

Mods, Rockers and Harleys

During the 1960's whilst in my last years of school, I habitually wore a Ben Sherman shirt, Wrangler jeans and the obligatory very short hair. I was, along with my contemporaries, a "Mod". Of course we all had scooters; mine was a Lambretta as I was never a great fan of Vespas which seemed too bulbous compared with the sleek lines of an LI 150. The wearing of Parka overcoats was *de rigueur* whilst riding and were great for keeping the rain out and hiding all sorts of things from the prying eyes of disapproving adults. Helmets were for the girls

Tribal warfare

Our tribe was very distinctive and were completely opposite from that other tribe, the "Rockers". They wore leather jackets and Levis and only road motorbikes, with the Bonneville and Nortons being particular favourites. I only know this because their favourite sport was to roar up along side of us and kick our much slower scooters over. We referred to them as "Greasers". This is because they always seemed covered in grease from tinkering with their bikes; they all had tattoos, bad teeth and oily hair and that was just the females! We Mods believed that the grease and oil was recycled from the engines to their hair and back again when an oil change was needed

My loving partner of today, Kathy was a Rocker at the same time, though we would never have spoken to each other back then. She believes that we Mods were all Nancy Boys who only went to Brighton to meet other gays and that if we had had a punch up on the beach we could only hit her mob with our handbags. There were bad lads and hard men on both sides and the warfare between the two tribes was only too real on all levels.

Our later years

There still exists many scooter and bike clubs with quite a few in Spain, and some will hanker after the old times, but the old warfare has died out. Bikes and scooters still abound but are seemingly no longer a tribal symbol

Eventually as we grew up, peace broke out and former Mods and Rockers have largely become merged into one. As those of us who had and still have a passion for two wheels are now in our 50's and 60's we form the largest age group by far to be seen on those icons of the road, the Harley-Davidson motorcycle. I don't own a Harley myself; in fact whilst I was being "re-habilitated" by Kathy, I bought and rode a Kawasaki ZZR 600 and were funds to allow would love another sports bike. Harleys are fantastic cruising bikes, not renowned for their zip and frequently referred to by the speed merchants as "tractors"

I became aware of the fondness for Harleys through my work. It seemed that every rider of my generation (remember "The Who?") from whichever tribe now rode one. I have re-registered quite a number of bikes, but the biggest single marque by far make Fat Boys and Soft Tails. The signature of a Harley- Davidson is the deep throaty sound of the exhaust; this is where I have had a few challenges when re-registering a

bike. Yes lads, they sound great, but your slashed pipes will not pass the ITV inspection as the exhaust is subject to both emissions and noise tests, so please put the originals back on before you meet me

Potential ITV problems

What other problems may we face? Well changes of wheels or tyres from the original spec' may cause a problem. Sometimes crash bars may not be accepted and anything else that has fundamentally altered the dimensions of the bike. The solution, if unsure is to ask first or put the originals back on for the inspections; I wouldn't dare tell you what to do afterwards!

The most bizarre reason for failure at the ITV has been where a bike has the main headlight flanked by two smaller ones. These add a touch of class as well as helping you to see better but are not allowed, despite being a standard fit in the UK and USA. I am told that under Spanish regulations, a bike can have one or two headlights, but not three as three may confuse the driver in front. I still don't understand this answer.

Many bikes have a flat beam headlight; this means that the light emitted is thrown directly ahead parallel to the road surface. By comparison, virtually all cars have biased headlights, which in the UK, apart from the flat beam have a secondary beam pointing to the left kerb; as this biased beam must point to the right in Spain, cars normally have to have their headlights replaced. A bike light only needs changing if it has a left kerb bias. You may have fitted extra brake lights and indicators to your bike (perhaps you are a former Mod, as we were very fond of adding additional lighting and mirrors); as these are non standard, they also will not pass the test.

Cost of becoming Spanish

Many bikers are surprised that the cost of re-registering a motorcycle is the same as for a car; indeed it is the same for motor homes too. This may make the cost disproportionate and certainly does so with a very small moped or scooter. The cost of re-registration is consistent, though the amount of taxes to be paid varies widely. Having said that, it actually takes roughly twice as long to produce an Engineer's Report and pass the ITV inspection for a two wheeler as it does for a car, this is mainly because of the amount of measuring of the dimensions as they can vary so much more on a bike than on a car. Either way, if you want advice on re-registering your much cherished two-wheeler be it a scooter or bike whether cruiser or sports, please get in touch

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