

DIARY of a THROTTLE TWISTER

JUST FANCY..... 106 in SECOND GEAR!

MANY a witless whismacker has started with the words Just Fancy, e.g.—Tramp No. 1: "Just fancy—a seven-course dinner, cigars and liquors, all for 6d.!" Tramp No. 2: "WHERE?" No. 1: "I've no idea, but just fancy."

THIS of mine is no mere variation of the theme. When I say to you: "Just fancy... 106 m.p.h. in second gear," I mean that in my capacity as Tall Stories Dept. I have just had the remarkable experience of riding a properly and legally equipped road-going motorcycle at 106 in second gear. Moreover, on a road (public not admitted, so there!).

The more elderly of my readers may remember

Altering, sleek
its integument of
chrome plate—
the outsize
Brough-Superior
tried by "Castor."

that early in 1931 one C. R. (and what a name!) Hobbs, of Guildford, lent me what was described as the world's fastest touring bike. I took it touring at around 106 m.p.h. No faster, because being at the time members of the public, Hobbs and I must needs use a public road, infested with Trojans, perambulators, waifs and strays, all eager to leave a wife and two children.

THIS time it was different. The road was different (closed). The bike was different (faster). Since last spring the compression of this 1,200 c.c. Brough-Sup. had sprung up to 81 to 1. The cams had become more advantageously lumpy. Twin carburettors grew where once there was one. The valves were lighter.

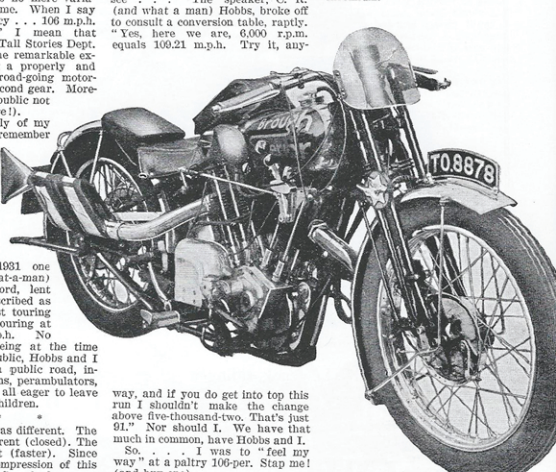
The wizardry of Tod Baragwanath had been at work.

Was there ever so Eureka-making a prospect? And yet my inward Eureka was not muffled with anxiety. I remembered this as the only thing on wheels which I had been scared to ride flat out. Now I dislike wearing my pride in a split, and accordingly had made a silent vow to right the matter. And now here was Hobbs telling me that she should do her 120 on the just perceptible down grade of our stretch... which was neither

dead straight nor quite perfectly surfaced.

"I SHOULD go up the grade first if I were you. Just feel your way in second for the first run. Maximum revs, on that 4-42 second gear would work out at—er, let me see... The speaker, C. R. (and what a name!) Hobbs, broke off to consult a conversion table, rapidly. "Yes, here we are, 6,000 r.p.m. equals 106.21 m.p.h. Try it, any-

into a natural crouch, so that the postage-stamp absurdity which is the tiny windshield covers its subject handsomely. Always slight of build like Gandhi, Charlie Dodson and other great men—my consciousness of puny stature is acute among these gleaming open spaces of chromium.



way, and if you do get into top this run I shouldn't make the change above five thousand-two. That's just 91." Nor should I. We have that much in common, have Hobbs and I. So... I was to "feel my way" at a paltry 106 per. Stap me! (and buy one).

WE haul her back against compression. Push a score of paces with the clutch up. Drop it—and she fires instantly with a tony resonance through her Brooklands "official receivers." It is a moderate note, under this light warning-up load, yet having a quality suggestive of sublime invulnerability, an insidious hint of boundless, prodigious power. Like a thunderstorm, distantly brewing.

I remember Moby Dick for the most carelessly comfortable of all fast motors. A Terry saddle nests low between the bolstered sponginess of pneumatic pads on tank top and rear wing. Scraping footrests, high-placed and far back, throw the body

THE grip goes round a quarter of a turn. Click—into second. Ahead there is the near-straight tarmac rise, beckoning its invitation to realms of speed beyond my ken. Below are nearly seventy brake horses. Right, let 'em come... Another sharp twist at the Bins quick-opener. With a bound—there is no other word—those five hundred-weights of iron and steel jut forward. Visibly she rises at the head, lifting the load from the forks until by its very feel I know the front wheel to be scarcely in touch with the tarmac.

Nestling behind the windshield is the white-faced rev. clock, translating into terms of tangible r.p.m. this

"Castor" Tells Another Tale of M.P.H. Sensations of Full-throttle Gear-changes at Over Ninety an Hour

phenomenon of mechanical science. Four thousand. In a breath to four thousand-five, five thousand, five thousand-five. Jerking, always jerking, that busy little hand works round. It fascinates strangely. I could watch it for hours. Yet I must tear my eyes off it and peer ahead at the smoky panorama of the road, and the banks that skirt that road. Yes, those banks... nasty things to hit.

Six thousand. Six thousand-one. The needle wavers, stops. The wind, seeming incredibly solid, strikes me like a rushing flood as I wriggle upward in my seat and ease back the throttle grip, gingerly, with reverent respect.

NOW down the grade, O Moby mine. Let us prepare to Go Places, as the Americans say.

The same hunching acceleration. The same large hiff in the base of the spine, as reaction does its best to slide me off the back. Five thousand-two, still the oracle, screaming near to peak. Now, with not a whit less zeal, we are unbuckling those gears on a gear a point higher,

eight. Five thousand. Five-one... now two. No declutching; this is a matter for the mag. cut-out, an ample black blob taped lovingly to the tank-side lever. I drop a paw from the off-side bar and fasten it on the lever and button. For a fraction, perhaps a fiftieth of a second, the power is cut off dead. There is a sharp, shell-like bang and twin

Next Week
Another "International"
Machine to be Tested!
(Perrie's B.S.A. is tested this week.)

tongues of flame show from the intake funnels. Simultaneously the gear slides in... and we unbuck the power.

If ever there was need to put hand to bar again it is now. A second ago seventy b.h.p., nearly, were screaming near to peak. Now, with not a whit less zeal, we are unbuckling those gears on a gear a point higher,

YET apart from being all but left behind at the stoppage, she steers and grips the road as surely as a freight truck. With this rear springing, pitching or wobble are non-existent, impossible! A feather bed could scarcely be safer.

The revs. climb up again, after dropping back with the extra-tonic load; four thousand-five. Now four thousand-eight... five thousand-two. Now I must cover an optic in the road again, and lay her over to make this scarcely perceptible left-hand curve. Hardly perceptible! Well, yes, when you're standing still. But this is different. Over she banks. A snatched glance back to that rev. clock. Five thousand-five.

Whoa there, Moby! She is straying out towards the off-side camber. Easy with the throttle, and over a bit more. Five thousand-two.

BACK to a standstill. Back to Barth and the cold realities of a conversion table. "If you five thousand-two on a 3.5 top gear," says Hobbs, in a not over-enthusiastic tone, to thin air, the little book of figures. "That's 115.22 m.p.h. But you'll want to check the gear for yourself. The back wheel is 28 inch of course."

Duly I check them. O.K. Privately he thinks me something of a little pansy. He's probably right. But just to make quite sure, we have another crack at beating the figure. And another. And several more. But there's nothing doing. For, quite frankly, I don't like laying over too far on a doubtful camber at upwards of 115.

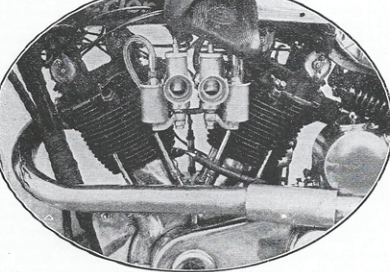
So Moby Dick is taken home, handcuffed and locked up again. Just fancy...

FREDDY DIXON sends everybody his love.

Too often when the great men of the riding game forsake our humble station for racing motorcars they develop a tendency towards an Oxford accent, *pâté de foie gras* and roses round the door. Not so, Fred. Still he has a ready ear for the "short and simple annals of the poor," as I learned on Saturday night when he fell upon me with a Dixonian bellow in ye olde hostlerie a mile from Brooklands.

And just to show how interested he really was in all this cycling he adjured me please to remember when flying into print on the subject of Brooklands sidecar speeds that he, Fred Dixon, still holds the lap record. This is all very true, and very necessary, too, that you should know how true it is, since a theory seems to have sprung up in the latter part of the century that Ted Baragwanath's 108.11 is the record.

"If you look it up," says Fred, "you'll find my figure is as near to 108.11 as I'm willing to swear." It is 106.9, which shows how close Fred came to using a wicked word.



THE SOURCE OF THE "SOUP." The rugged 1,150 c.c. J.A.P. engine of "the world's fastest road-going motorcycle," with its specially cast long-stroke cylinders, fed with Enyl "A" through twin racing Amals.