

# MOTORCYCLING

## AN ILLUSTRATED SOCIAL HISTORY

Roger Fogg

In the 120 years of their existence, motorcycles have been used as a means of basic and affordable transport, for work and play, in war and peace and in all kinds of sport and competition. Whilst many books look at the history of particular marques or types of motorcycle, in this book the author turns his readers' attention to the social history of motorcycling. Through the use of over 250 photographs (many of them appearing for the first time), he brings new insights into the impact that motorcycles have had on our everyday lives, from fashion to necessity, from flappers to mods and rockers, from milkmen to racers.

The book concentrates upon the Golden Age of motorcycles from the turn of the century to the mid 1960s, before the time when foreign makes put paid to Britain's manufacturers. The author focuses on the everyday experiences of ordinary riders who recorded their personal, sometimes intimate, interaction with their machines through the medium of photography.

Lengthy captions provide technical information and social comment on each of the photographs. In this way, this fascinating book reflects not just the history of the motorcycle, but also its place in the development of life in Britain during an era when British machines reigned supreme. The growing numbers of classic bike enthusiasts will be thrilled to see so many fascinating and unusual images published in one volume.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

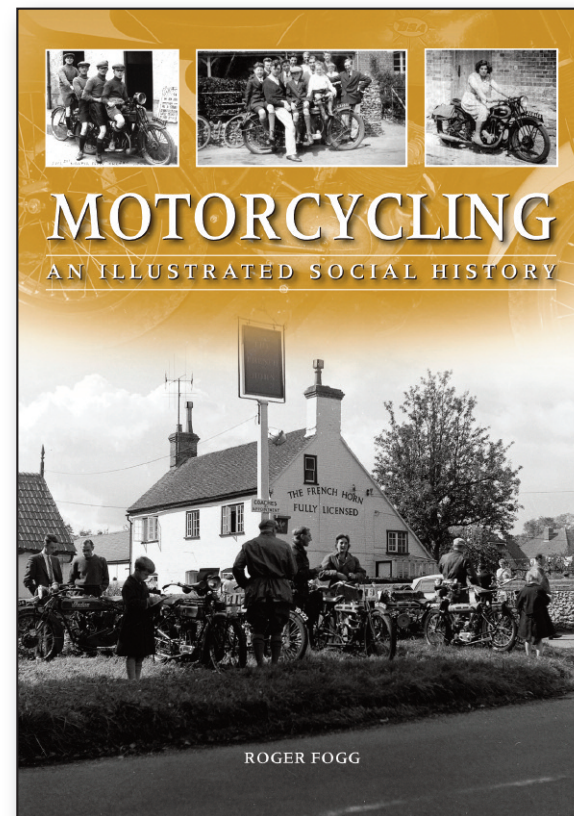
Roger Fogg is a retired teacher who confesses to 'owning more vintage motorcycles than are strictly necessary'. He writes on the subject of motorcycles for various magazines, and is a member and past Chairman of the Cornwall section of the Vintage Motorcycle Club.

### HALSGROVE CATALOGUE

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# MOTORCYCLING - AN ILLUSTRATED SOCIAL HISTORY



In 1903 Tom Silver on a 3 HP Quadrant motorcycle rode from John o' Groats to Land's End in a time of 64 hours and 29 minutes.



Corporal Bromley Penny, Despatch Rider in the Great War. The 2 3/4hp Douglas is seen here as ridden in action, covered in the mud of The Somme. PHOTO HALSGROVE CHS



The garage of C J Frost dealt with the sale and repair of cycles, motorcycles and sometimes cars in the village of Mulbarton, south of Norwich. PHOTO HALSGROVE CHS



This couple on their Vespa scooter seem to epitomise the height of respectability. Their very English style of clothing contrasts somewhat with what the Mods might be wearing on their forays down to Brighton a few years later.

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1910

The 1904 Vibronless 3 1/2hp Rex 'Air Driought' of 1904 was priced at 50 guineas according to the advertisement placed in *The Motorist* on 17 January 1904. This brought the King of Motor Bicycles 12 months ahead of its imitators. Features included the Rex Air Driought cylinder, four rim brake, improved piston silencer, exhaust valve lifter and an improved surface carburettor, all with twelve months guarantee. The Rex Motor Manufacturing Company Ltd of Coventry was approved by the War Office for use and claimed to have the largest combined output of tin cans, cans, and motor bicycles of any British manufacturing firm. The Air Driought cylinder involved extra fitting around the valves with a plate attached which directed cold air to the cone. This proved easier to fit than an early wet-work silencer although it could quite easily have brought and fitted a tin-car arrangement to the front of his machine and achieved the same passenger carrying abilities.

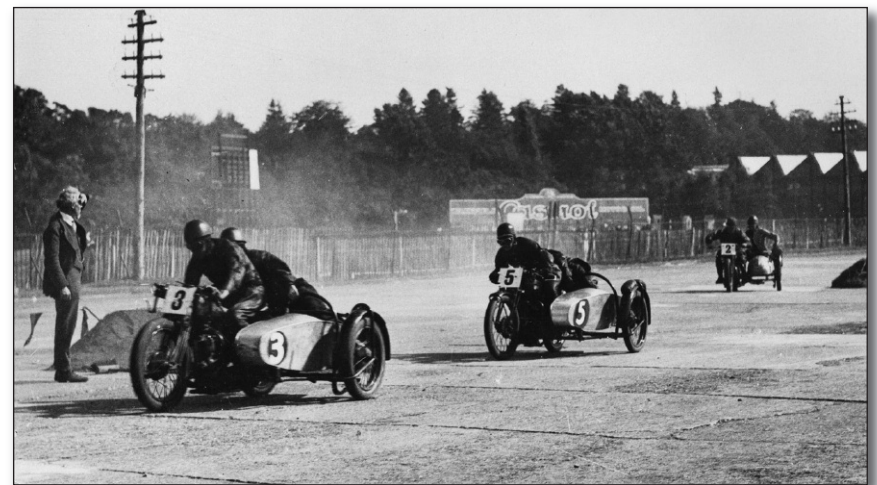
ALFRED J. GIBBINS, CARLISLE, BULLER, BELANCE, WOOD, CULLINGTON.

In 1904 wagon and carriage makers were still going full tilt, producing a wide range of two- and four-wheeled horse drawn vehicles. There was a bewildering variety of design shapes and forms, some were made to suit local conditions, others were bespoke while yet again there was a market for 'off the shelf' vehicles. Here, Gibbins' Carriage works of Cullington in Devon has two of their products on display outside their shop. However the focus is looking in the shape of the bicycle, and even the motorcycle. The bike is a Quinton, dated around 1903, and is very similar to the one that Tom Silver rode from 'End to End' in a record breaking time. 'The Quinton' and 'The Excelsior' were said to have done more to demonstrate the practicability of the motorcycle than any other make. Gibbins would also sell you an 'Alkidy' motorcycle or car, and could provide Dunlop motor tyres for them. PHOTO HALSGROVE CHS

Relex: Another Rex, this time a 3 1/2hp Rex from around 1905 with an atmospheric carburettor, but still reliant on oil rather than magneto for ignition. The photograph was taken in Cumberland and demonstrates the Rex's simple design made out of first class materials. The front fork, with its spring axle, nicely produced the action and geometry of a day's telescopic fork. To boost their sales Rex had generous part exchange scheme for their new models, although this threatened to land them in deep financial water. There are no lights fitted to this model, and the rear carrier can be folded down to use as a stand to aid pedal starting whilst the machine is stationary.

Relex: Wardill's Cycle shop in Pined Street, Carlisle, manufactured their own bicycles, but they were also agents for Minerva motorcycles. Minerva was a Belgian company which manufactured complete machines, and also sold 'hoop' engines to the trade or to anyone who wanted to install one in a frame of their own design. The close motorcycles in this 1905 picture are not too easy to identify, but probably the one on the left being the current in a P. M. a Yorkshire made bike with a dipping engine, the centre machine is a Bialloy while the third is a Minerva. Wardill sold petrol in cans, supplied by Shell and Puma's, and they also stocked Warwick tyres. The Minerva has its four number plate attached to the headlight in order to provide illumination for its registration. The track wheel and front forks on the pole probably served as a guide for the flag men and, as with many other early garages, Wardill's also repaired photographs and you could purchase records from them. PHOTO HALSGROVE CHS

Example of a double-page spread.



Brooklands, to the south of London, was the place to be seen before the war if you were at all interested in speed.