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Yamaha T80 Townmate - The Story

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YAMAHA T80 TOWNMATE – THE STORY

After some discussion with Richard Evans it was agreed that I would "acquire" a 1984 Yamaha T80 Townmate. Yamaha's equivalent to the Honda Cub but with a four speed box and shaft drive. The bike last ran in 1989 and had been stored partially stripped in a lock up garage for thirteen years. Having slid it, minus front wheel and mudguard, up a plank on its side, into my estate car I took it home.

In my garage I took stock, cobwebs, rust and mud were the stand out features but I was convinced that somewhere beneath this "patina" stood something worth rescuing.

In the next few weeks the leg shields, mirrors and front rack surfaced from Richard's lock up to re-join the bike.

Now was the start of my problems, the cleaning up was doable but no spark - no go. I checked all the wiring, changed the coil, plug, HT lead, CDI unit all to no avail.

Sometime later Richard rang me to say that he was at motorcycle dealer that was closing down, and that there was a T80 engine complete with carb for sale for £50, what did I think? As the existing engine and carb in the bike were so severely corroded that I had doubts as to whether the carb would ever work, I asked him to grab it. When I got the engine home I put it in the bike in the hope that a change of rotor and trigger unit for the CDI ignition in the "new" engine might give me a spark – no chance.

A few weeks later Richard came round to see if he could help. That morning before he arrived I casually kicked the bike over and unbelievably it sparked. With the plug in, when Richard arrived it started and ran, problem solved I thought, no way. For the next week the bike started and ran but then suddenly back to square one, no spark.

Returning to checks, I took out the ignition switch, a sealed unit but with a small hole in it, blasted it with contact cleaner and an airline, no spark. I made a jumper lead to bypass the ignition switch, no spark. I checked the rotor to trigger unit clearance, no spark. By now I was ready to put the bike back in my car and take it to the tip but not wanting to be beaten, persevered.

I regularly checked the bike until one day, and I still don't know why, when I kicked it over I had a spark at the plug. I had previously stripped and cleaned the carb so I put the plug in and in excited anticipation, kicked it over, it burst into life first kick and sounded so sweet, eureka.

It was now time to square up with Richard, "what do I owe you" I asked? "Just pay me for the engine" he said. I couldn't believe his generosity, unbelievable!

Over the next ten days I started the bike every morning and afternoon, first kick every time. By now convinced that my problems were over I booked it in for MOT so that I could register it as historic. I had already stripped the brakes and suspension so it was ready to go, I must say the ride to the MOT station was a new experience, wet weight fully fuelled, 83kg.

And the result, a pass with no advisories.

Let's hope that I get many happy days riding this mega (8.5 bhp) machine.

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO RICHARD,
AS HE SAID – "THAT'S WHAT MATES ARE FOR"