

Suzuki GT750B based café racer

My GT750R

Warning! Some people may find the notes below offensive, some may find it a form of sacrilege, however, as it is MINE I will do as I please!

This is work in progress and taking a lot longer than I had thought (A bit like decorating the house).

1. The incentive

In 1976 I bought a brand new Suzuki GT750A, a shiny 'Gypsy Candy Red' model, the first with the petrol filler and radiator caps under a locked flap. This bike was my sole means of transport and carried me many miles, many of which were on a Friday night and early Monday morning to and from Warminster in Wiltshire where I was posted whilst serving in the Army (REME) to my home in Kent. One thing I really wanted to do was to turn it into a café racer, but as I have stated it was my only transport and couldn't afford to be without it for any length of time, so any type of heavy modification was out of the question. In 1988 my wife and I moved to the midlands for my job, this sort of forced the sale of the bike, much to my regret.

I had a bit of a lay-off from two wheeled transport then got back into it again around 1996, had a variety of Suzuki's and now run a K1300S as my main bike. In early 2012 I really wanted to get hold of a GT750 again so started a search on EBAY, I wasn't after a show room condition one but one in a basically sound and running condition, this I found over on the East coast and bought it. I then spent a few months going over it with a fine tooth comb checking on what had been tinkered with, which was inevitable for its age. I still find it amazing how people can botch even simple things like leaving the steel sleeves out of the centre of various grommets etc, but it was in a basically good condition.

Living in the midlands the big meet-up point is Matlock Bath, a place that has a mysterious feel of a sea-side town but being just about smack bang in the middle of the country a sea-side town it is not! During the summer the place is crammed with just about every type and model of bike you can imagine, it was whilst there that my desire to build a GT750 café racer was re-kindled and set me off down the path of building one. The inspiration was a guy who had a TR750 replica, also using a GT750 as a donor. For quite a while we spoke and he told me of his escapades to build the bike, this is what I wanted to do, very much! Mine will not be a TR750 replica, rather a tribute to it, much based on the TR' but with my wants and trial parts.

2. The start...

Once again I scoured EBAY for a suitable victim to start on; this was going to be the core of my maniacal Frankenstein'ish desire to rip a body to pieces only to rebuild it in a different form. At this stage I hadn't a really firm picture in my mind of what I wanted or what was required to achieve it, only that I wanted to do it!



I found a 'B' model that was in a bit of a sorry state but once again in basically sound form, it was from this point that things started to gel in my mind, the engine, it's too wide with its bulbous timing and alternator covers, they've got to be put on a diet. I chose a 'B' model as it was the last of the GT750 production run and in my opinion a bit of a hybrid, part GT750 but adopting parts from the bike that was to replace it and thought if I was going to do this then do it to a machine that wasn't fully GT750 in the first place. It came with a Dresda swinging arm, although much lighter than the original it had to go. The electrics, all well and good in their time, very basic, being simple they're fairly reliable but it all had to go, every piece of wire and control item such as regulator, flasher unit all had to go, they did. The three instrument cluster – gone, handle bar switches, all gone.

All the various tabs welded to the frame for holding all of the above items plus the oil tank, the radiator fan, the saddle, the wiring connectors all fell off once confronted by the angle-grinder. The brackets that hold the pillion footpegs and exhausts, they too gave up when shown the grinder. I wanted better suspension so the forks did a runner along with the callipers. I now had the very bare bones of MY bike.

3. The ideas...

Before I go any further I will mention the fact that although I work in a normal household garage it maybe better equipped than some, with a Harrison 11" Lathe, a milling machine I converted to a CNC a few years ago, a TIG welder and sundry other power and hand tools. All of which have been put to use on this project. The reason for mentioning this is that it allows me to make just about anything (within reason) that I may need for this project. The TIG welder is a particularly great bit of kit, it allows me to weld steel, aluminium, stainless and braze, it can also be used as a conventional ARC welder.

I'll also mention that my job is as an electronics design engineer so the electrics side of this project presents no problem and I will be designing my own ignition system when I get around to the engine. The instruments will be digital and have no handlebar switches, only buttons that will be monitored by a processor and acted on when pressed.