

The Rocket Gold Star. Facts and figures

From the Despatch Books

Some years ago the BSAOC invested a large amount of its member's money in having the factory despatch books transferred to microfiche. They now have copies of each book giving details of almost all BSA motorcycles despatched between 1924 and 1973. I have had a chance to share some of the information found there with you so I am going to start with a model I have been asked a few questions about and hope to dispel some myths.

The Rocket Gold Star

How many were made? How many went to the States? How many were scramblers? What colours were they? Did they all have GA10 frames? How long were they in production?

All Rocket Gold Stars have the frame number prefixed with GA10 except for the first two test machines. The first one which was despatched on 31st January 1962 with frame number GA7.12925 was fitted with engine number A10R.6380 and was registered as 985 FOC. This went on road test with Motorcycle Sport and after return the engine was fitted in frame number GA7 22449. This also had the registration 985 FOC and was despatched to Chris Vincent on 29th May 1962 for the Isle of Man TT although I think, not to race. (I have recently been informed it was used as a travelling marshall's bike). After this it was loaned to Bernal Osborne, editor of the Motor Cycle, then used by Worcestershire County Constabulary on test. I bet the local Bobbies were fighting to ride that one. Chris Vincent later took it to the 1963 TT. and G Harding took it to the Manx GP the same year. It was eventually sold as a secondhand RGS to Aston Autos Birmingham on 24th December 1963. This meant it was the last one to be despatched. Production began in February 1962 and the first bike, frame number GA10 101 was despatched to BSA New Jersey on 16th February 1962. It was finished in red. The second went to a less exotic place, Grimsby. There were **1584** bikes made of which **272** were scramblers. There were 9 specials made for Hap Alzina in California and one was fitted with a sidecar by Watsonian for the Earls Court Show in October 1962. Does anybody remember seeing it? Most of those that went to the states were finished in red but some were stated as being finished in black and a few were in silver. Surprisingly of the first 120 built only 11 went to the states with one going to Hong Kong, but then the exodus started, the vast majority of bikes went mostly to Hap Alzina in California, with some going to other far away places as Mexico, Australia, Japan, and even Formosa and Trinidad. Indeed almost all of January, February and March, and also June/July 1963 production went to the USA. After July 1963 bikes were built in small batches some times weeks apart and the last Rocket Gold Star was despatched on 15th October 1963.

Val emery from the Rocket Gold Star Club has given some info about the Rocket Gold Star used as a TT marshall's bike. Neil Kelly rode the bike with registration number 319 GOP. The bike was despatched to Gilbert Harding on the island and used for a road test by Neil. While riding it it broke a conrod but did not break through the crankcases. The factory sent a new bottom end out which was fitted in double quick time. Neil reported from then on it went well with no problems.