

# The last of the last

In late 1996, or early 1997, I can remember reading somewhere, that the last ever batch of brand-new Indian Lambretta Grand Prix 200s had arrived at AF Rayspeed.



Only three miles from new – the last Indian Lambretta officially imported into the UK

**T**his must have been in one of the scooter publications, like *Scotering* or the LCGB club magazine, *The New Jet Set*. As usual I couldn't wait for these publications to arrive as this was pre-internet days (in our house anyway), so this was where I found out about the stuff I was interested in and what was happening within the scene.

## TURNING DREAMS INTO REALITY

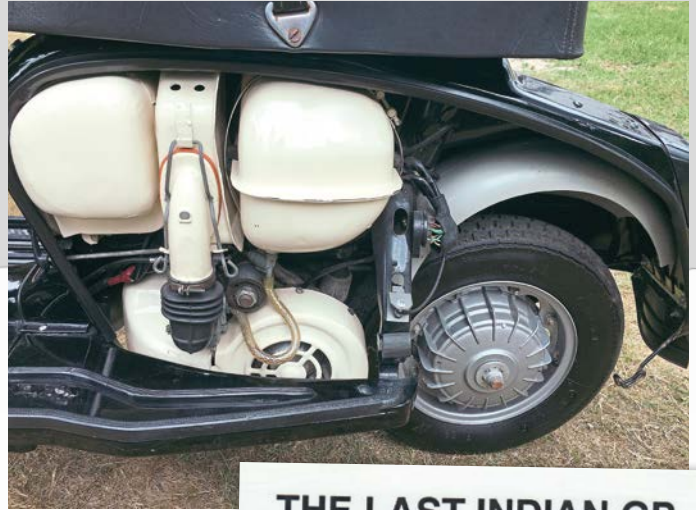
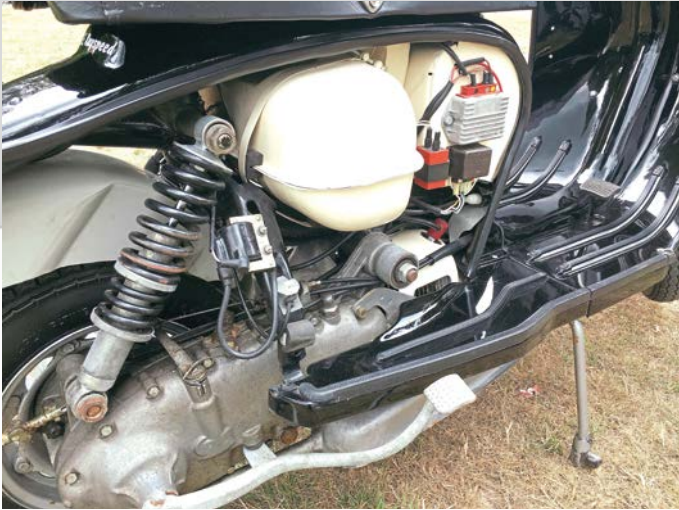
While having my preliminary flick-through before I settled down to read it from front-to-back, I noticed an advert stating that AF Rayspeed had just taken delivery of the last ever batch of 98 of these brand-new Indian Lambretta GP200s and if you wanted one, now was the time to get it ordered.

I'd always wanted a brand-new GP200 and had regularly called into AF Rayspeed to see the machines every time I headed-out that way to the East Coast, or for the East Heslerton shop's open days.



AF Rayspeed's Ray Kemp (right) hands over the last Indian GP keys to LCGB's Kev Walsh





I always looked and wished that I owned one, but as usual with everything that you think will be there forever, there was always tomorrow and something more pressing to spend my money on (mortgage, bills and food, etc), which back then didn't leave a lot left in my wage packet. Anyway, I already owned a 1992 Vespa PX200 which I'd purchased 'on the tick' brand-new from Midland Scooter Centre, so it wasn't like I didn't have a scooter.

So there was no rush, as I could always order one later – except this time there wasn't going to be a 'later', as there it was in front of me, proof that all good things do, in fact, come to an end. So after giving it considerable thought and trying to make the numbers add-up on paper, (they never do), I decided to order what I'd dreamed of, a brand-new Lambretta GP200 in white (this would have been February or early March, 1997).

I visited Rayspeed to order the scooter, leaving the biggest deposit as I could scrape together, which included the £2.71 I'd found down the back of the settee (along with a button, a hair clip and some fluff). My intention was to pick-up the machine as late as possible, but still giving me enough time to run it in before attending the LCGB Lambretta 50th Celebrations in Kettering. This would give me more time to get the rest of the money together to pay for it – if you want something so bad, there's always a way!

## HISTORY IN THE MAKING

On March 29, 1997 (the Saturday of the Easter weekend), I again rode up to AF Rayspeed to pay some more money on the scooter. I'd also gone to witness the official handing-over to the LCGB of the very last Indian Lambretta GP200 to come off the Scooters India Ltd production line from the Lucknow manufacturing plant. This had also accompanied my machine as part of the last batch of the 98 that had been imported to the UK. I can remember thinking that this was a bit of British scootering history in the making and quite a sad day really as the Lambretta scooter, something that had been omnipotent in my world was no more (well as a new vehicle anyway). I can remember also wondering whether I should have ordered a black one instead of white, as it stood with great pride of place outside the shop as Ray Kemp very kindly handed ownership over to the LCGB, which was proudly accepted by Kev Walsh on behalf of the club.



## GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

So here we are in 2018, some 21 years later and I can't believe that I've been honoured and allowed to use this rare scooter and piece of LCGB history to produce this feature. In fact I'd forgotten about it until I got talking to Kev Walsh when I was chasing-up leads for a previous article, on one of the first Indian Lambrettas to be imported. Rest in peace Kev – gone, but not forgotten.

This scooter is un-ridden with only three miles on the clock (presumably test miles from the factory back in India, or maybe from a short test on Ray Kemp's very own personal test track (more commonly known as the A64) after he'd completed the pre-delivery inspection.

This is the Indian electronic version – and for some strange reason, most of the electrickery has been moved and fitted to the offside of the specially adapted toolbox. As if a Lambretta toolbox wasn't small enough already, the Indians chopped the side off and made it flat to accommodate this modification. This model also has idiot lights in the headset top for the indicators and high beam, with the later 'flush' style direction flashers fitted, as opposed to the early 'lollipop' versions.

## QUALITY UNCONTROLLED

The seat can only be described as hideous in looks and from sitting on and riding my own machine at the time, too high, thus affecting

**THE LAST INDIAN GP**  
IS NOW OWNED BY  
**Lambretta Club**  
GREAT BRITAIN  
THE MACHINE HAS BEEN DONATED  
TO THE CLUB BY  
**AF RAYSPEED**  
THE U.K. LAMBRETТА IMPORTER

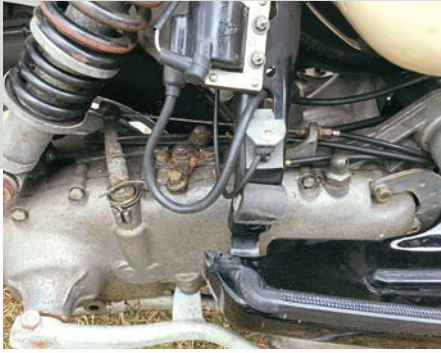
This last machine off the INDIAN production line (not out of India) came in with the last batch delivered to AP's recently. The machine will be kept on display in Rays shop window so everyone has a chance to view it and then when we get our own museum it will take pride of place as it may be the last Lambretta ever to be made on a production line so ending a unique piece of LAMBRETТА history. Plans have already been made to take the machine with us to the Euro Lambretta Jamboree & 50th Anniversary Celebrations of Lambretta in Milan in June, thanks to Kev Braithwaite at TWO WHEELED ENGINEERING. It will of course be on display at the LCGB's own 50th celebrations at Kettering in July. To mark this historical occasion the handing over of the machine officially will be done at 3PM on Easter Saturday March 29th special OPEN DAY at AF RAYSPEED This will tie in with Barnsley Vikings & the C.C.I. events over the Easter Weekend in Scarborough (see advert in Jet Set). The day will feature all the usual Open Day Bargains & Freebies with the Snooty Fox cafe/Bar next door. Ring KEV WALSH 0151 426 9839 for more details.

ARTHUR FRANCIS  
PERFORMANCE EQUIPMENT  
**AF**  
RAYSPEED LTD  
Five Acres, East Heslerton, nr Malton,  
N Yorks., Tel: 01944 710693



the riding position; but again from my own experience, very comfy in comparison to most other better-looking Lambretta seats and the original Grand Prix and stylish coffin-shaped one I put on instead. But this was probably a product designed out of necessity rather than of style (we've all seen pictures of a whole family using a scooter as their main means of transport back over there in India). You'll also notice that the vinyl on the seat has dried-out and perished even without use or weather getting to it.





After I'd completed the pictures for this feature I was on my way back to drop the scooter off and as I was passing, I called into Rayspeed to show Ray the machine and ask him if he remembered it – which of course, he did. He also very kindly donated a new-old-stock seat to the club (strange he had some left; I thought they would have all been snapped up?)

Anyway, ugly or not, it is original equipment and a very kind gesture from Ray.

The bodywork has all the pressing blemishes I can remember from my own machine, with many being in the same place on most other late Indian Grand Prix machines that I've looked at. Places such as the rear of the frame loop where the four holes go for the fitting of accessories such as sprint racks and the like, indicating possibly worn-out or damaged dies in the press shop back in the factory at that time. There were no splash plates fitted to these machines either and the stand lifts the front wheel high off the ground, which to be fair isn't a bad thing.

Several different types of wiring for the rear indicators on the sidepanels were used. This model had a fairly well thought-out plunger on a purpose-made bracket neatly concealed on the inside of the panels. I can remember mine was a crude spade connector setup joining the wires together (which I'd always forget about when taking the panels off and pull the wires out).

## I JUST CAN'T STOP

The front dampers are connected to the fork links with the bolt-on brackets and the original Modi Nylon tyres show no sign of perishing even after 21 years (probably due to their lack of any rubber content); they were the 1990s versions of the 1960s legendary joke 'Dunlop Ditch Finders'. This is again a fact that I have first hand experience of, as they were also fitted on my GP and I scared myself



to death several times on them while riding in the wet. Incidentally these tyres also have the Continental wording and trademarks on and upon further research I've found that Continental now owns Modi Rubber of India – a bit scary to think that a top tyre brand would be associated with such an item. Presumably they were never intended for use outside of India and the same can be said of the quality of the factory fitted tyres that came fitted to the LML right up until the last production in 2016.

So it is what it is, an Indian-built Lambretta GP200; not as refined as the Italian version, or to the same build quality, but thank goodness the Indians took it on or we would have lost the chance to purchase a new Lambretta scooter back in 1972, which would have no doubt affected the way the scooter scene has thankfully developed and survived so successfully.

**[I'd personally like to thank Paul Moylan and the LCGB committee for entrusting me with the machine while producing this feature and for all the hard work they do representing the Lambretta enthusiasts of Great Britain. I'd also like to thank Roger Knott for the secure storage of the scooter while in my care and Scott Gray for the info from his Jetset archives.**

**Finally I'd like to posthumously thank our Kev Walsh, a good pal for many years, a wealth of information and always there at the end of the phone to help out. One of the greats of the classic scootering old guard].**

**Big Chris**

### AF RAYSPEED (HISTORICAL) OPEN DAY

Over the years we have had a few good Open Days at AF's but the one thing that was lacking from most of these was having a venue for a 'DD' on the night. We had tried going back to York. Using the Brocton Fox Cafe Pub next door. All meeting up at a pub in Scarborough on the night. Now when Barnaby Wilms S.C. through their Chairman Steve Onidge decided to take the plunge and arrange an Easter Bank Holiday event in Scarborough followed up by the Classic Club International also deciding Scarborough would be a good venue we had an ideal opportunity for an Open Day. Now as all this was being planned the last Indian GP off the production line came into the country and was donated to LCGB by Ray Kemp at AF Rayspeed. Now we really had a party brewing. With still no scooters on the road I was once again cursing my luck and attending an event in the car but glad to say everyone else wasn't suffering my problems and when I arrived at AF's the first few scooterists had already arrived although I doubt if any of these were part of the party that had been in Scarborough the night before.

As usual Ray had the place well organised and the smell of bacon butties was waiting over the smell of two kinks. The coffee machine was still taking OLD 100s which many people attending don't even remember that's how old the machine is. Remind me to buy Ray a new machine if I win the lottery. We were there to look at Lambrettas. Our machine turned out to be a BLACK one and not the White one I had advertised in Jet Set (Old Ray's going colour bird. Been watching Arnel or is it Arnel to long).

Outside was awash with scooters all day as those going to Scarborough or just up for the day parked SCOOTERS joining in the event as people shed prejudices and try out the new breed of machines. Controversial opinion ME Never!! highlight of most peoples day was the lad who picked up his brand new GP 200, put on his helmet and ing face disappear into the sunshine as another LAMBRETTA owner was born. We could only stare in amazement as he wound the throttle round, only to look perplexed when it didn't rip off down the road. ?? We have some nice automatics in the showroom Sir. What's your worst memory of your first machine. Send them in to Jet Set and we'll give a £10 voucher to spend in Club Shop to the lunniest. 3pm prompt and the historic handing over of the LAST GP to LCGB was completed with much pomp and ceremony and knowing the cameras would be there I had spent 2hrs on the morning doing my hair. I went and forgot it though, which just about summed up my day. BUT glad to say everyone else looked like they had a great time at what will almost certainly become an annual event.

KEV WALSH



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