

Nutty Norm rides again



IT'S not often that you come across a guy who goes to all the trouble of building a full road-going prototype before taking the plunge and building the pukka thing, but that's precisely what Norm Wilding did before investing his time and money in the immaculate Harley trike you see before you. Recognise the name Norm Wilding? Well, he's the gent who brought you the Mark 2 Zephyrs 'Blue Moon', 'Pieces of Eight' and 'Ford Fever', but before making the transition to the four wheeled ranks, Norm was pretty heavily into biking — hence the trike.

Going back a year or so, after getting rid of 'Ford Fever' Norm had a hankering for a return to the bugs in the teeth, wind in the hair style of motoring, so what better than to combine two of the loves of his life and build a trike? Work started by building the aforementioned prototype which was built primarily to test the bike engine/car rear-end theory (Harley Servicars aren't exactly plentiful you know), and to check out police reaction. Based on a 650 BSA the thing wasn't exactly pretty — not that it was meant to be — and as a result attracted plenty of attention from the Southend branch of Her Majesty's Police Force. This resulted in a prosecution for using seat belt mounts not fitted by the manufacturer. Did BSA ever produce seat belt mounts? However, the bust turned to Norm's advantage when the officer concerned stumbled across a little known law stating that any three wheeler under 5 cwt didn't have to have seat belts. As this was just the case with the Beezer, there was no problem. One-off Vee Dub-based trikes may find the opposite though...

With all the problems sorted, Norm decided it was time for the real thing. An original 1942 Harley 45 (750cc flathead) was located in Brian 'Prisoner' Kerby's garage, and after parting with the necessary, Norm

had the beginnings of his tricycle. A short three months later, and the final picture was complete.

Working from front to rear, the original Harley hub wearing a Tiger Cub rim with 3.25 x 18 rubber hangs on the end of the 10in overstock HD springer forks — cleverly extended by the use of sections of Ford Pop radius rods. The home made 'glass front mudguard was positioned as close to the front tyre as possible to give the impression that it's not really there, while the handlebars came from a scrambler, and the headlamps a copy of a Bates original. This whole assembly hangs on the front of the frame by way of a four inch gooseneck, just ahead of the early BSA C10 petrol tank that had to be modified to accept the light switch.

The motor is internally stock, but Norm replaced the old Harley jug with a 1 1/4in SU from a Mini. Other external modifications are a home brew chromed exhaust system with (whisper it), no mufflers, and lots 'n' lots of polished alloy and chrome plate. All the chroming, incidentally, was done by *Muirspeed Motorcycles* of Manor Park, and Norman was a bit impressed with them, especially when they managed to plate no less than 115 parts in five days — and all for £145.

Norm built all the foot pegs and linkages himself (chromed, naturally) — the left pedal operating the clutch, and the right connecting up to a Mark 2 Zephyr master cylinder (surprise!), which in turn pumps the fluid through chromed brake pipes to the MG Midget drums on the back. A Mini handbrake operates two Honda 50 front brake cables, and gear shifting is courtesy of a modified Jag gear lever (the old Harleys use a hand shift). Front brake is operated conventionally (for a bike, that is), by a handlebar mounted lever.

The rear end of the frame was rebuilt with 1in gas barrel (bent with the assistance of the

right boot of a certain person called Trogg), and bolted up to this is the rear axle from an A35 narrowed by a total of 9in. To transfer the chain drive from the gearbox to the rear-end, a 31 tooth sprocket from a Honda CB500 was installed where the ring gear used to reside. The front cover of the diff had to be removed to allow the chain to enter and exit, and if you're wondering about what happens to the oil, then wonder no more 'cos there 'aint none, see. To make up for this lack of lube, Norm replaced the four bearings in the rear-end with sealed units, and every once in a while treats the spider gears to a dollop of grease to keep 'em quiet. A Bultaco was relieved of its chain tensioner to help keep the driveline in check, and as you've probably realised by now, there's no rear suspension, the ride being smoothed by the sprung saddle.

Upholstery was applied by *Bensons of Leigh*, in a tan vinyl, and complements the Ford Roman Bronze Metallic paint perfectly. Bob the plumber (!) nailed together the neat wooden box, and another set of Wilding moulds gave birth to the rear mudguards which add a touch of legality to the 8 1/2 x 14s.

West Road Motorcycles are to be thanked for supplying various bits and pieces, and if you'd like to know how much it costs to put together the trike that won *Best Trike* at Belle Vue, and *Best Trike* and *Best Engineering* at the Kent Bike Show, then it's £1000 — including £400 for the bike in the first place.

If you happen to be down by Southend seafront one Sunday afternoon this summer, then don't be surprised if you see Norm putting along on his trike — that's what he built it for — but in the meantime the man's got something a little quicker up his sleeve. Lurking in a corner of the Wilding workshop is the L88 427 motor that originally resided in 'Roarin' Rat'. Anyone know where there's a 100E Panel going? **Clive Househam**

