

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Works Racing Motorcycles - wolves among the (Manx) sheep

### Lead

Classic Driver meets engineer and gentleman road racer Patrick Walker of Works Racing Motorcycles - a one-man farmyard-based operation that designs and manufactures faithful Manx Norton engines, almost entirely from scratch...

### Norton factory



Patrick Walker is a man who prefers to work alone, at home with his family, where he feels most comfortable. That's not to say he can't manage a team of grease monkeys, his credentials as an engineer and team owner are second to none, he just prefers it that way. His career in engineering was kickstarted during a sandwich placement at the Norton factory at Shenston in 1985, where he worked alongside legendary mentors such as Doug Hele and Brian Crighton.

### Doug Hele



"Doug Hele was a proper gent, he taught me so much and really inspired me to become an engineer. He had such a charming and simple way of explaining things to me, even inventing his own vocabulary; 'jogolocity' was one of my favourites." Later, Walker helped adventurers Giles Cardozo and Bear Grylls achieve a flying car project (among others), eventually leading the team at Maxsym Engine Technology - a company that produces powerful parallel-twin engines designed to render the noisy and polluting two-stroke motors found in jet-skis and snowmobiles obsolete.

"I have the engineering degree, but have always enjoyed getting my hands dirty. You could say, I suppose, that I come from a white-collar background but possess blue-collar skills."

### 1962-spec Manx Norton





Let's be clear what Walker's company offers today: available as complete bikes or in engine-only form, Works Racing bikes are close replicas of a 1962-spec Manx Norton 350 or 500. Engineered almost entirely from scratch, engines are produced from original drawings and a full set of 3D CAD models, which took Walker six months to produce.

State-of-the-art precision methods are used to create engine parts that are, by design, more accurate than Norton's originals. The result is an oil-tight, high-performance thoroughbred – a true wolf in wolf's clothing. Many customer bikes race in the UK's highly competitive Lansdowne Classic Series. "My interest began as a teenager, after seeing a Norton on the front cover of Classic Bike magazine. That, and a discussion with co-founder and fellow Norton enthusiast Miles Robinson, at Goodwood in 2008. The rest, as they say, is history."

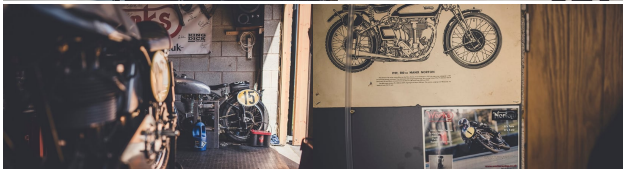
### Manx sheep



We meet Walker at his delightful wooden barn-style workshops in deepest, rural Leicestershire. Along with the family pet dogs, Walker's farm is also home to an Austin-Healey 3000 and a flock of Manx sheep that originate from the island from which Norton's iconic racer took its name – the Isle of Man. You won't find a faithful Collie at this farm though; these sheep are herded by motorcycle (with daughter riding pillion), a modified Norton 500T motorcycle, no less.

"There's nothing that extraordinary about the Manx Norton engine; in fact, it's relatively simple. The magic happens when you marry the engine to a Manx chassis. By doing so, you create something that can be ridden totally flat-out. My engines are both original and very quick. I only alter the original design if I can see a real benefit in performance."

### So just how quick are they?



At the 2014 Isle of Man Classic TT (previously known as the Manx Grand Prix) Walker's machines managed 1st, 2nd and 4th in class, 100+mph lap speeds, three finishers in the top 11 overall, two silver replica trophies and one bronze trophy. "I left the Isle of Man last year on a massive high, but it was the culmination of lots of hard work with many, many late nights. This year I want to concentrate more on having some fun."

### Define 'fun'



Fun for Walker is defined as riding and 'spannering' both his own and his customers' bikes for the Tandragee 100, a 'real' road-racing event in Ireland. "The track at Tandragee is just incredible. There is no feeling quite like racing on closed public roads in Ireland; it's the purest form of motorcycle racing and, for me, the most enjoyable. Strangely, I don't get nervous at the start like I do on short circuits. I'm starting something of a collective among friends, it's called the 'Gentlemen's Road Racing Club'. It would be called the 'GRRC' but a rather well known Lord, based in West Sussex, beat me to it."

Other than Walker's undoubted skill operating the plethora of modern computer-aided machinery in his workshop, (a brand new Nakamura-Tome lathe takes pride of place), Walker's drive to succeed manifests itself in precision engineering, good PR and a commendable attitude to doing business: "If I'm taking your money in exchange for one of my engines, it's quite simple; it has to work. The start-up costs of a business like this can be prohibitive. I do it because I enjoy it."

With a total of 53 units produced and with a delivery time of around six weeks for a complete engine, owning a top-quality replica of a road-racing icon has never been as enjoyable or more straightforward. Following our visit to Works Racing, however, it might help a little if you, too, are prepared to muck in and get your hands dirty. For more info, visit [www.worksracing.co.uk](http://www.worksracing.co.uk)

*Photos: Amy Shore for Classic Driver*  
**Gallery**















































































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