

Fitting Triple Barrels the Jim Smith way !!!!

Only Angus McLeod could make the daunting task of fitting Triple cylinder barrels appear to be so simple and angst free. The article on T.E No.201 Pages 35-37 inclusive has an unusually high level of veracity which threetards everywhere would recognise.

But! How many of you have ever thought that:

- a) Successful motorcycle engineering is the profit of discovery***
- b) that any given engine component can possess, let's call it, a perfidious nature which can trap the unwary?***

What follows this blinding piece of information transfer is a true story. So, be prepared to be amazed and forewarned in equal measures...

It was a reasonably bright Saturday afternoon in what ought to have been the bleak Midwinter. The entire family had gone out for the day and were not due back until late, very late. I had the house to myself, and spare time to play with. The Trident T150R was confined to the outside Utility room, my only available workstation, with very little room to manoeuvre. Not to mention the difficulty trying to progress, beyond the full rolling chassis, with crankcases installed, that I had managed to do over several months previous.

The next part of the rebuild was of course to refit the cylinder barrels, and after that the head, then the rocker boxes and... you know how it goes. All the best engineering practices had been followed... The bog roll inner tubes fitted neatly around the con-rods, and unmentionables, such as a certain light blue Nurses uniform (that I never found a use for!) was stuffed into the top of the crank case mouth. To protect forever, during times of inactivity due to:

- a) Loss of interest
- b) Unacceptable ambient temperatures
- c) More urgent domestic issues
- d) Living life to the full
- e) Other (Please specify)

So, leaving the oil cooler hose clips, loosely in situ near the frame top tubes seemed completely harmless. Like in crime scene investigations where they routinely say: "nothing to see here sir – please move on..."

In the work zone, as poor as it is, your skill is constantly tested to the max and your patience stretched to the nth degree. Only after hour upon hour of diligently carrying out the absolute job from hell, that nobody told you about, do you finally get to tighten down the cylinder barrel base nuts, with the not yet ground down, extra slim ½" AF Ring Spanner that you bought specifically for the occasion. To try and attempt anything more than this, to be truthful, was unrealistic, foolhardy even – or both. The need to rejoice disappeared almost as fast as the rapidly fading winter daylight; when I realised that there was something that I had not picked up on.....

What exactly was that light metallic tinkling sound that I had heard and dismissed – while gingerly making my way past the bike during the coffee break hours ago? Oh YES! I remember now; the Crankcase mouth was fully exposed right then, but surely not long enough for anything to..... I was about to say... "Go wrong!"

when to my absolute horror I realised that the hose clip, the one loosely fitted to the oil cooler pipe near to the frame top tubes was not present...

In no more than a nanosecond, I was scrambling about on the floor, searching and praying that at best I would get to kneel on it soon and all would be well. Meanwhile; in the ensuing panic, I had forgotten to turn on the light, and it never crossed my mind that to do so would have been wise. Instead, I had deployed the small torch that I had used earlier whilst lowering the barrels into position, and this confirms that the clip is not on the floor. However, the torch does light up the underside of the crankcase, where a close look inside the aperture normally covered by the L.P Williams magnetic sump plate reveals the whereabouts of the hose clip.

The mechanical game of hide and seek is over. It is tucked up beside the left hand crankshaft web, and appears to be clinging desperately onto the rough casting of the crankcase inner wall, in a vain attempt to evade capture. Thought equals success... I would use the element of surprise by putting my right hand through the aperture, and using my middle finger – for its alternative intended purpose, I would safely dislodge the clip... Simple!

Hands up all those who would have done exactly the same?

Well, I had certainly managed to get it moving! Yep, it slid right on down my finger, straight past the first joint and stopped dead in its tracks before the second. Almost immediately; my finger started pinging as the circulation become ever more restricted. While trying to pull my hand back out of the aperture, this proved impossible as it was grazed and swollen beyond belief. In short I was hopelessly trapped. I.D.S :Personified.

By now it was proper dark, with only the faltering torch providing light and comfort, while the onset of muscle cramp in both legs was another major issue. Also, the coffee I had mentioned earlier had well and truly filtered through and that manufactured another problem in the time honoured way.....In a crisis, adopting the mindset of a crazy fool is self deprecating at best. You simply have to regroup, overcome the overwhelming urge to panic and follow the cliché, keep calm and carry on.

I had thought about shouting for help, but did not think that anyone would hear me, above the late night radio show playing back to back 60's Golden Oldies. I had even thought about the Fire and Rescue personnel coming in through the front door when or if the alarm was finally raised. The officer of the watch – perhaps a guy like Sam Milner, quickly assessing the rapidly deteriorating situation – realises that the anti-hero lying flat out on the Oak effect laminate floor is only just conscious and is in shock. The watch officer's voice, more urgent now, is calling for the latest plasma cutting equipment, a Stihl saw and the hydraulic "Jaws of Life" to be brought in from the rescue truck. They would then, and only then, cut away the T150's various driveside components to gain access, and then proceed to surgically remove with the aid of a junior hacksaw, the hose clip, the trapped finger – OR both! How on earth was I supposed to cope with the loss? The trauma of no longer having perfectly matched crankcase sections, not to mention, original and matching engine and frame numbers...

The lifelong embarrassment if this saga was to appear on Youtube, or God forbid, be the stand out feature on the TR3OC website ([its here now for all to see Jim](#)), would surely be unbearable, insufferable even. It must have been these dark abstract thoughts, or it may have been an influx of adrenalin – that well known nervous

system stimulant, available at Accident and Emergency centres everywhere. Or you can simply manufacture your own by putting yourself into seriously perilous situations like this.

Whatever; I suddenly gained the clarity of thought and deed formula that I so desperately needed. The window of opportunity was opened, when I caught sight of the large pump action oil can standing near the rear wheel. An unprecedented level of dexterity was required to hook my foot around the can, and to drag it inch-by-agonising-inch along the floor into the rescue zone. Spillage was not an option, for if it tipped over, then a broken heart would have to be added to the list of things to fix. Being naturally left handed; I was able to guide the long flexible spout of the oil can up past the palm of my trapped right hand and into the crankcase void close to the left hand crank web.

The war of attrition was well and truly on now! Working the pump action trigger as though my life depended on it – it probably did, I would need to dispense the entire contents of the can if Plan “A” was to be successful. Luckily; the ASDA 20/50 oil had been suitably chilled by the almost freezing ambient temperature that had prevailed throughout. There was an indeterminable delay between cause and effect; as the Weir dynamics of the Super oil provided all the cooling agents and lubrication that it was never ever designed for.

Now was not the time or the place to test whether I was mentally challenged, I simply had to get my hand back out of the world’s most unlikely snare. So it was now or never time, and I kind of knew that whatever I did next would hurt. The gyratory principle – a downward rotating movement at pace, was selected from the no options menu, and this was to be deployed after the obligatory count down....
5...4...3...2...1... ACTION!

To my absolute astonishment, the carefully orchestrated and universally acclaimed Plan “A” had delivered. I had managed to escape at the first attempt. As an added “bonus” the hose clip was no longer on my middle finger either! Question was where the Hell was it NOW? For surely this caper had gone on for long enough, I needed closure. I need not have worried though, for a few seconds later, I heard it drop to the floor and attempt its escape by rolling away into the darkness, but it was too late, for now, the whole scene was lit up by a blaze of light from outside. Had someone called the Police to report the overly loud radio still playing well after midnight? Or had the Police themselves, unable to gain access or a response, called in the Fire and Rescue team to reports of a body lying prone on the floor of the work zone? Bearing in mind that I reckoned I would have still been trapped, exhausted and in almost total darkness even then. Or; was it my family returning home from their night out...?

I heard a key opening the front door, and it was my youngest son, Stuart a.k.a. Chicanne who was the first one into the house, who came through to see how I had got on with the job. He said I looked terrible – traumatised almost, and asked if I had “had a shock or somethin’”. His puzzled expression pre-empted the next question and asked me why did I have what looked like so much engine oil on my hands, but more importantly, around my mouth... How exactly, could I ever, explain that I had actually just kissed that Goddamn oil soaked hose clip? Yes, the very thing that was so complicit in one of the stupidest things I had ever done in my entire life!

There are valuable lessons to be learnt from all this – but the question remains, do you know and recognise what they are? **Remember stupid is as stupid does...**