

From Machinery to ‘Mate’

That's my bullet, that is! Not an actual bullet from a gun, but a motorcycle that came with the slogan, "Made like a gun, goes like a bullet!" Originally manufactured by Royal Enfield of Redditch, England, this model traces its design back to a 1960 engine contained within a 1955 era frame. Although the English Company are long gone now, due to a twist in fate which is directly due to the bullet's suitability to off road conditions which lead to an unbeaten record of trails competition wins, made it the favoured motorcycle when the Indian Army were looking for suitable vehicles for their border patrols.

An Enfield partnership with Madras Motors produced 'Enfield India Limited' who were to assemble the bullets from parts sent over from England. Due to Indian government rules, Madras Motors had 51% share in the new venture, with Enfield having the remaining 49%. Apprentices were shipped over to the Redditch works and began learning how the motorcycles were assembled. At some later point, Enfield sold the manufacturing tools to Enfield India, which allowed the Indian branch to manufacture the bullets themselves. Around the late 1960's, the British motorcycle industry

was in great decline due to foreign competition and by 1970, Royal Enfield, along with the bullet was gone.

Well not quite gone. Enfield India continued to produce the bullet because it suited the local roads and conditions well, and in the event of a breakdown, it was easy to fix. There were a few minor upgrades introduced over the coming years, but even as late as 2006-7, you could still buy what was quintessentially a brand new 1950's motorcycle.

And this is really where my own relationship with these bikes begins.

I already owned a brand new Royal Enfield bullet. European regulations had meant a shake up leading to a new design of engine. Although it was still an overhead valve with push rod engine, it was bang up to date with electronic fuel injection, whilst the bike as a whole had managed to retain enough of the old style parts to make it a viable ‘modern old motorcycle’. It was a few months after buying the bike which I named ‘Thunderbolt’ due to the rather loud exhaust sound, that I came across an online auction for an older type military styled bullet.



royal enfield 500 bullet
in army trim

Item condition: **Used**
"in fair to good"
Ended: 23 Aug, 2013 14:46:49 BST

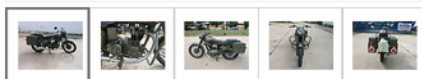
Sold for:

Postage:

Delivery:

Payments:

Returns:



My first encounter with what became a very unexplainably close relationship with a motorcycle.

I was fascinated by the looks of the bike. I kept telling myself that I did not want and could not really justify having a second bike (I was certainly not going to sell Thunderbolt!) but the advert kept creeping into my mind. The bike was located only ten miles from my base, and it just seemed like it was supposed to be. It became like something I had heard about called 'Synchronicity' where something is pre-ordained and everything just drops into place until the plan comes to fruition.

In the closing minutes of the auction, I slapped an irresponsibly high amount on the bike, and thankfully won it for well under my maximum bid. I had been in France during the auction, and would remain there for a few more weeks, but had arranged for the local Royal Enfield dealer to collect the bike and give it a good examination. I asked my friend 'Moo' who kindly went along to take many very detailed photographs, by which I could better see the condition of the bike.



Somehow, you can almost see sadness in a bike that has seen five owners sell it. Although in quite good mechanical condition and having obviously been looked after, there is still something in the bike's appearance that makes it look sad and dejected.

Having finally returned to England, Moo took me straight from the Eurostar terminal to see the bike and a good half hour was spent chatting with Chris whilst checking over the new additions to the 'Military' as it was temporarily called. I had ordered some parts

which had been delivered to Moo, who had painted the headlamp peak, before delivering everything to Chris and already, the bike was already looking more traditional.



I was quite used to riding bikes and had done so for many years, but I was in for a bit of a shock with this one.

As many of you may know, motorcycles all have a familiar control layout. left hand - clutch, right hand - throttle and front brake, left foot - gears, right foot - rear brake. Well, familiar to anyone that is used to post 1970's bikes... But not a Bullet!



For a start, When I said that very little had changed since the 1950's? Well, that included the control layout that most British bikes had. For a start, the rear brake and gears are on the opposite sides, with the brake pedal on the left, and as for the gears? For me, they proved very hard to get used to.

Firstly, in another reversal you move the gear pedal up for first, and then down for 2nd, 3rd and 4th. You can't just 'flick' it into gear either, otherwise you will end up in between the gears, going nowhere fast. To make a successful gear change on the Bullet, pull in the clutch, press the gear lever in the direction of the gear you want and wait a fraction of a second until it clicks in, then release the clutch.

So Moo left for home and after bidding Chris a slightly anxious sounding goodbye, I left with the intention of riding my new steed home.

First mistake - spending time driving in France and then getting straight on bike in England, and riding off down a country lane on the right hand side of the road.

Second mistake - assuming that I would adjust automatically to be able to use the new layout.

Third mistake - forgetting that drum brakes were not as efficient or light as disk brakes.

The result was very frightening. A car appeared around a left hand bend on what I thought was my side of the road. I expertly compounded all possible errors into one batch of sheer terror as I simultaneously pulled on the front brake lever as hard as I thought the disc would take (which did sod all braking on a drum brake system), whilst instinctively pushing down on what had always been the rear brake lever, which immediately changed from 2nd to 3rd gear. The 500cc Bullet seemed quite game for this as it leapt forward, leaving me to try and keep it on the road. Finally with the clutch pulled in, and a little more action with the front brake, we coasted to a stop, whilst I seized the opportunity to shake for a minute or so.

I will always feel a little guilty and wonder what the driver of the car thought about some old motorcycle coming around the bend at them... If that was you, Sorry!

Just to ensure that this bike could test me to and beyond my limits, it also had something extra on the gearbox called a neutral finder lever. This piece of additional excitement was actually quite a neat piece of design when you

had learnt to use it properly. At this stage I hadn't, and the bike seemed to take every opportunity it could find to play on this fact. Every time you change up a gear, there is a shaft that rotates. Royal Enfield had extended this shaft outside the gearbox and put a lever on it, so that every time you changed up a gear, the lever would move up a little more, until you got into 4th (there was no fifth!) where the lever would be at its highest position. The idea being that when you were just pulling up at a junction or coming to a stop, you put the heel of your boot on the lever pushing it down, and it clunked through all the gears into neutral, saving the usual epileptic bouncing on the gear lever to achieve the same effect.

By now, my shaking had stopped, and having mentally (and physically) switched sides of the road, I started off again. This time I got involved in a game of 20 questions, where the prize seemed to be the gift of life or death. It went something like this... Bike gets faster, pull in clutch try to remember the correct way to move gear lever, is it up for up, or is it down for up, or is it up for down??? CLUNK. let the clutch out slowly in the hope that I got it right.

Then having got either a false sense of security, or just bravado at having got the bike into 4th, I then came under the threat of assault by an approaching roundabout. Having sensibly left more distance to brake, I pulled in the clutch, and instinctively pushed the 'gear lever' down. This time, the obviously insulted bike decided to lock its back wheel until I took my foot off the brake pedal again.

I'll give the Bullet its due. For a heavy all metal bike, it stayed true to its course, so that by the time I had managed to think again, I was right at the give way line, still doing about 25 MPH. Luck was with me, and the gap between vehicles on the densely populated Kent road allowed me to shoe-horn the Bullet between them, thus ending up on the other side of the roundabout, where I pulled into the first drive on the left to watch some roofers replacing tiles on a house for a few moments.

By now, I was mentally defeated. I had spent all my life learning and practising everything I

could, electrical, plumbing, solving problems, and had in fact been sent away to one of those special schools for the gifted as a boy, but for all that I had learnt, nothing had prepared me for the feeling of defeat that I now felt.

I had been so cock sure that it was just a case of mind over matter to be able to operate the bike. So certain that it would be well within my capabilities, but no. With one of those 'Being brought down to earth with a clang' feelings, I realised that whatever people expected or thought of me, I had failed totally in riding a bike that I had already fallen in love with.

What the hell was I going to do now?

The bike stood silent as I had even managed to stall the engine whilst pulling up. In abject misery, I considered what to do. I was only a mile or so from the bike shop, and with a feeling of inevitability, I turned the bike round and nursed it back to Chris.

Upon my return, Chris looked up in surprise, and asked if there was anything wrong with the bike. By this time I had got my helmet off and upon seeing my face, he asked, "Are you ok?" I have never been too proud to admit when things have gone wrong, and told him that the bike was ok and that I was at fault as I just could not ride the bike.

He put the kettle on and we talked. There was no problem with leaving the bike there if I wanted to sell it again, but why don't I drink my coffee and try again? I was still gutted about my total abortive ride but what was even worse, was thinking about selling the bike which I had already become so attached to.

By now I was convinced that any further attempt to ride the bike would likely result in either coming off or locking the rear wheel and sliding into or under something. On Kent's over populated roads, this could become very serious or fatal. This was one of the few times in my life that I had to think thoroughly. Do I sell the bike or do I take the real risk that I may be killed whilst trying to learn to ride it? I so nearly decided to sell, but I couldn't, and so I finally took the second option.

The poor bike's gearbox was to suffer many more unexpected clutch-less gear changes, while the back brake put up with routinely being asked to lock the back wheel, but I finally arrived back at base. After another coffee, I rode to Penshurst station, which has a long road to a small and rarely used car park.

I went up and down the almost unused road for about an hour. Then I did it again. I returned the next day and the next and so on until I could ride the bloody bike properly and also do an emergency slow down (well, an emergency stop to those of you with disc brakes!).

Result - I could ride the bike, but for many months to come I would still occasionally get caught out with gear lever direction, or wrong pedal, but now... I can ride the bike and it is the greatest feeling ever!

It had been during the first few trying days that I had named the bike. There had been many factors that had come together and really done the job for me.

I like railways and a new steam engine had been built, the first since the 1960's.

The RAF had got some impressive fighter jets.

Trying to learn the bike had managed to make my head spin.

Also I had been in Florida, USA when a small 'Funnel cloud' had passed directly over our house. We had been transfixed by the experience and (Stupidly) stared out of the windows. First the wind, rain and debris had been travelling from right to left, and then as we watched, it went quiet for a moment before everything went in the opposite direction. Luckily, we were ok, but it did rip the roof off the end of the house.

All these events had one word in common, 'Tornado'.

The next few weeks saw many trips out and also many upgrades to not only Tornado, but also for Thunderbolt, My other Bullet. Now with two tanks to feed, along with various

upgrades, plus oil (for Tornado), servicing and new parts, the bikes were heading up a serious wealth extraction program on my wallet, especially as I went ahead with my plans to retro fit Tornado with older style parts.

The first casualty was the old ammeter. Nasty red and green thing, which was swapped for an original Lucas type, which I had got from Hitchcock's, a very famous company for Royal Enfield spares. Over time, nearly everything I bought came from them, and I often wonder if there was a period when the packing staff knew my name and address off by heart from all the stuff that I was continually ordering.



By this time, the Lucas ammeter had been joined by a reproduction smiths chronometric speedo, and an additional time piece that I named a 'Hitchclock' after the suppliers, plus a neat fuel tank cap badge!

The oil filler cap was also replaced with a version containing a temperature gauge.



Having taken a photo at a parking bay, I began to realise how effective the army green paint actually was. I had always ridden bikes with the headlamp on during the day, and had managed to source a very bright led lamp, but alas this only had main beam and was not suitable for after dark riding, but it was summer, and the days were long, so the LED was to stay for the moment anyway.

It was at this time that the rear indicators, tail and brake lamps, plus all the pilot and instrument illumination lamps were also changed to LED, whilst the battery was exchanged for a Lithium-ion type. That cost a bit but there is no acid or gel inside and they can be mounted at any angle. Lithium-ions are much the same as very big and powerful mobile phone or sat-nav batteries, and when they finally die, the inside powder makes good plant compost apparently!



An old style battery box to conceal the new battery and also a new pushrod cover helped Tornado's image along. All I needed now was to find the correct type and shade of paint.

Now that couldn't be hard could it???

I sent an email to the factory, asking what colour they used, but never did get a reply. When I looked at Tornado closely, I found the frame was one shade, the engine another, and the tank, mudguards, tool boxes and air filter box which were all gold lined, were a third shade. I can only assume that the factory mixed up the paint on the day, and it was never the same shade twice!

After trying various sources, I ended up with a can of Humbrol model paint. Before you scoff, enamel paint is very durable, has a good heat range, and is the stuff they put on ranges and cookers and the like. It's just good for models as well, that's all. My first go at painting the engine with 116 matt US army green went very well, but soon the shop ran out of that colour, so I was forced to go elsewhere.

The next supplier had the tins with a different design, apparently the production had moved to China. Happily, I purchased three cans, but that was when it all started to go wrong.

The first can didn't seem to match very well. They do say that you can have differences in shade between batches, but this was a totally different colour. Finally in desperation I opened all three tins, and got three different colours!



I later heard that Humbrol were switching production back to the UK and there was also a rumour about quality control problems. Luckily, the whole lot was not wasted as the lighter colour was a match for the tank, the darker for the engine, and the third was good enough for the frame.

There was a very strange thing about Tornado's original paint. All the gold lined parts would go almost white when wet, which was very

worrying the first time I got caught in a rain storm. I had no idea what was happening as Tornado turned white, but all was ok as soon as the water dried off.



So there you go! When I get wet and cold and turn white, Tornado does too!



Having finally resolved the paint problems, the engine and primary chain cover start to look a bit more in keeping with a much loved and treasured motorcycle. The gearbox is next!



As the paint dried, the new rubbers arrived!



Nowhere to park? Just say it's an exhibit!



A few old army clothes, and a quick twist of the photo editing software, and anybody can become Capt. 'Bike' Biggles!



Tornado rests in the shade of a WWII pillbox.



Before you say that the boot polish will wash off in the rain... It doesn't. It seems to bond to rubber, gets rid of the white powder, and keeps it shining like new. Put it on, brush it off, do it a second time. And... I mean real black polish, not that drippy timesaving liquid stuff for lazy people.



A trip to Biggin hill airport had a surprise...



We met a Redditch built Super Meteor.



Tornado's time as an Enfield was drawing to a close as soon it would be time for Royalty to appear. Royalty had certainly been booked and paid for, and was expected to arrive the next morning!



A brand new army green canvas Royal Enfield rain cover completed the transformation, and now I was contented, knowing that my bike could hold it's headlamp up high, wherever it was parked!



The new RE points cover with gold lining.

That very next morning, work started early! The points cover was changed to something more in keeping with the occasion whilst letters were peeled, paint touched up, rubbed down and new transfers got ready. With due ceremony, the finished work was revealed with a fanfare of, "Ruddy 'ell, you don't half look good mate!".

After the months of toiling and upgrading, Tornado had finally made the ultimate accolade, promotion to a fully fledged Royal Enfield. I was so proud it brought a tear to my eye. Or had that been the fumes from the cellulose thinners that I was still trying to come to terms with?

Then it started to fall apart!

You get a certain vibration from these single cylinder engines, and the side effects usually include very important bolts, washers and nuts falling off whilst you are riding along.

There is something known as loctite. It's a sort of thread gummer. you put it on the threads and put the nuts back on. It doesn't glue them solid, but just makes them stiff to turn, so they don't vibrate off. All Enfield's should come with a tube of this stuff.



Where's it gone? A very large and important stud that should be holding engine and gearbox together.

After a few weeks of checking for loose studs, bolts nuts, washers, and just about anything else, you should have the problem just about licked. But be warned... If you are riding along and you think the bike feels different, don't fall into the trap of thinking that it was always like that, STOP, GET OFF, and have a good check around. It happened to me and I assumed that I was only imagining an increase in vibration.

Poor Tornado! Good design too, to carry on with one major engine stud missing and a second one loose. After that fright, I checked regularly and with the help of the loctite, nothing has come loose for some time now.



Totally chuffed with Tornado!

I learnt about a cafe called the Hollyville which is near to Brands hatch racing circuit. Every Sunday morning, the old British motorcycles turn up whilst their riders take time out to chat about spanners and scoff a traditional English breakfast. Having got a spare helmet, I set off with Moo at about ten in the morning, arriving just over half an hour later. Tornado performed faultlessly all the way.

The place lived up to the hype. there were many, many old bikes there and it quite gave me the idea of what a typical rocker type cafe would have look like in the fifties and sixties. The food was good and honest, and a good time was had by all, even if I had felt a little awkward with a more modern Royal Enfield, which I had parked around the side of the building. Breakkie finished and Tornado took Moo and myself to the river at Eynsford,

although we gave the ford a miss and used the bridge. It was not until we were going up a very steep hill about 200-300 yards (or metres if you like them better) from Moo's house that the clutch cable snapped. Luckily, the gearbox went straight into one of those 'false neutrals' thus taking the bike out of gear so I was able to stop normally. It finally dawned upon me why there seems to be a 'neutral' gap between each gear. It's for when the clutch cable goes!



Where the gearbox end goes.

Most Enfield guys agree that you should always carry a spare clutch cable, but there are two schools of thought. One that says it will never happen to me so I won't bother, and the other that thinks the same but carries one anyway. A few days previously, there had been advice on Hitchcock's forum about the need to carry a cable or two, and thankfully, I had read it and what with Tornado having two large metal pannier boxes, I had done as suggested.

Moo waited patiently for about 8 minutes. I had never changed any cable on a bullet before and took it slowly, ensuring I got the routing of the cable correct. After finishing and a final adjustment, we were on our way up the hill again! I would have been totally screwed if it wasn't for that new cable. A replacement was ordered the next morning!

"It will never happen to me" is something that does not apply to a Bullet. I am not saying that

they break down a lot, just that they need regular adjustment as any 1950's machinery would, and if you fail to do that, you run the risk of breaking down!



It's not too hard to learn either. You don't need to strip the engine, just open a cover or two and follow the manual to check all is well.

The following Sunday, I was off again to the Hollyville cafe. This time, I parked right out front amongst the older bikes. I had already apologised to Tornado for parking him around the back. I was extremely proud of my bike and from now on, he would be at the front!



Umm, yes... That's something else that seems to happen to Bullet owners. You start off innocently buying a machine because it looks great. then you get a bit intimate with the spanners, getting to know your steed, then before you know it, you have given it a name and it is now known as 'he' or 'she'. Well Tornado is an army model and so that made him a 'he'. You see these bikes have so much character, that they cease to be machinery and become a living entity.

Did you know that there is a motorcycle god that is worshipped and revered, where riders go in order to have their motorcycles blessed? You might think it would be a huge bike or the most

powerful or maybe even a best seller, but no... The motorcycle god is actually a Royal Enfield 350cc Bullet. That is why our Bullets are alive. They came out of the same factory as a deity!



Here at the Hollyville cafe, Tornado is parked next to another military bullet, and two bikes to the left is a third silver bullet. I got to know Les and his silver bullet over the following weeks and asked what his bike was named. Les had been trying to think of a name when I said that there was only one possible name for a silver bullet, "Ammo" It was few days later when I read with a big smile that Les had announced his bullet had been named 'Ammo'!

There was one other Royal Enfield at the cafe, but this one was not a bullet, but an English built 1970 Interceptor mark II 700cc twin. It automatically explained the 'royal' part about Enfields, for this bike looked majestic enough to be a pureblood. It also had a very nice original British pre focus headlamp reflector which most of the other old bikes had. I swear



I caught Tornado looking at it. He wanted one, and I was not about to stand in the way of my bullet's happiness.

Meanwhile there was the second Tuesday of the month visit to the local Kent group of the Royal Enfield Owner's Club meeting which was several miles away at Luddesdown. Winter was well and truly drawing in, with ever shortening evenings, and I knew that I would have to ride back in the dark. I swapped the LED headlamp for a motovision halogen 55W lamp, and having checked to see it was working, I got all my gear on and headed off.

On buying Thunderbolt, I had installed a Neolite reflector with a motovision lamp and it was a stunning success. It had to be about the brightest combination on the market and had served me very well at night. However when I had done the same for Tornado, I had overlooked a very basic and important point. Thunderbolt has a modern three phase electrical generator, where as Tornado had some old magnets and bits of wire spinning around inside somewhere.

The trip started well. The light worked and the ammeter indicated that the battery was charging. It is usual for the ammeter to show discharging when the engine is ticking over, whilst stopped at a junction, but it then picks up and goes back into charging as you start off again. but this was not happening. At every junction, the needle would slip further into discharge, and then back into charging, but each time it showed less and less charging.

By the time I was about ten minutes away, the needle was only going between big discharge and at best, small discharge. I was thankful for the high capacity Lithium-ion battery, but knew it was being drained at the similar rate of 'a lot' at junctions to 'a bit' when moving. Luckily, the battery held out, and by the time I pulled up at the meeting, it was already early twilight

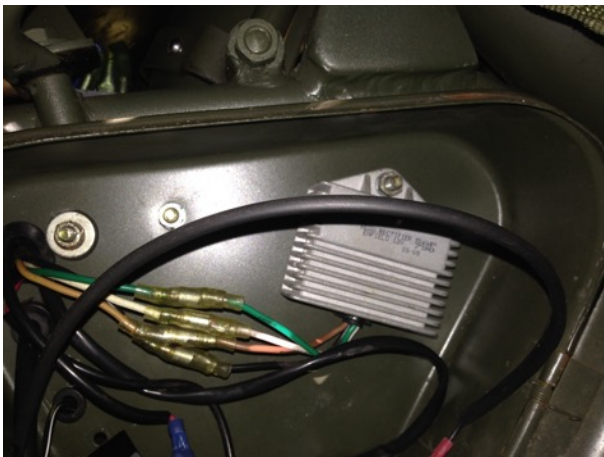


The meeting went very well and when I left, the ammeter went straight into charge. things were looking up! Then they started looking down again. Not really knowing all the electrics, I stopped as the charging rate failed again, and tried to see what was wrong. Well, the regulator/rectifier which controls the rate of charging was missing. It should have been under the seat to keep it out of the rain, but allow air to circulate and cool it.

I did find it after a while. Some previous owner had moved it to the left side toolbox. It had been quite happy there, just running the LED's and electrics, but the second I started to use the 55W headlamp, it got rather hot. With no air flow to cool it, it just kept getting hotter and working less and less. I waved air into the toolbox to help cool the regulator as I was not in a position to try disconnecting and moving it in the dark with only a torch. Cooling it would have probably been faster by throwing a couple of strips of bacon into the toolbox and cracking an egg over it, but alas, I was clean out of both.

After a good 20 minutes or so, We started off again. this time the roads were quieter, and the need for stopping was greatly reduced. although as expected, the charging system was starting to dip again, good progress was made

and with one final 10 minute stop for a further cooling, Tornado got me back safely.



“Something’s cooking!”

The regulator was newer, from 2005, and so I decided to replace it with a different system which I mounted under the seat. I noticed from Tornado's wiring diagram, that it showed a 40W maximum headlamp bulb, but I had been running a 55W, which couldn't have helped matters, however synchronicity was about to pop it's head in and set things right again.

Obtaining a BPF headlamp had taken a while but a real Gentleman on Hitchcock's forum by the name of Adrian offered to swap my brand new Neolite headlamp for an old Lucas pre focus! He thought he was getting the best deal as it was a new headlamp, whereas I thought the same, as getting an old Lucas had so far proved rather difficult!

The BPF came and I was delighted, Adrian got the Neolite for his newer bullet and he was also delighted. Great when it goes like that! The old BPF lamps were tungsten filaments like the traditional light bulbs, but there was also a newer Halogen type available. Even better they were rated at 35W. Obviously they were not going to be as bright as 55W, but then Tornado couldn't run that anyway.

Having installed headlamp reflector and bulb, the setup was found to still be bright enough to cruise at 50 MPH (80 KPH for foreigners) down a country lane at night.



It's something about the lens patten and logo!

I had some good ideas and a few bad ones concerning how Tornado should look. It was mainly a case of trial and error. Most of my ideas worked and looked fine, but there were a couple of notable failures.



The army bar stand for soft ground, although not exactly a failure, it only lasted a few hours. It looked great but had not been finished correctly and so it did not retract enough. I heard it scrape on the road at the first left hand corner, and sadly, off it came again.

Hopefully I will get time to grind it correctly and re-fit it. It was cool, and would be useful.

The prize for the shortest time on my bike goes to the fishtail exhaust pipe add-on. I pushed it on, took a few pictures and took it off again, I never even got to tighten it up. I gave it to my friend Moo as it fits her vacuum cleaner and she finds it very useful to clean her curtains.



Something a bit too fishy!

The next part to get my attention was the back of the bike. It had two metal panniers, known as biscuit tins, which a previous owner had screwed Lucas pattern red reflectors on. They looked quite good and army'ish, but they had been screwed to the bottom of the tins as the padlock and hasps (yes, really!) were at the top. Usually these tins were bolted in, but these had got cable straps doing the job instead. I wanted to make the tins removable, but how could I accomplish this?

The Lucas pattern reflectors were more 60's-70's and a little too late for the look that I wanted to achieve on Tornado and so I obtained a pair of metal and glass 1950's "Fairylite" reflectors of the same type that the British army had actually used. I swapped the tins to the opposite sides and also turned them around so the padlocks were at the front. This allowed the slightly smaller Fairylite reflectors to be screwed above the tin's holder frame and voila! The tins could be removed.

I also took the opportunity to paint an emergency number plate on the back of the bike, just in case the plastic one ever got broken. I'm always thinking of useful things such as this!



The Bullet Boogy-man cometh!



Stops damage to the plastic one when off road.

Tornado may be fitted with Avon road tyres, and he does way a ton, but we do like to spend time travelling off road, or on the local byways.

It is so nice to be able to take a track, and then stop to cook breakfast or lunch, before continuing on, with other wonders of the countryside to discover.

There is still nothing to compare to that which mother nature can show and teach to you.



Byway Breakfast, home cooked is best!

Finally, I am close to achieving what I set out to create. Not so much a copy of a 1950's bike, or an authentic army bike, but my bike, my bullet! I could have painted out the gold pinstripes to make it more authentic, but this motorcycle was hand built and the pinstripes were hand painted. I appreciate all the craftsmanship that went into Tornado and so I am happy the way he is. Even the badly painted "IGON" on the handle bars will be preserved, which I guess was put there to remind a previous owner to turn on the ignition before trying to start the bike. Either that, or it had a Russian name at some point.



So great just to ride this bike. So different too!

Christmas day 2014 was an eye opener. We had turned up at Moo's for a visit and I had planned to take Tornado onward to visit family for dinner, but the trip to Moo's had seen the tank go onto reserve, with no open fuel garage within range to re-fill.



"Tornado's finest hour!"

I broke the news to Tornado, and can say that I never saw such a look from my bullet as I got then.



OUCH!

I snapped this picture and went and showed Moo. She has also got used to Tornado and so she agreed to take me quite some distance in her car to a garage that was always open.

You can't put a price on a friendship like that!

One plastic can and five litres of 98 octane later, and tornado and I were off. It was very quiet on the roads, being christmas day, and the ride was a real treat.



I often go to the Hollyville cafe, and there are always many old and great British bikes there. Proof of when we led the world in motorcycle production. It's a proud heritage.



Still with tinsel, Tornado looks grand!



Having joined the REOC, I found this old plate and simply just had to have it. I told Tornado it is a medal! He certainly deserves it, putting up with the abuse from my learning the controls !



Tornado's 'medal' installed on boxing day!



I guess Moo was wrong in the end. She did say I was not the type to settle down with a family. Well I have got my family, but instead of having two mouths to feed, I have two tanks instead!

So where do I go from here? Well, pretty much anywhere I want on Tornado or Thunderbolt. Ah yes, Thunderbolt, my other Bullet. That's another story for another time, but it wouldn't be fair to leave you without a picture...

Scaleyback - 2015

Thunderbolt, a young, eager bullet with much to prove.