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### THE ESSENTIAL BUYER'S GUIDE™ CURRENCY

At the time of publication a BG unit of currency “●” equals approximately £1.00/US\$1.32/Euro 1.13. Please adjust to suit current exchange rates using Sterling as the base currency.

## 2 Cost considerations

– affordable, or a money pit?



The spares situation for Triples is excellent. Virtually every part is available, including crankcases, and only a few parts are currently NLA (no longer available). There are several specialist suppliers who are very knowledgeable, and their range of spares continues to expand. The range of upgraded parts is also increasing for those who wish to fit more modern technology, such as brakes, electrics, and ignition and fuel systems.

Complete restoration cost from basket case to concours is expensive at around ●x10,000, depending on upgrades etc.

Example parts prices:

- Front brake master cylinder ●x135
- Carburettor ●x122 (each)
- Piston and rings ●x93 (each)
- Valve guide ●x13 (each)
- Valves ●x15 (each)
- Big end shells ●x40 (set)
- Main bearing shells ●x35 (set)
- Oil pump (complete) ●x220
- Timing cover ●x230
- Raygun exhaust silencers ●x145 (each)
- Hurricane silencer set ●x295
- T160 silencer ●x116 (each)
- T150 3-into-1 exhaust system ●x785
- Standard brake disc ●x45
- Drilled brake disc ●x59
- Rocket III wiring harness ●x90
- T160 braided wiring harness ●x129
- Tri-spark electronic ignition ●x220
- Boyer electronic ignition ●x110
- T150 rear mudguard ●x185
- T160 rear mudguard ●x154
- Twin-disc conversion ●x630-780
- Front fork stanchion ●x57
- Rear shock absorbers ●x128 (pair)
- T160 headlamp shell and rim ●x110
- Re-con rocker box ●x145 (complete)



Drilled brake discs are now available.



Twin-disc upgrade fitted to a T160.



Virtually all engine and gearbox parts are available.



Wiring harnesses are available.



Put the bike on its centre stand and have a good, slow walk round it.



The first two letters of the engine number tell you the model year and month of manufacture. This T160 is EK – May '75.

bikes fitted with them, shows charge. Before turning off the engine rev it and check again for blue smoke.

With the engine off, check for play in the forks, headstock and swinging arm. Are there any signs of oil weeping from the front or rear suspension? Are details like the tank, the colour, the side panels, brakes and forks correct for the model year?

### Spotting a fake

Since most variants of the Trident and Rocket III differed only in cycle parts – tank, side panels, forks, wheel hubs and brakes, it's relatively easy to change the identity of a machine by bolting on the

relevant bits. Nothing wrong with that, as long as it's made clear that this is the case and the bike isn't being sold as something that it isn't. Original bikes are always worth more than those that are 'mixed and matched.' Engine and frame numbers provide the model year and month of manufacture, and this is a good indication of the bike's authenticity.

Hurricanes and specials are a bit more problematic. Since Hurricanes are

(with the bike on the main stand rock and twist the rear wheel) if there is play it may be just the bearing that's the problem, but it may be a worn hub, and they are NLA. Repairs can be effected however, if necessary. Later models with disc brakes used straight alloy hubs on those wheels fitted with discs.

## Suspension 4 3 2 1

The basic suspension setup was the same for all Triples with front telescopic forks and twin rear shocks, but the front forks on early models had steel lower fork legs with external springs under a rubber gaiter. Later models used Ceriani forks with alloy lower fork legs, with later models adapted to accept a front disc brake. (Note that twin discs were never fitted to any production Triple, but twin-disc conversions are now available, although they're not cheap!). The main problem with the forks is that, like most forks, they can leak oil where the stanchions enter the lower fork legs. Check for leaks here – misting/oily dirt round the bottom of gaiters on early models is a tell-tale sign. This is often caused by pitting on the chrome of the fork stanchions, so check these carefully if they are exposed. The forks should travel up and down easily and smoothly.

Rear shock absorbers can leak and lose effectiveness. Check for leaks and rust or oil on the central shaft inside the springs. Replacements and upgraded items are readily available.

## Steering head bearings

As with most bikes, the steering head bearings can't be greased in situ so are often ignored, and often over-tightened, which results in a stiff and uneven operation.

With the bike on the centre stand, swing the handlebars from side to side to check for roughness or stiff patches. New bearings are quite cheap, but it's a big job to replace them. To check for play, take the bike off the main stand and rock it backwards and forwards with the front brake on – if there's play you can hear and feel it through the handlebars. In this case it may mean that the bearings simply need re-tightening, but until that's done, you won't know. T160s used taper roller head bearings which are less prone to wear.



Conical rear hub on a T150V.



Check fork stanchions for signs of pitting, which can cause oil leaks.

4 3 2 1

# 11 Paperwork

– correct documentation is essential!



## The paper trail

Classic bikes usually come with a large portfolio of paperwork accumulated and passed on by a succession of proud owners. This documentation represents the real history of the bike, and from it can be deduced the level of care the bike has received, how much it's been used, which specialists have worked on it and the dates of any major repairs and restorations. All of this information will be priceless to you as the new owner, so be very wary of machines with little paperwork to support their claimed history.

## Registration documents

All countries have some form of registration for private vehicles whether it's like the American 'pink slip' system or the British 'log book' system.

It is essential to check that the registration document is genuine, that it relates to the bike in question, and that all the vehicle's details are correctly recorded, including frame and engine numbers. If you are buying from the previous owner, his or her name and address will be recorded in the document: this will not be the case if you are buying from a dealer.

In the UK the current registration document is named 'V5C,' and is printed in coloured sections of blue, green and pink. The blue section relates to the bike's specification, the green section has details of the new owner, and the pink section is sent to the DVLA in the UK when the bike is sold. A small section in yellow deals with selling the bike within the motor trade.

In the UK, the DVLA provides details of earlier keepers of the vehicle upon payment of a small fee, and much can be learned in this way.

If you are importing a bike from abroad, the main document to have is the NOVA certificate (Notification of Vehicle Arrival), which means that all the relevant import duties and taxes have been paid. With this, registering the bike in the UK is quite straightforward, if a little bureaucratic. As well as the NOVA, you need to insure it (on the frame number), have the bike authenticated by the owners' club (TR3OC), provide the receipt of purchase, and complete a rather onerous form and send it all off to the DVLA. Without the NOVA document it can be a complete nightmare. Note that to register a Triple in the UK you no longer require an MoT, which is great news as it means you can register a restoration project as soon as you get it and not have to wait until it's restored and MoT'd before you can apply.

## Roadworthiness certificate (MoT)

In the UK it is no longer a requirement to have an MoT on any vehicle over 40 years old, so this includes all Triples; although, some owners choose to still MoT their bikes every year. Whatever the case, a good owner should have all the past certificates from when the bike did require an MoT (up to May 2018), and these show mileage and give a good idea of how the bike has been used.

It can be a good idea to ask that the bike is given an MoT as part of the deal, just for peace of mind. I think this depends on how mechanically minded you are. If you're not, and don't trust your own checks, then an MoT might be a good idea. But just remember that an MoT doesn't cover any part of the engine or gearbox.

# 14 Paint problems

– bad complexion, including dimples, pimples and bubbles



Paint faults generally occur due to accidental damage, a lack of protection/maintenance, or poor preparation prior to a respray or touch-up. Some of the following conditions may be present in the bike you're looking at.

## Orange peel

This appears as an uneven paint surface, similar to the appearance of the skin of an orange. The fault is caused by the failure of atomized paint droplets to flow into each other when they hit the surface. It's sometimes possible to rub out the effect with proprietary paint cutting/rubbing compound or very fine grades of abrasive paper. A respray may be necessary in severe cases. Consult a bodywork repairer/paint shop for advice on the particular tank or panel.



A high quality paint job on this Rocket III tank.

## Cracking

Severe cases are likely to have been caused by too heavy an application of paint (or filler beneath the paint). Also, insufficient stirring of the paint before application can lead to the components being improperly mixed, and cracking can result. Incompatibility with the paint already on the panel can have a similar effect. To rectify the problem, it is necessary to rub down to a smooth, sound finish before respraying the problem area.



Chipped paint.

## Crazing

Sometimes when the problems mentioned under 'Cracking' are present, the paint takes on a crazed rather than a cracked appearance. This problem can also be caused by a reaction between the underlying surface and the paint. Paint removal and respraying the problem area is usually the only solution.



Dented petrol tank.