



RECREATING A DAYTONA WINNER

Building a replica Buddy Elmore 200-mile race-winning Triumph twin for the Goodwood Revival is just the kind of challenge that Ace Classics relishes

WORDS BY GARY PINCHIN PHOTOS BY KEITH REED. ARCHIVE PHOTOS, MORTONS

London-based Ace Classics is back at Goodwood again this year. It's the fourth year on the trot for the Ace's Kev Rusworth and this time it's with a brand new build, based on Buddy Elmore's Daytona 200-winning 1966 Triumph Tiger 100 – the success that earned the 500 unit twin road bike its Daytona moniker in subsequent years.

Don Burnett won the Daytona 200 in 1962, chalking up Triumph's first win in the big race on a Triumph T100/SR prepared by Cliff Guild with a bunch of TriCor racing parts to beat Dick Mann's G50 Matchless by 12 feet. But in the following three years the British manufacturer took a hammering in America's most prestigious road race.

In 1963 Ralph White and then Roger Reiman in 1964 and 65 won the race for Harley-Davidson so, in 1966, Triumph fought back with a concerted effort, sending a batch of specially prepared T100/R race bikes with a star-studded factory-backed line-up that included Gary Nixon (second on a Triumph in 1964), Dick Hammer and Texan Buddy Elmore.

Nixon quickly parked his factory bike, trading off some speed for the reliability of his own twin that Guild had prepared for him at the TriCor. At that time Triumph had two main distributors: Triumph Corporation (TriCor) in Baltimore, Maryland on the East Coast and Johnson Motors (JoMo) in Pasadena, California in the West. Each had their

own top-class riders and there was always an intense scrap with both teams trying to outdo the other.

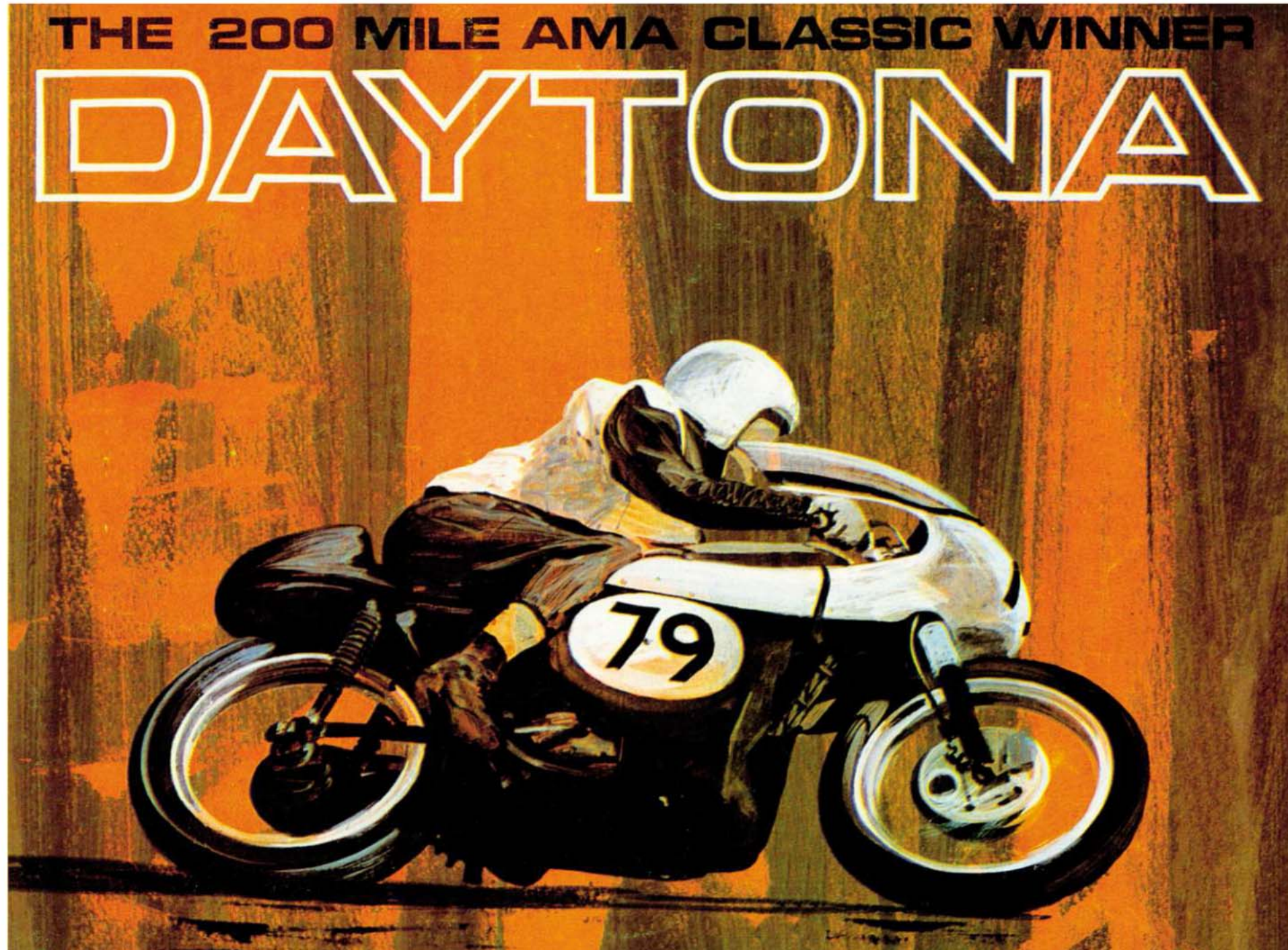
Looking at practice, Nixon had a point about reliability issues with all the British-built bikes suffering oil pressure problems and grenading. Elmore's bike had blown several times to leave him 46th on the grid after his qualifying run – and it took one last effort by his mechanic Dick Bender in rebuilding the engine, trying to make one good one from a pile of broken bits before his rider could take his place in the 200 miler.

In the race Hammer went head-to-head with Harley-Davidson's Cal Rayborn until the Triumph broke down after only seven laps. Rayborn was also sidelined with technical issues, as was his Harley team-mate Reiman.

Nixon then led, but got a puncture and would finish ninth after a pit stop, leaving Elmore to take the race win at a record average speed of 96.582mph. Triumph was once again able to cash in on that American racing maxim: 'Win on Sunday. Sell on Monday!'

Kev's decision to build a 1966 Daytona-winning Elmore replica was taken after last year's Goodwood. "The organisers asked me if we'd build a new Triumph for this year under the new 1966 cut-off date. I didn't need asking twice.

"To be invited to Goodwood is a real honour. In fact, it's an even bigger honour to be invited back each year, especially when you think there are only 30 bikes permitted on the grid and Ace Classics' machine is one of them.



ABOVE LEFT
Kev Rusworth swings off the banking at Monthery earlier this year in what was a shakedown run for the newly built 500

ABOVE RIGHT
Original Triumph promo literature shouting up Elmore's Daytona victory

"It's amazing really to think that I can line up on the same grid as some of these ex-world champions and current TT heroes. There's no way on earth I'd be able to do that in any other form of racing. But I don't disgrace myself and I think we do a good job, bringing a great-looking bike to the help boost the grid line-up.

"I first went in 2010 with our own bike – a 1954 Triumph Tiger 110 we built. Racing at Goodwood was something I really wanted to do. Then for 2011 I got offered a ride on a Domiracer and went back again last year with our original Triumph.

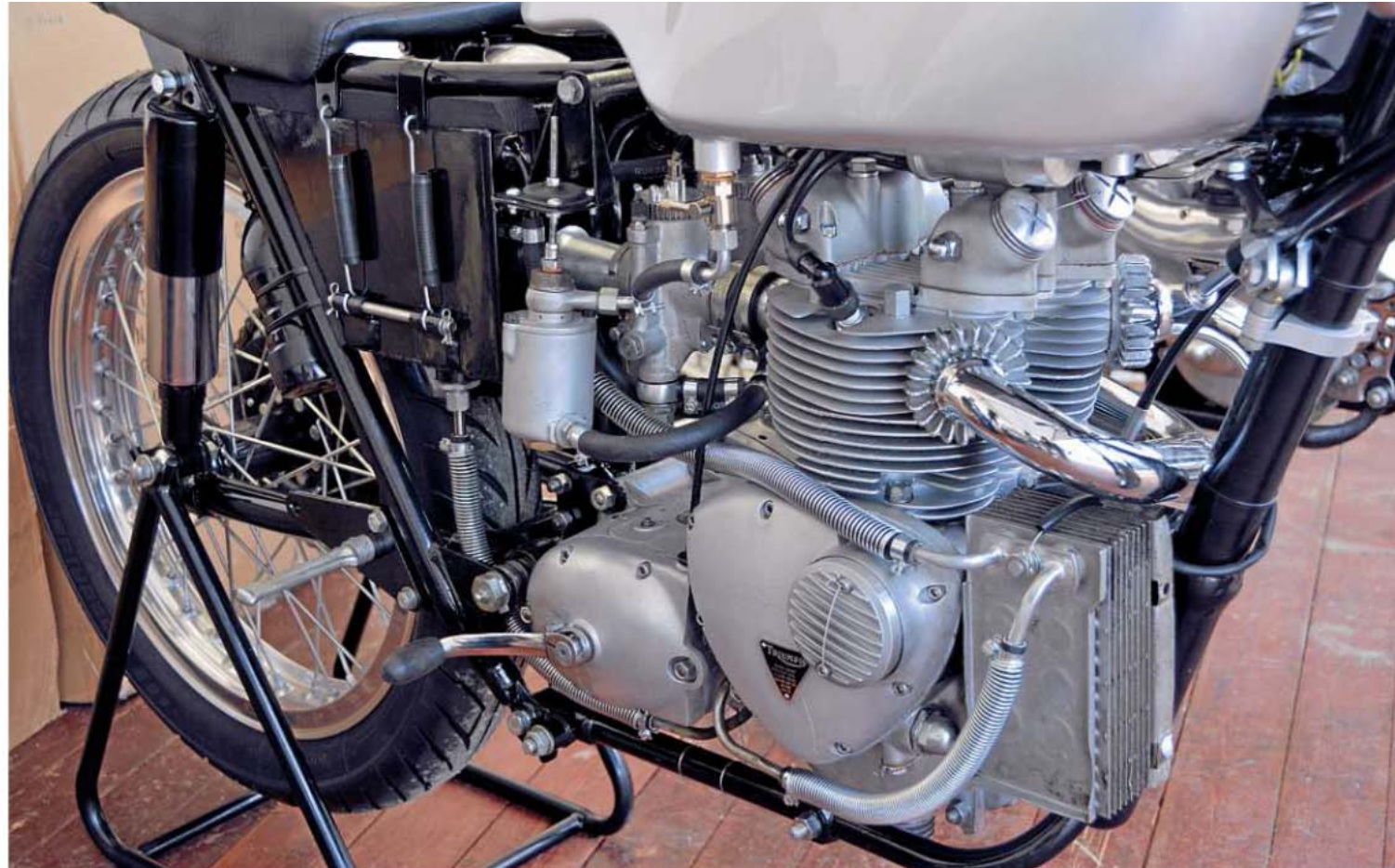
"This year though, with the cut-off date set at 1966, I knew we had to build a replica of Buddy Elmore's Daytona winner and, to put some real icing on the cake, we've got Paul Smart riding with us. I mean, he's a legend in the racing game and an ex-factory Triumph rider too. It doesn't get any better."

Smart and Ray Pickrell raced works 500 Triumphs in the 1967 Senior Manx but both retired early in the race. And, as the 500cc project gathered pace, fellow Brit Percy Tait finished second to Giacomo Agostini on one of the twins in the 1969 Belgian GP on the super-fast Spa Francorchamps circuit.

Smart though raced the factory, Rob North-framed Tridents in England and America before switching to Bon Hansen's Kawasaki team in the States – and racing the Ducati V-twin to victory at the Imola 200. Ironically, Ace Classics will share garage space at Goodwood with a team running a Bon Hansen Honda 450 replica.

Smart, now 70, said: "I didn't know the guys at Ace Classics until we agreed for me to ride their bike at Goodwood. But I understand they build a really top class bike and I'm really looking forward to having some fun on the twin." ▶

'I knew we had to build a replica of Buddy Elmore's Daytona winner and, to put some real icing on the cake, we've got Paul Smart riding with us. I mean, he's a legend in the racing game'



ABOVE

Main pic: Motor is about as authentic looking as you can get, right down to the Chevy Corvair oil cooler. Check out the oil tank against the original pictures on page 78

Left: Kev (left) and Jim Hiddleston working on the bike in France

Middle: Jim, who runs Mister Jim Motoren in Holland, warms up the Triumph

Right: Ace Classics' Buddy Elmore replica Daytona winner plus, in the background, the 1954 Tiger 110

The Ace Classics project began with a set of 1966 T100C crankcases and grew from there. The bike was assembled by Ace Classics' great friend Jim Hiddleston, an ex-pat Brit who lives in Holland and runs his own business under the 'Mister Jim Motoren' banner.

The motor is surprisingly stock; standard barrels, crank, rods, 9.5:1 compression Triumph pistons, standard valves and guides with R&D springs. It's got Megacycle cams. And even has conventional points ignition.

The factory engines featured new heads with shallower valve angles and bigger inlet ports to make the most of the 1 1/2in Amal GP carbs, rubber-mounted to prevent fuel froth. The heads found their way on to the later Daytonas.

The race engine compression ratio was 9.75:1 and it revved to 8000rpm with the sparks supplied by a Lucas energy transfer racing ignition mounted on the outside of a magnesium timing cover.

Tuning work to the Ace Classics bike has been limited to gas-flowing the otherwise standard head, and blending the porting to suit the twin Amal GP carbs with remote float bowls.

Jim says: "Really there's little been done to the engine apart from blueprinting and porting the head. But that's how it was in 1966 with the works bikes. Remember, this was Triumph having a real crack at Daytona (with the unit-construction engine). The more fancy parts and different ideas came in subsequent years (when Triumph would

return to Daytona in 1967 and record a fabulous one-two with Nixon this time beating Elmore)."

The transmission is a four-speed close-ratio gearbox – brand new, old stock Triumph – plus primary chain and Triumph clutch albeit with Norman Hyde plates. "We wanted it to be totally period correct," says Jim. "So that meant no belt primary or fancy aftermarket clutch."

The Daytona factory Triumphs also sported a rather obvious oil cooler, located to the right of the front downtube, in front of the crankcase. "I read up that the Triumph team used a Chevrolet Corvair oil cooler (the idea initially coming from California-based tuner Dan Macias) so I set about finding one on eBay. I found one for twenty quid plus postage in the States and it's identical to the ones Triumph used in 1966," states Kev with a high degree of satisfaction.

The oil tank on the Ace Classics bike is as factory as it gets. Kev says: "Triumph rubber-mounted the one gallon tank on special clips which we have. I bought the tank, an original factory item, off Rob Prior who specialises in these Daytonas. The thing is that the carb bellmouths (or velocity stacks as the Yanks call them) actually sit in the recess of the horseshoe-shaped tank." As per the works bikes, they locate on to rubber-lined brackets on the frame.

The Ace Classics frame differs from the factory bike however. Back in 1966, the UK Triumph factory had special frames made for the Daytona bikes, fabricated from T45 tubing. Outwardly the geometry looked similar to ▶

TRIUMPH DAYTONA REPLICA



ABOVE
(Top and right) Original pre-Daytona publicity shots of the works Triumph 500. Above left: Elmore's winning bike on display at the international bike show later in the year

the street bike but the factory bikes had a larger diameter top tube, plus an additional bracing tube to stiffen the headstock. The top tube was also bent to facilitate engine removal and fitting. The swingarm spindle area was also beefed up with small plates welded into place. The JoMo Daytona frames were similar but with a welded-on subframe and no kink in to the top tube. Although they too added a bracing strut from the headstock and braced the swingarm area.

The Ace Classics bike sports a stock 1966 frame with bolt-up subframe and no added bracing. Forks are also stock but with competition internals that also fit Thruxton Triumphs and other models from 1964-67. Shock is stock Triumph 12.9in though Kev says he's hoping to replace the covers and expose the springs so the forks look just like the factory bikes.

Gas tank is five-gallon Lyta, originally to fit a BSA. Seat has been specially made to look like the works Triumph ones – but Kev's still not sure where Triumph sourced the original seats. Fairing is modified Velocette Thruxton – just as the original was.

Wheels are 19in just like the factory bikes – shod with nice sticky, soft-compound Avon Roadrider rubber.

The finished machine is a joy of engineering excellence and close scrutiny leaves no question about its authenticity.

As befits the Goodwood Revival, the team is going to dress in period gear – in full Triumph regalia: corporate official racing team T-shirts, chinos, baseball shoes and hats – and the garage will be decked out in replica Triumph banners. Hansen Honda is doing likewise to create a period American racing team image in pit lane.

"Our bike is 100% 1966 technology," says Kev, "so we're not going to Goodwood with the thought of winning. We're going to enjoy ourselves and be part of the history and heritage of the event."

"When you consider we're racing again world class riders on bikes that are 2013 technology, it would be foolish to think any other way."

"The really nice thing is that Paul Smart has the same mindset. I don't really know him but once we put this together, we spoke on the phone and it seems he has very similar views to mine, that this is all about enjoying the experience of riding an old bike in an historical setting. It's the magic of taking part at Goodwood. There's nothing like it in the world." **CBG**

'Our bike is 100% 1966 technology, so we're not going to Goodwood with the thought of winning. We're going to enjoy ourselves and be part of the history and heritage of the event'