

# MB Stories – Keep it in the family

I always said this bike would go to the grave with me, but when your on your knees and needs must, everything has a price. When our business hit the rocks in the recession, we were doing our best to keep going and not loose the lot. And here's where the story starts.

The the mid 1980's I built and tuned a water cooled reed valve cast iron Sx200 for Steve Ash called 'Eddie Cochran' well he was a bit of a 50's looking Rockerbilly type. It was a lovely bike and full of innovative ideas and was way ahead of the rest of the dealers – water-cooled, reed valve, Yamaha piston, advance retard Suzuki ignition, hand made expansion, radiator hidden in the toolbox, custom paint etc.

Steve lived in the deep South but the bike was constantly returned to me to do work and get developed and it got better and better. I then learnt – if the cables or plug needed doing, Steve didn't do it – I did it.

I recall he wanted it to do 100mph, then his friends told me he usually does 50mph! It was a wake up call to actually – what people said they wanted and what they actually wanted! It really was a bit of a missile and could be seen at some rallies of the time.

In the late 80's, he wanted it to be restored back to a Blue and White Sx200 but with the same engine, all hidden away so it was truly a wolf in sheeps clothing. After all that work, a car pulled out on him and wrote off the frame! And it had to be all rebuilt and restored again! And even in it's tamed down look – that bike would lift the front wheel in 3rd gear with a TS1 Water cooled engine – away from old style cast iron cylinder.

When it came to paying the bill – only £2000 or so for the full restoration and repairs, Steve said 'I haven't got the money to pay, but I do have two Scooters you may want off me to pay the bill'. The two scooters were a Gp200 Electronic and a Tv200 both complete! All I wanted was the bikes to make up the missing money!

The week before, Rob Skipsey had asked if I knew of a Tv200 for sale! I didn't at the time but when it turned up – one phone call and without seeing it we did a deal at £600! Within an hour my mate Max Bygraves had popped round, he saw the Tv, looked under the mudguard and said 'thats brand new, I've got a rough one at home can I swap it' I told him it was Skipseys both him and Max had served their apprenticeships together at the dock yard and said 'it will be fine'. Rob wasn't bothered either and collected and sold it the same week. Me – I had money in my pocket towards Steve Ashes rebuild.

It left the this GP 200 Electronic – something I had always wanted when I missed out on one in the early 1980's at A1 Scooters in Doncaster when they wanted £500 which was a bitza – and probably worth about £200 to me at the time, but I didn't have that amount of money. My mate from the club Kev Bird bought it and still has it to this day and that was White as well, the same as this one. When Rob Skipsey saw it a few weeks ago he recognised the number

plate! And the answer to that Rob was, it originally came from his home town Hull in the 70's.

It had not been long since I had re allocated back to Doncaster from Grimsby, my local accountant, more than doubled their accounts price – stupid in those days. I'd just finished a TSl Engine rebuild for my customer Barry Drew from Chatham in Kent. He asked for an invoice 'I asked why, no one asks for invoices unless its mail-order'! His replied was 'I'm an accountant, if I can't do anything with that I'm no good at my job'! Accountant you say? How much to do my accounts! It was £500 a year instead of £2000!

And from that day Barrys been a best mate and my accountant for 29 years the same length I'd owned the Gp Electronic. When I was struggling I told Barry 'the Electronics got to go! He said 'no you can't, lets keep it in the family – I'll have it! And so the deal was done!

When I first did the bike, I customised it as a 'Shrine' to the Gp range. It was featured in Scootering in the 1990's and the photos were taken at the top of Edlington pit top, thats why the wheels are covered in mud. I sprayed and built the bike – loosely sprayed in all the colours that a Gp had been painted including Indian variants. It had the years of manufacture 68 – 71 on the panels and legshield and then the various badges used – 'Innocenti' 'Grand Prix 125, 150, 200' 'i' and 'Electronic'. Engine wise it was stripped and developed constantly, and with all my bikes I tested engines and parts that customers eventually got through the shop.

I ended up making a pigs ears of the paint by adding things and ended up hating it.

Eventually it was stripped again, all the panel work was sent to my Carbon fibre man who made moulds of all the bodywork, all of which were perfect fitting – making great moulds all based on Italian pressings. The bike was rebuilt as a one off Carbon/Kevlar bike, it was as light as a cutdown. But I didn't stop there, it had the first full production outboard hydraulic disc. The Engine had the first MB Alpha super wide crank that I designed and still have the hand drawings. Using thinner Vespa PX drive bearings and a small block flywheel bearing to allow for the wider crank – something Casa has done 20 years later!

I'm always playing around with engines, always wanting that bit more! In the end I built a new engine with another one off crank at 64mm – no one had done that at the time either, with a TSl cylinder it was now a real 250cc. It was a 30bhp 25lbs torque engine, again no one else had done that.

When we bought our first dyno off Jerome from Readspeak and we ran up my bike for a training session and his eyes burst out saying 'wow that's good' That bike you could set off in 4th with GT200 gearing. It was the Black and Yellow Carbon Kevlar Gp that I took to the Isle Man Centenary TT races, but the engine had been developed to 37bhp. I went with motor bike mates and with 60'000 other bikers and only me on a Lambretta! I raced around the TT course and showed how fast a Scooter could go! Clocked at 105mph on the mountain, it was one of my best memories in my Scootering life – I'm still mates with the

bikers I went with and we still have a laugh at me grinding down casings and exhaust. Again that IOM week and Carbon Scooter was featured in Scootering magazine in 2007.

So now this bike is the third time featured in Scootering!

When Barry agreed to buy the Electronic, we discussed I would make it as a MB custom dealer special.

I had this idea. If I had been old enough to buy a Electronic in the early 70's this could have been quite possible.

It would have been a White Gp Electronic as it originally was, hence the White base coat. Hubs and forks are the original Gp colour. As time went on, as I tampered with it as I did in my real life, it would have been normal to mask off and do block and pin stripes and sprayed with rattle cans! So the block work was based on my own dealer specials from the 1980/90's.

We even built in rubbing the paint down so paint had been wiped away and developed a bit of patina, if you look closely the light Blue blocks are faded into the white with years of polishing it. I then picked logos' over the last few years from MB Developments to MB Scooters. Theres the MrBee logo on the panels, something I got inspiration from racing Max Bygraves around a roundabout coming back from Skegness our first rally together. He thought he was going fast! I nipped underneath him on the inside and looked up straight into his surprised eyes and he recalled my great big beaming grin coming out of my helmet!

I've brought the Scooter into the modern world on the mudguard using our simple MB Scooters logo used in our webshop. Theres the Marmite logo on the left side of the legshields – but I altered it to 'Markmite – love him or hate him – pure quality'! Something developed from keyboard warriors on forums in later years. A logo people have to look at twice and then laugh. It's even got a spelling mistake because I'm dyslexic!

Then theres the one I always like 'Designed to be ridden hard!' the Race-Tour product version is on the right side. Originally the exclamation mark was a penis hard on! But I was out voted to do it that way because we are now living in a politically incorrect bollocks of a world – I would have left it – the smooth talking Yorkshireman doesn't fall for the new ways and says it how it is – which constantly makes Barry laugh when he phones me. If he's in the car with the kids its always 'Marrrrkk before you say anything I've got the kids in the car, sometimes the kids have shouted Mark teaches us some Yorkshire swear words – to noooo from Barry and Joe! Theres our simple 'designed to be ridden hard on the legshields and simple MrBee on the toolbox lid.

Cowlings and exhaust are Black keeping in the theme – Gp's have used Black compared to Grey of the Li range.

Things like black seat, Black tyres, black stand and rubber trim helping to pick out Black in most of the logos.

Engine wise it's the original matching numbers one with the one off super wide crank and rumble restoration polished in house. The 250 engine was sold onto a long term customer Steve Baxter going back to the 1980's. The carbon/Kevlar was sold off to Barney St George another long term 1980's customer still keeping it all in the family.

Barry was the one who organised the Scootaway motorway challenge that we did for the Parkinsons charity. He's had me build two Race-Tour reed engines – developments from the Steve Ash Eddie Cochran Scooter of the 1980's that all kickstarted this bike and storey. Barry and Dave his older brother knows just how well those Race-Tour Reed engines performed on all those mileage of the motorway tour and so it had to be another. This time with a 71mm piston to go with the 60mm crank increasing the cc. Another massive power spread, 'a touring torquey MB tune', Giving a high fuel economy engine driven through our MB 5 speed and MB CNC 5 plate clutch with simple 18 x 47 giving a top gear ratio of 4.70:1. Internal and external parts are all MB. Ignition wise, I've kept it simple like his other Scooters – accountants aren't known for mechanical ability! I did a MBgm electronic with external pickup, AC and no battery. As usual I've run a 30mm Dellorto – old and simple and have never changed from the 1980's as they just work and work well. We've used one of our MB Tea strainer filters to keep the motor from wearing out. Exhaust wise is my MBgm Clubman keeping the looks of the bike simple and nice and neat and tidy as I like them. Giving a nice rideable – drive able 22bhp motor. Along with the last custom Banksy bike I've just built – I think this is even better as its all MB parts with next to no hiccups on the rebuild!

As Max Bygraves said when he saw it 'I've got to give it to you Broady, when you build a bike you do it right, you've got to really look to see the design and standards no one else does'. He was the only one to spot the return lip on the head cowl that was cut for the reed manifold to stiffen up the cowl so has not to crack. Making and modifying the cowlings to fit took 3 hours! The last few custom bikes I've built have taken around 160 hours each to make. 'Time is money' as I was told as a teenager – these things do not come cheap.

The Scooter is built with as much original parts as we could, the old mould panels were reused. Over time, parts had been lost or weren't up to the job and had to be replaced. All fasteners are stainless steel as is some of the MB parts – some are polished some are not, it changes the look of the Scooter.

I've kept, the original MB outboard disc brake now used in the three incarnations. I've kept the original MB twin tank again passed on from all three Scooters. It's been updated with bgm front and rear shockers something – I've helped to develop.

Tyres are modern semi slick Dunlop Scootsmarts on SIP polished alloy rims. It keeps it's original MB alloy polished Gp rear light and small mudflap. Cables are MB upgraded stainless steel braided versions. The loom is MB as are all the parts to bolt the electronic kit with a fine detail of MB rubber covers. As it has no toolbox and Barry was adamant he didn't want a leg shield toolbox I made a one off leg shield rack which also houses his oil bottles.



In fact the more I look – the more I see MB only parts..... The only thing not MB is the seat, keeping it in the 1970's with a slope back seat just what I had on my very first Lambretta.

Writing this article has made me think back at all the friends and family who's been involved with the Scooter and the stories and fun and heartache it holds. I'm glad it's still in the family..... now it's finished and ridden I didn't want to let it go. Oh well onto the next rebuild.





"When I first did the bike, I customised it as a shrine to the GP range and loosely sprayed the scooter in all the colours that the GP range had been painted in, including the Indian variants. It had the years of manufacture 68-71 on the panels and lightguards and then the various badges used, 'Innocent', 'Grand Prix 125, 150, 200', 's' and 'Electronic', Engine-wise it was stripped and developed constantly," said Mark.

It was all of this, over the course of the development of this theme, Mark explained that he kept adding things to the paint and as a result he ended up having it.

Eventually the scooter was stripped again, and was rebuilt as a one-off Carbon/Kevlar bike, which was as light as a cut-down. Mark didn't stop there. The scooter had one of the first outboard hydraulic disc brakes fitted, and the engine had the first MB Alpha cranks. In the end after several changes, Mark built a new engine using a 64mm crank, and with a T51 cylinder it was now a true 250cc, and showing 30bhp with 25lb torque.

#### New form

When Barry agreed to buy the Electronic, he discussed the project in detail with Mark and decided that it would be made as an MB custom dealer special.

To set this off, the scooter would have the original white GP Electronic base coat and the black-work would be based around Mark's own dealer specials from the 1980/90s. Mark then picked the logos and graphics, which have been developed over the last few years from MB Developments to MB Scooters.

"The scooter has been built with as many original parts as possible. But over time, some parts have been lost or weren't up to the job and had to be replaced," said Mark.

Along with the original-style paintwork, block and pin-stripes influences, Mark has also brought the scooter into the modern world. There's Mark's 'Mr Bee' logo on the headbar, footboard and side panels, and on the mudguard, which is a simple MB Scooters logo. Mark's Marmite-themed logo, "I can't love him or hate him - pure quality", which is a response to various negative comments online, appears on the offside of the leg shields. Then, cutting across the nearside section of the leg shields on to the horn casting, there's "Designed to be ridden hard".

"Originally the exclamation mark was a penis hard on! But because we now live in a politically correct world I was out-voted to do it that way. I would have left it, because a straight-talking Yorkshireman says it how it is, which constantly makes Barry laugh when he phones me," smiled Mark. "If Barry's in the car with the kids it's always, 'Mammi, before you say anything I've got the kids in the car'. Sometimes the kids have shouted, 'Mark teaches us some Yorkshire swear words' to nood from Barry and Joe!"

#### Engineering, set up and spark

Engine-wise, the scooter is based on one of his tried-and-tested set ups. The engine sports a 71mm piston to go with the 60mm crank, which increases the cc and gives a good power spread with a decent fuel economy. The scooter is driven through an MB 5-speed box and MB 5-plate clutch with simple 18x47 giving a final gear ratio of 4.7:1.



- 1: SK200 'Entire Cochran'
- 2: GP 200 Electronic in its original form
- 3: Original engine view
- 4: 'Shiner' full 1997
- 5: Carbon / Kevlar coming home from Biddington
- 6: On the beach
- 7: Nearly ready



Mr Bee



MB Black and pin-stripes



30mm Dellorto and tea-strainer filter



One-off leg shield rack and 2-stroke holder



MB logo Clubman keeps the classic look



Barry takes a test ride





# Keeping it in the family

When Mark Broadhurst's business hit hard times, he was doing his best to keep things going and not lose the lot. But as he told us: "When you're on your knees and needs must, everything has a price"... and that's where this story starts.

**I**n the mid 80s Mark Broadhurst built and tuned a water-cooled reed-valve cast iron SX200 called 'Eddie Cochran' for a customer, which was full of innovative ideas. By the end of the 80s, though, the owner wanted it to be restored back to a Blue and White SX200, but with the same engine all hidden away so it was truly a wolf in sheep's clothing. However, when it came to paying for the restoration the customer didn't have the funds. Instead he offered Mark two scooters as payment, one of them being a complete GP200 Electronic. Mark accepted the offer and kept the scooter, which was a model he'd always wanted.

## Out of the blue

At that time, it hadn't been long since Mark had re-located back to Doncaster from Grimsby. Also at that time, he had just finished a TS1 engine rebuild for a customer, Barry Drew from Chatham in Kent. When the bill came to be paid, Barry asked Mark for an invoice. "Why? No one asks for invoices unless its Mail Order!" Mark said. "I'm an accountant, and if I can't do something with that invoice, then I'm no good at my job!" Barry replied. "An accountant you say? How much would it be for you to do my accounts?" Mark asked. Barry's fee turned out to be a fraction of what Mark had been paying, and thus their friendship was formed.

"Barry's been a best mate, and my accountant for 29 years, which is the same time that I've owned the GP Electronic. A few years ago when I was struggling, I told Barry, 'The Electronic's got to go'. He said, 'No you can't, let's keep it in the family. I'll have it'. And so the deal was done," explained Mark.

## Shrine

Before we go into the development of the scooter's current form, let's rewind a little and take a look at the various forms the scooter's appeared as since Mark got it back in the late 80s.





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Any questions ask [mark@mbscooters.co.uk](mailto:mark@mbscooters.co.uk)