

Lambretta Series 1 Framebreather

An updated classic

When it comes to building scooters, Ian likes to stick with the original aesthetics of the machine and bring it up to date with subtle improvements, which is exactly what we have here...

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OWNER DETAILS

Owner: Ian Bugby
Job: Engineering manager.
Scooter club: Not Quite Right.
First interest in scooters: 1978-79, saw some guys around town on scooters and liked what I saw.
First scooter: Lambretta SX150.
First event: Malvern National Scooter Day, 1981 on my SX150.
How could the scooter scene improve: A collection service to take your scooter home after a rally – hate the journey home. On second thoughts, they've already invented the AA...
Farthest ever ridden on a scooter: As far as is required to get to a rally, from the Midlands. Nowhere is too far away.
Worst rally/event: It's about what you make of it and the company you choose to keep.
What do you dislike about rallies/events: Tribute bands.
Favourite featured scooter of all time: Leery Li owned by Mark Watts.
Who first inspired you in the scooter scene: CJ (Clive Jones of CJ Motorcycles & Scooters). He allowed me to travel to my first northern rallies with him. First saw him in my local town riding his ochre GP (in a sheepskin coat wearing an open-face helmet).
If you had to recommend one item of riding kit what would it be: A decent armoured jacket and trousers. Having seen what happened to mine in a 40mph crash I'm glad I was wearing them!
Most useless thought for a scooter: Most of my thoughts, without a remedy, tend to be negative.

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Updates are often essential on a classic machine if it is to be used on 21st century roads, but also to complement other improvements made elsewhere on the scooter.

Starting at the nose, the most visually noticeable update on Ian's Lambretta is the front suspension setup, courtesy of Frank Sanderson at Lambretta Innovations, utilising external coil over dampers as opposed to the traditional internal rod and spring combination.

Moving up just a little, there's also a headlight conversion which comes from a Scooter Centre H4 sealed beam unit. Ian is happy to report that the conversion fitted with a minor fiddle here and there, and improves visibility on dark roads over the standard setup as well as looking good into the bargain.

Fed up with speedo drive gears constantly chewing themselves into oblivion, Ian fitted a SIP speedo and used the front fork link buffer bolts as a mounting point for the magnetic pick-up head, which tells the speedo unit how fast the scooter is travelling. In a classic piece of scooterist inspiration, while trying to work out how to fit the pick-up head, Ian found a bracket from a clip-on cycling shoe in the garage and discovered it lined up nicely with the buffer bolts, job done!

Utilising the SIP speedometer means Ian was able to do away with the old-fashioned cable and speedo drive, replacing it with a modern sensor and magnet.



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Inspiration for the paint scheme comes from the new generation of the Fiat 500 Abarth. After a full dry-build to make sure everything lined up and a trip to a local Fiat dealer to obtain the paint code, the scooter was dropped off with Craig Beadle at the Scooter Paint Shop to work his magic. Ian reports that not only does Craig turn out paintwork of the highest standard he also gives a date for completion and sticks to it. Praise indeed. The pinstriping was applied by John at LetterKnight and as he and Craig are local to each other they were able to work together to achieve the finished product.

Initially Ian was keen on using a speed block pattern similar to the Yamaha design, but after speaking with John and sharing ideas, John was given a free rein and came up with this striking and personal design which is simplicity at its finest. Topped off with a frame-hugging seat from the talented hands of Gary Simpson, it seems less is definitely more in this case.

CRASH TEST BUGBY

Many of the usual problems associated with rebuilding a 50-odd-year-old scooter were smoothed over with careful planning and attention to detail.

One thing that can never be planned for though is an accident, which is exactly what happened on the way to Tenby a couple of weeks after finishing the scooter. Luckily Ian came away fairly unscathed, thanks in no small part to the armoured jacket and trousers he was wearing. Unfortunately the same could not be said for the scooter. As it slid down the road, the scoot flipped from one side to the other leaving deep gouges in the freshly painted panelwork.

In the same Zen-like state, Ian returned the damaged paintwork to Craig to be repaired, usually a fairly straightforward job on new paintwork as the colour is easy to match. However it transpired that when the paint was mixed at the suppliers for the first paint job, it had been mixed in slightly the wrong shade to the paint code. This meant that when Craig had a new batch mixed to carry out the repairs it did not match the original paint and it took three attempts to get somewhere near the right shade before he could very carefully blend the two together!



SCOOTER DETAILS

Scooter model: Lambretta Li 125

Specialised parts: Gary Simpson seat, Frank Sanderson front end.

Time to build: Two months by myself.

Frame mods: Rear end holes welded up.

Specialised parts: Gary Simpson seat, Frank Sanderson front end.

Engine: GT 186, 25mm Dellorto, 42mm ceramic coated clubman, centre plug head.

Paintwork: Paint by Craig at Scooter Paint Shop, striping by the Letter Knight.

Engraving: Just where I slipped with the screwdrivers and spanners.

Powder coating: Redditch Shotblasting.

Overall cost: Twice what I would have liked to have spent.

Hardest part of the project: Rebuilding after the crash.

Advice for anyone starting a project: Be original. Anything you would like to be different: I'd like to be 30 years younger.

Favourite dealer: Jerome at Readspeak, for his wonderful repartee and taste in music.

Thanks: Dave Worcester, Yian, Dave Norton, Baby David, Kev, Wobbly Johnny, scootermum Karen, princess Stephanie, Sibbo, Katie, Al, Pughie, Luke and Sam, CFCAl, all the local lads and lasses I ride with and anybody else who knows me



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So, with handling and braking upgrades, what lies beneath the panels to warrant all this? Well the engine's top end kit is, for many people, one of the best small block kits on the market; the GT 186. This has been coupled with a 25mm Dellorto, clubman exhaust and a reworked cylinder head courtesy of Jerome at Readspeak scooters and the result is an engine which performs exactly as Ian wants it to.

Following a spill on the way to Tenby, one of the exhaust studs was ripped out on impact. On hearing this Richard Taylor, designer and manufacturer of the GT kit went to Ian's house, collected the cylinder for repair and returned it free of charge. Now that is customer service at its finest.

One thing Ian has learnt through building scooters is that while original parts generally fit where they are supposed to, remade stuff usually has to be 'persuaded' into place. With this thought in mind he tries to approach the spanners in a Zen-like state to rise above frustration and walk away from a difficult part of a build - coming back to it later he usually finds the problem easier to overcome. Looking at the quality of this Lambretta and previous scooters he's put together (like Monochromatic in the December 2012 edition of Scootering), it is fairly obvious that nothing is rushed so there may be something in that philosophy.

Words: Barrie

Photography: Richie Lunt

