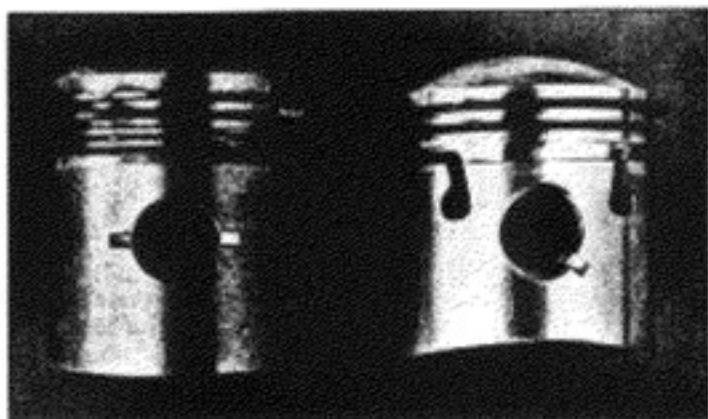


Crusader Sport exhaust pipe (top) looks crisper than the flabby curve of standard version, and also helps top end performance.



Also from the Crusader Sport, higher compression piston (right) gives more poke than flat-topped Bullet item.

contact on both halves of the inner spigot and a rougher finish on the outer faces. Clean everything carefully, apply RTV jointing to the outer face and pop it all back together. You get a slight boost to the compression ratio, total oil-tightness, no more blown gaskets and you can't burn the exhaust valve. If it occurs to you to ask why Enfield didn't do this sort of thing themselves, reflect that it's about all Velo ever did and look where it got them!

Incidentally, while you have the head off it's usually worthwhile running a drill down the retaining stud holes. The funny head nuts tend to squidge alloy into the threads on the studs, making head removal very difficult. If you get this problem don't hit it, the alloy used is soft, so try sticking a broom handle up the exhaust port and wiggling it. Providing the remaining faces on the engine and gearbox are reasonably intact, all remaining oil leaks can be cured with a dash of RTV. This may seem amazing, but it's not uncommon to find Enfields with rusty engine nuts.

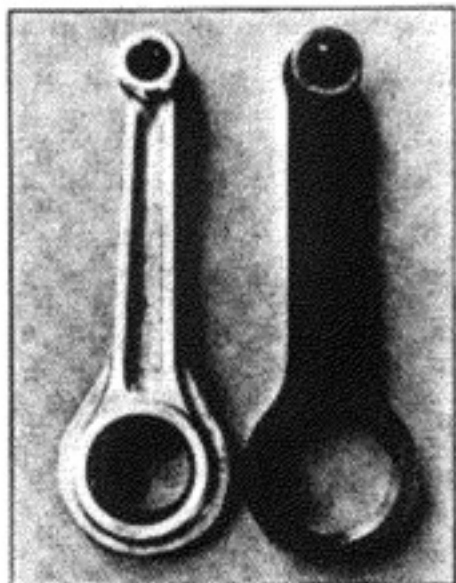
There are no other basic faults in the power train that will surrender to treatment so easily. The remaining faults are minor, however, and can be tuned out. Gear selection and clutch operation are both poor, but replacement of any clutch parts that look rough, particularly distorted plates, and careful attention to cable oiling and routing will render it all bearable. Gear selection is adjustable and easy to get at, and careful adjustment of the selector and the spring pressure on the selector fork will make gear changes possible, if not actually smooth. No bike made before the mid-sixties runs the right gearing for today's roads; early Bullets and all the Clippers are grossly under-gearred. This is great for trials work, the original destination of this engine, but produces overheating and rapid wear on motorways. The Bullets will pull the highest gearing available on the biggest wheels, but for use around town use one tooth down from this on

19in wheels, or the highest 21-tooth on 17in wheels, seems about right. Wheel size alters the trail slightly, but the general agreement that handling is best on 19in wheels is difficult to prove in actual back-to-back testing. Probably the big wheels just feel better.

So that's the Bullet as it's commonly experienced. The 500 is very rare and very nice, but I suspect that it's just another 500 single that goes bang if you really use it. Apart from extra stomp, in fact quite staggering torque from about 75rpm, the performance of the 500 is pretty similar to the 350.

Coming back to the original point concerning the Velo's retirement from the field of bikes that support their owners rather than the other way round, there is obviously a need for a working bike that will suit us poor fools still searching for the perfect line. Quite frankly, a standard Bullet running out at 82mph and putting down a standing quarter in about five minutes just doesn't make it. Furthermore, if you actually manage to get yer bog stock Bullet on to the perfect line it isn't likely to stay there very long. And don't do too much late braking! This is where all these other bits come in.

As noted, we have an indestructible bottom end attached to valve gear that will really rev. More power is simply a question of getting more of the mixture in and out faster. The engine in standard form is almost all bottom end, so an exhaust system about two feet shorter is a good first move. Naturally Enfield have just the thing; fitted as standard to the Crusader Sport, it's rather a neat Gold Star-like swept-back item that almost fits straight on — only the front stay needs re-positioning. It's impractical to alter the inlet tract length, but for diameter I've found that a 1 7/8in carb is about right. Both ports can be extensively opened up, providing you take care not to break into the inlet valve spring pocket, or take too much metal away from the fragile valve guides. Serious lunacy in fact demands guides in



Note how Velocette con-rod (right) is almost exactly the same length as the Bullet rod, which lasts well but will wreck a motor when it eventually expires. Rod swap could be a good tweak for post-vintage racing.

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