

The Boathouse

7 Westcliff

Sheringham

Norfolk

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5th March 1974

Dear Louis,

I want you to know that I have not forgotten the 4-branch. It would have been relatively easy to produce a 1st Series Aprilia 4-branch as we have our prototype from which to copy. You will realise that it is necessary to get a 2nd Series chassis fitted with engine and cylinder head without exhaust manifold from which we can work. Then the branches would have to be fitted by rule of thumb, as the outlets are much different owing to the revised engine mounting springs on this model.

All very well and I had a 2nd Series chassis lined up for the job. The engine has been done - crank ground to accept Vanderwell thin-walls etc., and was ready to put in. Then it happened: (this is something which I would prefer not to go any further in the Club!) We had to fit the English Hardy-Spicer adaption rear-drives to replace the very-worn-out Italian shafts. So we jacked up the rear-end one very cold day and were getting on very well when the Molotov explosion took place. What had occurred was that about 4 gallons of petrol had poured out of the front union which was loose owing to the engine being out and it went up like a bomb. In seconds, the whole workshop was afire from end to end. I could never believe that petrol could do so much damage in less than five minutes. I was able to get my recently renewed fire extinguisher on the job and with all doors and windows shut, the fire went out, perhaps within 3 minutes. It caused up to £2000's worth of damage and although insured to a certain degree, the car was completely burned out at the front end, all windows cracked right round to the rear ones and I face a major rebuild. Fortunately the engine was not in but when I get the front end cleaned down and derusted I will fit an engine and get on with your 4-branch.

From an
paraffin
heater!

You may like to know about events on the Hills which cater for the Aprilia as far as possible. The first is at Prescott on Saturday & Sunday, June 1st & 2nd (I believe that "our" do takes place on the 1st, ~~Saturday~~, practicing in the morning and official runs in the afternoon with a different event on the Sunday - this must be confirmed). Our event is for cars up to 1500cc made before 1960, with 1/4 second handicap for each year before 1960 excluding the war years, which gives us about 4 seconds.

Then comes the Club Sprint on Sunday 23rd June, about which I know nothing - where is it to be held?

The next Prescott event, 29th & 30th June has been cancelled on account of the 20% reduction of events as agreed with the RAC.