



ABOVE L-R Rockford Taka and Tora, TAS Taka, Tora, and Chibbi, Buffalo Mini Trail.

## Oriental oddballs

I enjoy your articles on early and odd Japanese bikes, as New Zealand had import restrictions in the late 1950s and through the 1960s, so only known brands and models were brought into the country. The article on Bridgestone 350GTR (OBA43) mentioned that this bike was made for another two years until 1972, after Bridgestone closed their motorcycle division, for the American market, but still made in Japan. When Bridgestone stopped producing motorcycles in 1969 they had three models not released, 100cc Taka Trail, 60cc Tora and Chibi mini bikes. Their American distributors Rockford Motors bought the models and tooling and had Tanaka Kogyo Ltd in Japan manufacture for them, and were sold in America as Rockfords, so it would appear that they also built the 350GTR in their factory. These three models were sold in the Pacific Basin including New Zealand as TAS eg. Taka by Tas Motor. This carried on until 1975 when the

tooling was sold to Taiwan where they were produced and sold as Buffalo.

The photo above shows two Rockfords, three Tas and a Buffalo in Ron's Toy Shed Motor Cycle Museum in Seddon, Marlborough, New Zealand.

**Ron Heberd**  
*Sedden, NZ*

## Big brother is watching!

John Paterson ("Signs of the times" *OBA 44*, Letters) writes about his frustration with traffic signs and the variable messages boards (VMBs) in particular. As a recent ex-employee of the organisation responsible, due to privatisation, I would like to point out that the average transit times displayed on these signs are quite accurate as they are determined by tracking motorists' e-tags between various points. They can also track "People of interest" almost anywhere, and how often they travel to certain destinations, and if you don't have an e-tag there is number plate recognition technology for average speed infringements. And yes – they can keep track of you!

**Mark Dodds**  
*Stanwell Tops, NSW*

## Lingo-gistics

I recently purchased a bike I had long wanted to do up. First thing I thought I would do was look around to find a couple of new mudguards for it. Strangely I could find very few. What I did find though was a lot of people offering "fenders" for motorcycles. I found this very strange as I had not previously come across a motorcycle with a "fender" on it. As many Australian blokes know a fender is a big bulbous thing you hang off the side of your boat to stop it bashing into the wharf, but why

would you want one on a bike? I suppose fenders hanging off the side of the bike would be good with lane splitting, you could bounce off the cars as you go through and if the bike fell over it would bounce up again, not a bad idea all in all.

Oh well I thought, people do strange things, try something else, look for a fuel tank for instance. Another surprise, there were very few fuel tanks available, however a lot of "gas" tanks. Now, in all the years I have been riding I have never once come across a motorcycle that runs on gas, but apparently they're out there, so there you go, you learn something every day.

The list goes on and on. Perhaps I have missed something, perhaps the Australian language with all its colloquialisms and idiosyncrasies which identify us has been banned and I didn't hear about it. Come to think of it, a few issues ago in *OBA* I noticed a bloke had written in to the editor and mentioned that he had been to the "drug store". At the time I thought he must have been an American bloke living in Australia and unaware that in this country they are called Chemists shops. Perhaps indeed he was Australian, I'm not sure now, however until someone can tell me why we should shed our culture and its language I shall keep talking Australian and avoid people selling strange objects for my bike even though it brings perplexed looks from some sales staff. Is it me, or is there something wrong with the Australian vernacular?

**David Barker**  
*St Helens, Tasmania*

*A complimentary, Australian-made Raritee t-shirt is on its way. – Ed*

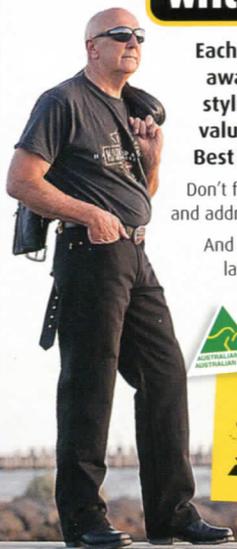
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