

'66 BSA Victor Restoration Project

Dana Robbins

History of Victor, my first year '66 BSA Victor:

It all started when, as per usual, I once a week went out to Frank Puckett's to help fabricate/prepare the 4 bikes he was taking to Bonneville for Speed Week. Frank showed me a nice un-restored late 60's Triumph 500 Daytona he had just bought. Turns out to get the Triumph he also had to purchase an old BSA that the owner's son had raced back in the day, it was Victor ! Frank said he didn't really want to keep the BSA, so my excitement grew.

The bike had been raced off road back in the day and then stored inside for years. He had been stripped of all lights/gauges; and had Ceriani front forks and 21" wheel donated from a Bultaco. Guys that raced these BSA's preferred the lighter longer travel Ceriani forks, so it was a period correct modification. Cosmetically he looked fine considering he was 51 years old, but I knew he would shine like a polished jewel when I was done with him !

It was love at first sight, as I get older I am appreciating more and more light weight motorcycles. I threw a leg over Victor and I just had to have him. Frank saw my eyes light up, and with the shaking of hands a deal was struck. I tried to sneak Victor home, but when I went to hookup my trailer at home to go and get Victor, it had a flat tire. While changing the tire my wife caught me, so I had to admit yet another cycle was coming home (sigh. . .)

Once home I took stock of what I had, Victor was a 1st year 441 round barrel complete with his stock AMAL monoblock carb, oh joy ! The engine looked complete and all there, so I cleaned out the gas tank, carb, and filled him with oil. To my surprise he started and ran quite well. I took him for a run around the block. My initial enthusiasm was soon deflated as the play in the clutch became greater with every shift, until the point where there was so much cable play one couldn't disengage the clutch. I went home, wondering how much was wrong.

After removing the primary cover I discovered the entire clutch was about to fall off ! The large nut on the clutch hub was only finger tight ! After fixing this problem I restarted the bike. I revved up the engine and the whole thing fluttered, then slowly came down in RPM until it died. One kick and I knew there was now no compression ! So I took of the timing side and discovered the nut holding the cam drive gear on was almost all the way off. Luckily the exhaust valve was only partially off its seat when the cam drive stopped, so it didn't hit the piston (whew!)

OK, time to not trust anything in the motor. Below is what was either cleaned, replaced/tightened or new on Victor :

- 1) new primary chain
- 2) new rare GP racing camshaft (found a NOS one in Minnesota!)
- 3) all new gaskets
- 4) new GP racing exhaust (came from England!)

- 5) new added headlight with fabricated mounting brackets
- 6) new added tail light
- 7) new AMAL monoblock carb
- 8) new final drive chain
- 9) new trials type tires
- 10) new small chrome speedo with custom fabricated mounting
- 11) new handlebars
- 12) added new rear view mirror, horn
- 13) new front brake shoes (NOS sourced from a Bultaco dealer in Australia, thank god for the internet!)
- 14) new rear brake shoes
- 15) new tank and side-cover decals
- 16) added new front fender

- Engine rebuild/reassembly took a couple of months on & off waiting for parts.
- The restoration/polishing of the front and rear wheels each took a full week !
- Polishing the back part of the alloy tank had to be done by hand, to avoid blemishing the painted front half of the tank.
- The front forks were completely disassembled, rebuilt, polished and reassembled.
- To properly drive the new speedo the rotating direction of the speedo drive had to be reversed by exchanging the front and back drive sections in the drive unit (not an easy task)
- Timing the Lucas E.T. ignition (no battery) was frustrating and finally rewarding, once I understood how it worked.

So now that Victor is finally running correctly, what is it like to take him out for a spin you ask ? Well, my off-road days are over (bad back) so Victor will mainly see pavement duty, with an occasional burst off-road if I can't resist. That said the first ride brought a huge smile to my face, and made all those months of work well worth it. Victor is a torque monster, and with the racing cam he has a nice mid to high end rush as well, just pure British single cylinder motorcycling fun !

Victor's_Dad (aka DanaMan)



Victor after engine redone , new front fender, with engine, wheels & forks all polished !



uh oh, front shoes down to the rivets ! Sourced NOS Bultaco shoes from Australia .



Polishing wheels/spokes took a week for each wheel !



A later three hole oil pump was installed for more reliable oil pressure .



all mounting holes were deburred, the Rupert Ratio manual on BSA singles was invaluable !



Now all done, new racing exhaust, new AMAL monoblock, new headlight, speedo and tail light installed, plus Victor now has a set of trials universal tires, a little better on the road than the full race knobbies he came with !



Victor with Pikes Peak in the background, one beautiful bike in the sunshine, and I do mean shine ! I have over 200 miles on Victor since he was finished, starts on the first kick and leaks nary a drop, you gotta love it !