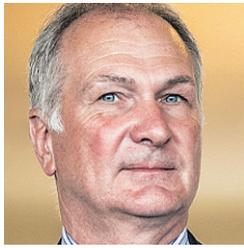


Indian-built '59 Royal Enfield Bullet wins award



Nigel Matthews
COLLECTOR CLASSICS



Shad Lievesley's ride was judged the best Royal Enfield at Saturday's All-British Field Meet. PNG FILES

The sight of Shad Lievesley arriving on the VanDusen Garden lawn on his motorcycle at last Saturday's All-British Field Meet took me back to 1970, when I spent the day at the Goodwood racing circuit with my formula one racing hero Graham Hill.

The déjà vu moment was Hill's crash helmet paint scheme and the motorcycle I was riding at the time.

I immediately noticed Lievesley's crash helmet painted in the same colours Hill had adopted from the cap design of the London Rowing Club — black with white oar-shaped tabs. The late Hill's racing driver son Damon and grandson Josh also use the same design for their helmets.

Then there was Lievesley's 1959 Royal Enfield Bullet. I wandered

over and admired the Royal Enfield remarking that they still make them in India, to which he replied, this is an Indian-manufactured motorcycle and it bears an Indian license plate. Upon closer inspection indeed the rubber knee grips on the fuel tank

were inscribed Royal Enfield India. The Enfield Manufacturing Company Ltd. dates back to 1893. Manufacturing bicycles registered as Royal Enfield, they built their first motorcycle in 1901. During the First World War they supplied motorcy-

cles to the British War Department and were also awarded a contract to supply the Imperial Russian Government.

World War Two also involved a contract to manufacture motorcycles, the most famous being the light-

weight 125-c.c Flying Flea, designed to be dropped by parachute with airborne troops.

During the 1950s the Indian government was looking for a suitable motorcycle for its army and police force to use patrolling the country's border. They chose the Royal Enfield 350-C.C. Bullet, and in conjunction with Madras Motors in India created "Enfield India." The tooling was sold to them and shipped from England so that they could go into production.

Royal Enfield is the oldest motorcycle manufacturing name in the world; you can still purchase a new Bullet which is the longest production run of any model motorcycle manufactured — from 1949 to today. And it has not changed a great deal in looks.

Lievesley's original survivor example won the Hagerty feature marque award for the best Royal Enfield at this year's All-British Field Meet.

Nigel Matthews is the global director of client services for Hagerty Insurance Agency, LLC — Hagerty is the world's largest specialist provider of collector car insurance and provides many resources that support the classic car lifestyle. Contact him at nmatthews@hagerty.com or visit hagerty.ca

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