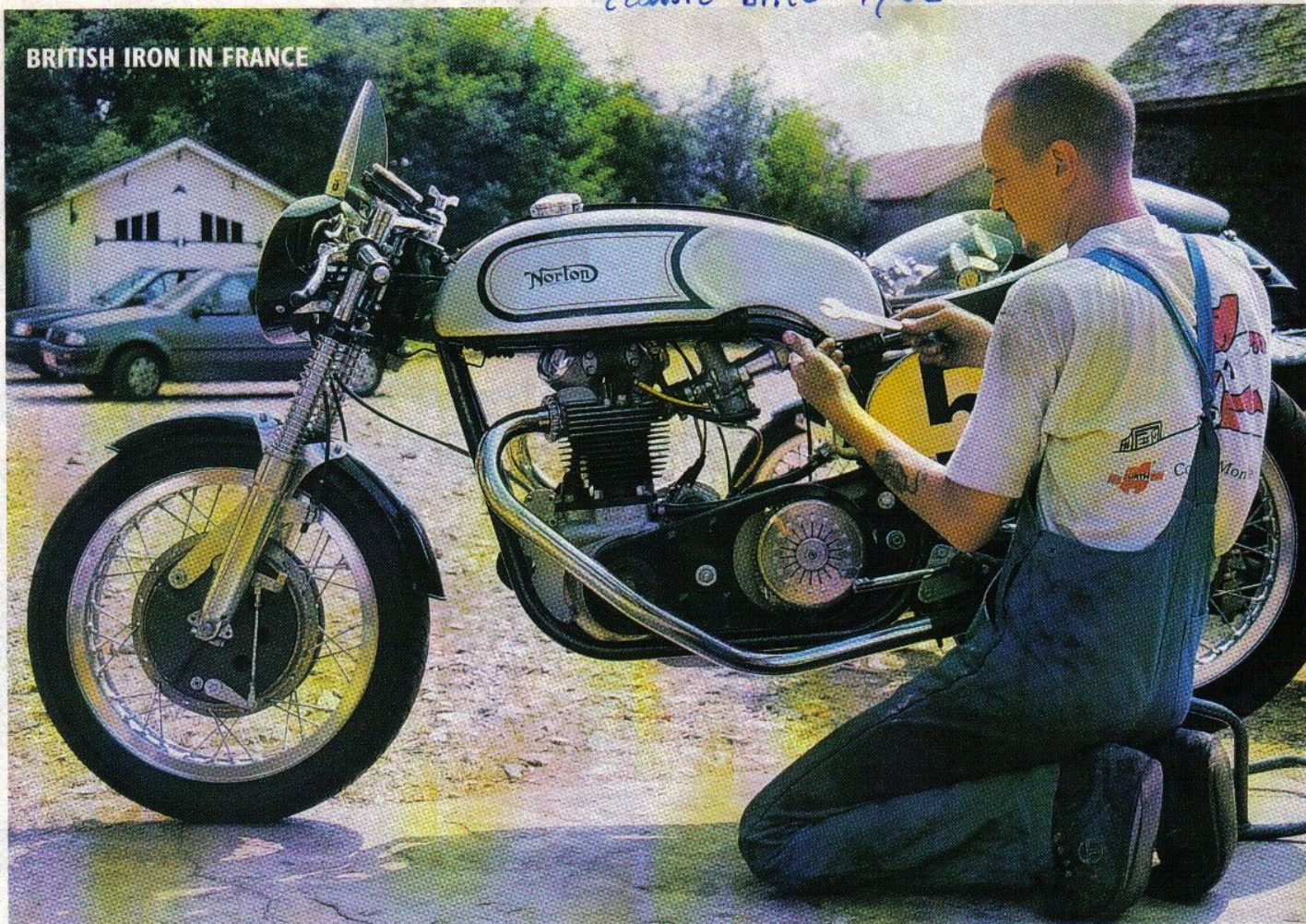


BRITISH IRON IN FRANCE



DOMIRACER? JE L'ADORE

Somewhere deep in France is a corner that will be forever England – a workshop which sings an enduring hymn to classic British machinery including this immaculate sporting replica

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY: **BART EZENDAM**

Roland Chatokhine may live on a farm in the heart of the Gallic countryside but he is not your typical Frenchman. For a start he is no chauvinist. More importantly he loves classic British machinery – and he likes to quaff the odd pint of Guinness.

I discover this by chance when I come across the workshop he runs with son Frank in Ourray, three miles from Chartres in western France.

I am on my way from my home in Holland to to visit my parents at their residence in France when I stop to help a Triumph Bonneville which has broken down by the roadside.

The Bonnie rider is trying to reach the Chatokhine atelier (workshop) and readily assures me that, not only is Chatokhine an ace mechanic, but he

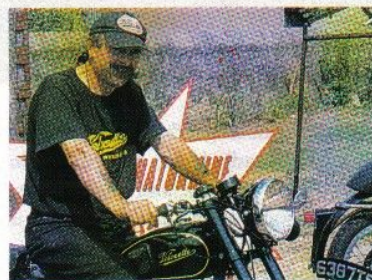
also has a truly amazing collection of British bikes. My appetite has been whetted and after we manage to get the machine going I duly follow the Bonnie rider which is how I end up whiling away a couple of hours chatting with Roland on his farm over a can or two of Guinness.

He then motions me to a huge barn in the middle of a field that turns out to be his workshop. He opens the doors and my eyes are dazzled by more than 50 motorcycles including four Velocette Thruxtons with a fifth in boxes awaiting a rebuild, Triumph Daytona, Norton 650 SS, Ariel HT trial bikes, Cotton Telstar racer, various BSAs and Matchlesses. The list goes on.

But the pick of the pack has to be an impressive Norton Domiracer replica lovingly built by Roland.

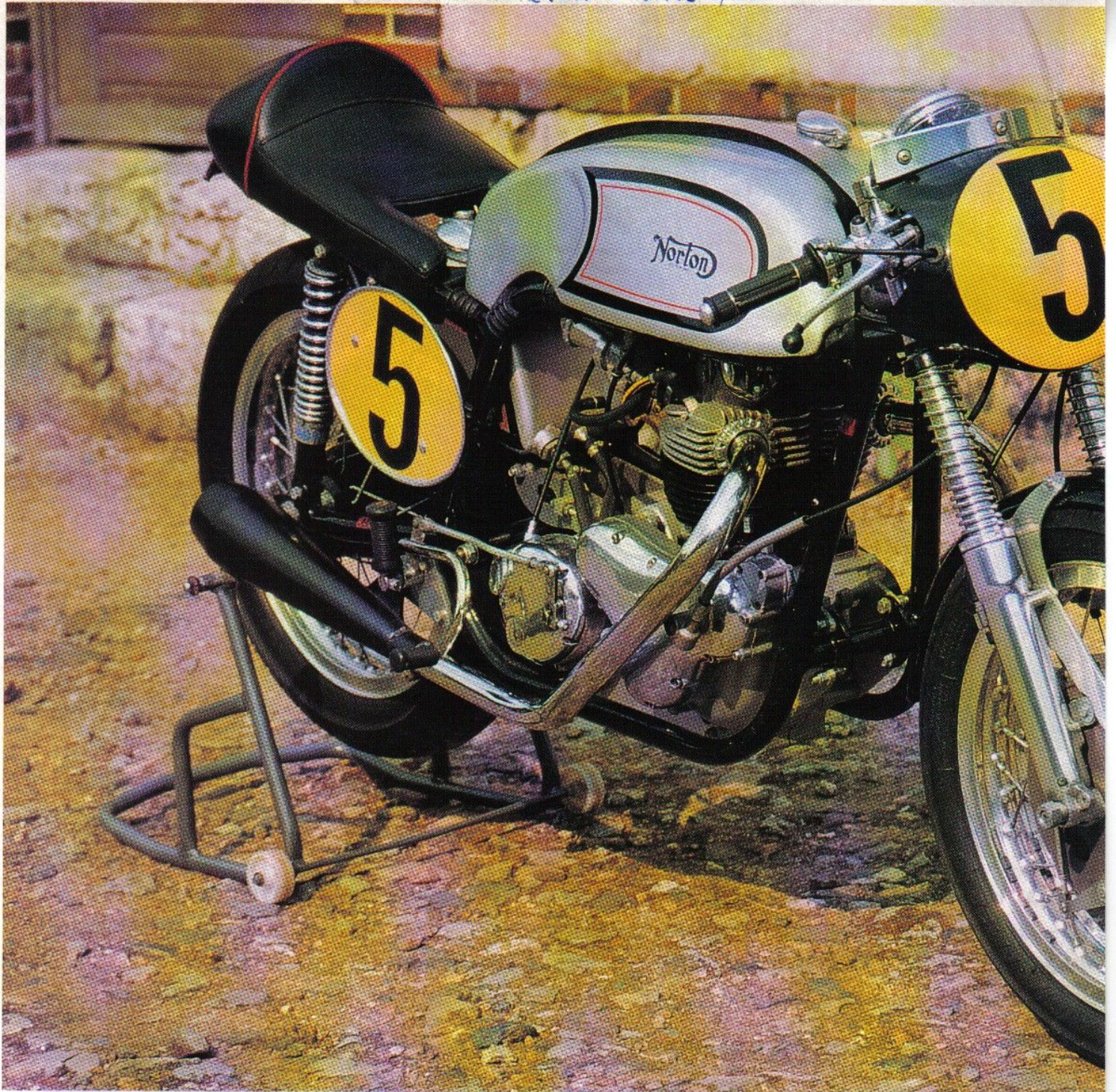
Top: spannerman Frank Chatokhine makes some final adjustments to the Domiracer

Right: Roland Chatokhine on one of his four Velocette Thruxtons



He wanted the looks of the works bike but added his own touches such as the big Ceriani front brake. The fuel tank features Norton's standard livery. The bike is pictured here naked but there is a replica full fairing in white.

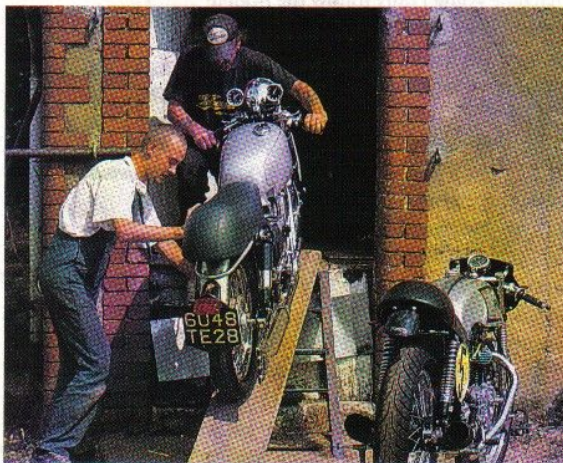
The 88SS engine has been tuned to the hilt and produces a claimed 55bhp at the crank. The replica frame is from Northampton Norton specialist ▶



◁ Mick Hemmings, the front forks are standard Roadholders, but cut down with Manx bottom and top crowns. Hagon shocks are used at the back as is a simple Triumph conical hub.

Roland reckons that with its generous powerband and a ceiling of at least 8000rpm, four speeds are enough on the twin. A Manx cluster is used with a modern clutch and belt-drive.

The engine spins on a one piece forged Nourish crankshaft and Superblend bearings. The full race camshaft turns on needle roller bearings, the pushrods are lighter and stronger, and the big valve head has been ported and gasflowed.



Bringing a Velo Thruxton into the sunlight from the workshop

Two 30mm Concentrics and an authentic exhaust system have been fitted. The megaphones have no baffles so you get that period – and beautiful – engine sound. Electrics are by a Lucas racing magneto.

Just look at the pictures and you will understand how much loving care went into creating this beauty, which Roland has raced for four seasons. He says it can top 125mph.

Beautiful though the Domiracer is, there is no room for sentiment in business so Roland has now sold it to finance other projects.

That just leaves the other 50-plus bikes in the collection. Not to mention

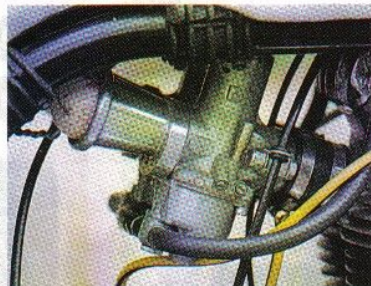
clomic bike
4/2002



Hagons are used at the back of the Domiracer and Triumph conical hub



Smiths magnetic rev counter is fitted



Golfballs acts as carburettor plugs

the day-to-day work of mending and repairing bikes. Roland started as a mechanic in 1972 and in all that time has only worked on British machines. He has repaired them, rebuilt them and raced them. An habitue of the annual Coupes Moto Legende meeting at Montlhery, south of Paris, Roland has competed in every discipline except for speedway and ice racing.

Motorcycles are, and always will be, his life. So much so that he doesn't even have a licence to drive a car. Any long distance travel is undertaken on his trusty BSA Spitfire with Steib sidecar on which he has clocked up a staggering 250,000 miles – the last 30,000 of them

Tour de force: the 885S engine has been tuned to the hilt and produces a claimed 55bhp at the crank

after an engine rebuild.

His children have been bitten just as badly by the biking bug. Son Frank competes in trials and road racing on British iron while daughter Laurence rides a Ducati Monster 600, outgunning Roland and Frank on their Velos.

Chatokhine pere et fils are always delighted to meet any passing British enthusiasts. And if you happen to be unfortunate enough to need spares or repairs, the workshop has nearly every conceivable part for a BSA, Triumph or Norton on its shelves.

And what isn't there can usually be delivered in two three days.

I for one certainly know where I am

DOMIRACER REPLICA

ENGINE

engine type	ohv four-stroke
cooling	air
configuration	parallel twin
bore x stroke	66 x 72.6mm
capacity	497cc
compression	11:1
lubrication	dry sump

tuning One piece forged Nourish crankshaft, ported and flowed big valve head, camshaft runs in needle roller bearings. Sweptback big-bore exhausts with megaphones

CARBURATION

manufacturer	Amal
size	2 x 30mm Concentrics

TRANSMISSION

primary drive	belt
clutch	diaphragm
gearbox	four-speed
final drive	chain

ELECTRICS

Lucas racing magneto ignition

CYCLE PARTS

Frame Double cradle, works Domi replica in 531 Reynolds tube **Suspension** front: Cut-down Roadholder front fork with Marx bottom and top crowns. Rear: Hagon twin shocks. **Wheels** Akront Aluminium, front: 18 x 2in rear: 18 x 3in. **Brakes** front: 230mm 4ls Ceriani. Rear: sls Triumph conical hub. **Tyres** Avon (racing)

PERFORMANCE

top speed	125mph est
horsepower	55bhp

going to stop the next time I am touring France on my recently acquired 1980 750cc Triumph Bonneville.

And maybe over another Guinness or two I will be able to talk Roland into letting me have a spin through the French countryside on one of those wonderful Thruxtons.

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