

A Vincent risen from the ashes!

This story is about a Rapide bought from Alec Corner, multiple Australian sidecar road race champion by the late John Weber a staunch member of our Club in 2013 on a trip to the Broadford Bonanza event in Victoria. In his distinguished career Alec had been campaigning the Phil Irving fettled Frank Sinclair Vincent which had been the outstanding performer in the class for many years, and was a big name in the racing business.

Undoubtedly this reputation influenced John's perception of the quality of a Vincent Rapide Alec had for sale, and it did appear on face value to be a tidy, if not completely original machine though it failed to start at first attempt. Next day, with the help of Marque expert Murray Barr on the kickstarter it did go, and the plan to acquire was started by a phone call to the Minister for Finance, Angela his wife. In about a month John had scraped up the readies and made a flying raid on Melbourne again to collect his prize, which started off a downhill spiral of the bank balance commonly seen to be a Vincent ownership pre-requisite! It rapidly became obvious that the bike had been the final landing place of all the worn out and dodgy parts accumulated over a life time of racing by Alec, and this gave John his intro into the vagaries of Vincent engineering as he and Murray combined to replace all the junk therein. John did not seem to bear any grudge against Alec, and when we went to Broadford in 2015, he was anxious to show Alec just how he'd improved the beast, and he and I did the whole programme on the road race track with no problems. Alas, this new found reliability did not last and the "Irving" crankshaft failed when back home, causing another very expensive rebuild, but John took this one on the chin and it was repaired again, and along the way he incorporated some strange modifications to the oiling system, not in any way handsome, and fitted a French Alton generator as well. As we all know we lost John tragically in January 2021, and the Vincent passed to another Club member who has also enjoyed?? the downright strange construction and foibles of the machine from Stevenage. I am pleased to say that the new owner has left absolutely no stone unturned in his rebuild of this machine, and a few days ago I witnessed the results of a lot of hard work and money, and this bike is now the equal of any in the land and hopefully now registered it will take its place in Club rides shortly. A good job, very well done! BG.