fuel slowly seeping past the new float valves, filling the float bowls on each carb' and causing fuel to dribble from the four overflow tubes!

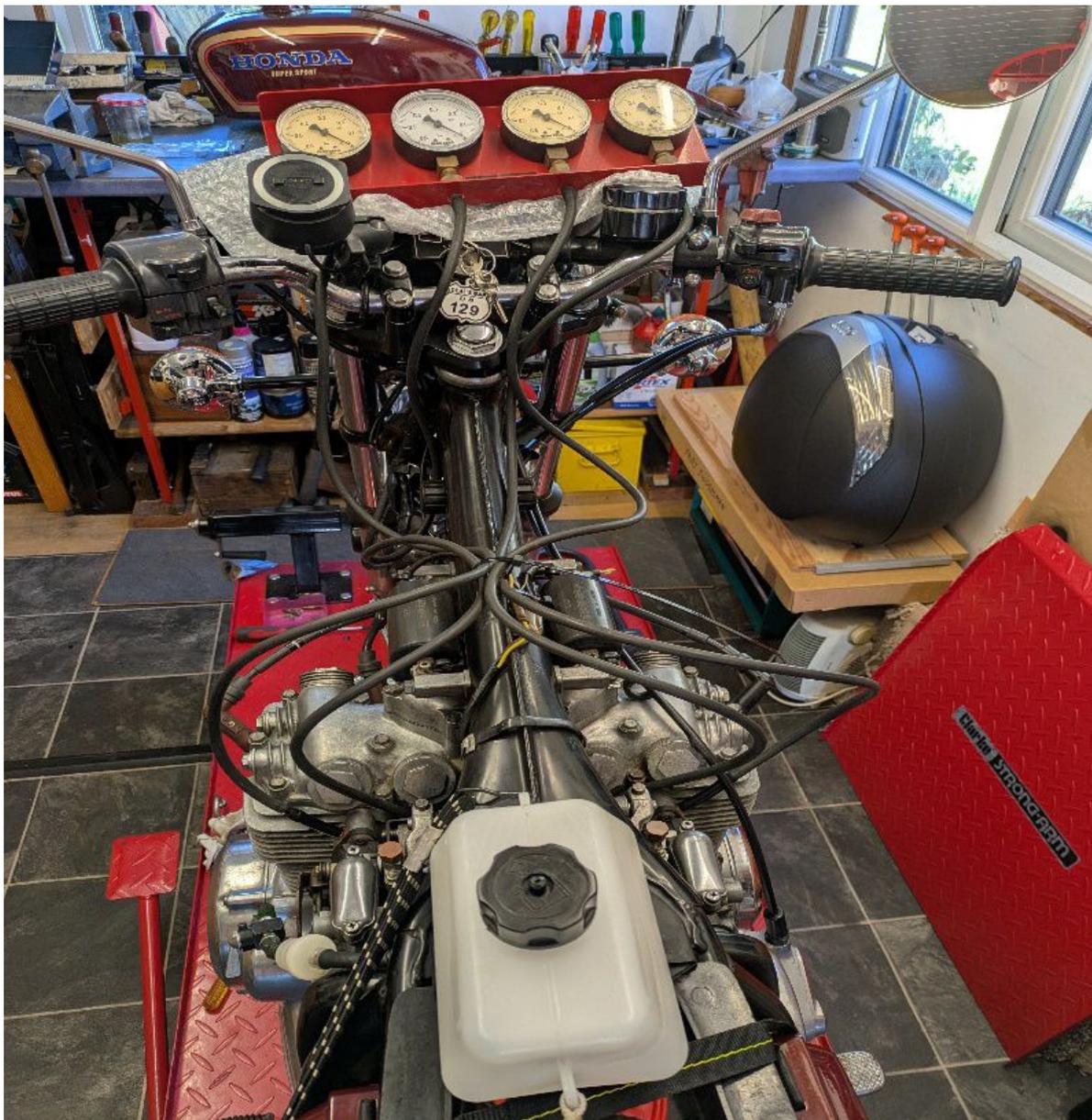
I've been meticulous in setting the float height, all the jets were new and Honda in origin. The floats themselves are the solid variety and although original, floated at the same height. However, the last thing I'm going to do this winter is put new floats in place. My theory is that over time they

may not be quite as buoyant as brand new floats might be. A reasonable assumption in my view. I'll let you know how I get on.

However, having consulted widely a change to Aspen fuel for the winter storage period seems to have resolved the problem for now. This fuel is not cheap, but will last for 2 to 3 years and is completely Ethanol free, so great for classic bikes & cars that are off the road in the winter.

The lesson learnt is that old carb systems can be problematic when using modern Ethanol fuels. You have been warned.

Finally, after 600 miles it was time for a tune up. This is the stuff I really like doing.



Points checked and adjusted. This time rather than just set static timing I dusted down my timing light. This showed I had to advance overall timing slightly. The mechanical advance and retard

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mechanism behind the points was also working well and I could see the ignition advance the required amount at 2.5K. Tick.

The next step was even more fun, yes I'm really that sad!

Check out the pictures below. Four vacuum gauges were fitted and minor adjustments made to each carb, so they opened at exactly the same time! Tick.



The result, perfect pick-up throttle response. Happy days.

What project shall I do next.....?