



Triple S Enamellers

The Right Stuff

Another Nigel Clark tour to a corner of Olde England with architectural observations once again to the fore. This time Nige enjoys coffee with Andy Rushworth, who enlightens our man on the superior method of frame coating.

LEAVING behind the curry houses and ethnic majority video shops of Bradford City and entering the suburbia of Shipley was something of a culture shock.

Grandiose, well kept stone buildings, elevated settings and greenery screamed 'Bronte Country' after the inner city tattiness I had just left.

As the sun broke through there was revealed more than just a hint of the true beauty of this part of England.

On reaching Bingley, I searched out Whitley Street, finding it beneath the monstrous concrete monolith known as the Bradford and Bingley Building Society headquarters.

At the top of the street sits Triple S.

Our regulars may recall that Mechanics covered Triple S way back in July 1993, but things have changed since then. Sole proprietor is now 32 year-old Andy Rushworth, former partner Kevin Small having left in October last year to pursue his love of computers.

The premises too have changed. Andy recalls, "The Castleford industrial unit was okay, a bit run down but cheap. This place used to be a Scimitar main dealers. We moved over here in March 1995 and its proved a good move so far."



Andy Rushworth shows off 'after and before' mag wheels.

Andy bucked the usual 'Service Spot' trend by serving coffee instead of tea, but even that job was undertaken with noticeable precision, a trait which manifests itself in the line-up of

motorcycle goodies awaiting collection.

Between phone calls, Andy gave me the guided tour. He still speaks collectively as he explains the system. "We

request our customers to degrease their stuff before they bring it in for blasting. Light oil is okay but we can't do much with a swinging arm or headstock full of grease!"

All mating surfaces are masked off - highly important when blasting mag wheels for example - likewise headstock, swingarm or wherever bearings run.

Andy found his stock Guyson blasting cabinets a bit short for larger frames so a bespoke extended version now takes pride of place.

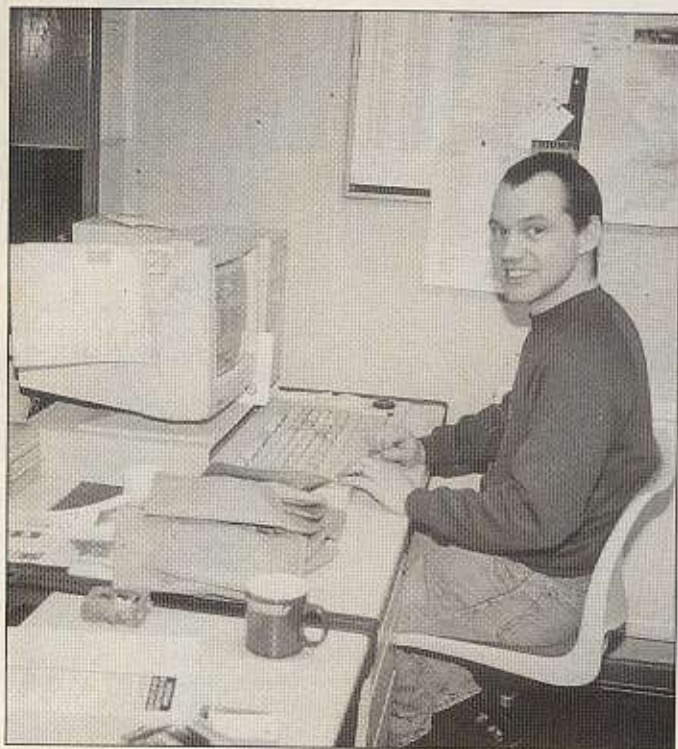
All parts are blasted by hand using the finest grit possible to do the job. "People don't realise how coarse industrial grit can be," said Andy. "Light steel fabrications can disappear in front of your eyes if you are not careful."

"Our way takes a bit longer but is a kinder on components."

A rack in an adjacent



Recoated components ranging from Fireblade wheels to an A10 frame.



Andy processes a batch of mail orders.

room contains a variety of lengths and diameters of nuts and bolts which mask off threaded areas before the part is hung up in the oven for pre-heat.

This awesome device, capable of over 200° C and as big as an abattoir fridge (and resembling one) can hold several frames at once. "If anyone fancies losing some weight they're welcome to come and give me a hand on a hot Summer's day," joked Andy.

Pre-heating to about 170° prevents 'Faraday's Cage Effect' - an electrolytic reaction which causes the powder to refuse to take in tight corners.

The component is earthed via a wire to the main earth whilst the powder is positively charged, courtesy of a computerised system which delivers the right amount of powder at around 60kv.

Another mistake people make when they're looking for a cheap job is the powder coating," says Andy. "There's three types of powder - epoxy, epoxy-polyester mix and polyester. The first two are for indoor use only (desk legs and fridge doors etc.).

"Only polyester will do externally. Use the others and within 12 months it'll be turning to chalk. We use Courtalids. It's expensive but it's the best stuff on the market."

A full powdering takes around 15 minutes with another ten back in the oven at 190 degrees. Once cool, the job is done.

Turnaround is about five working days but rush jobs can usually be accommodated by negotiation, workload permitting.

Most colours are available but black, red, silver, grey, white,

maroon, yellow and green are the regular requests. Tasty little sample washers sit on the counter for customers to take home for perusal. Lacquers can be applied, without reaction, to cover transfers.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope will secure the customer a comprehensive catalogue of powder coating services and prices as well as stainless steel fasteners. This latter line developed on the back of the lovely refurbished frames and is now a large mail order part of the business.

I noticed parcels heading for Scotland, Channel Islands, Cornwall and Gibraltar.

Prices for frames with swingarm start at £59 plus VAT for a lightweight to £99 for a monster - not bad considering a coating of the 'wrong stuff' will set you back £50.

"One thing the customer can rely on here," says Andy, "is that his parts will receive individual attention, and as we do 99% bike stuff, he can rest easy in the knowledge that nothing will go missing amongst some giant industrial batch.

Although primarily a one-man band, Andy does occasionally recruit the help of his 'semi-sub-contractor' Ivan, a dab hand custom chop builder who uses the workshop to the rear of the shop.

A superbly crafted T100 chopper bore witness to Ivan's abilities as both a fabricator and metal polisher. Polished cases and ancillary alloy parts can thus be offered on the Triple S list.

As I left, a customer arrived to collect his. The look on his face said it all - another satisfied customer.

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