

AJS Motorcycle Models.

Production was started by four Stevens's brothers in 1897 using a proprietary engine. Sons of a blacksmith, they built their own complete motorcycles in 1909 & named it AJS after the initials of the eldest brother, Albert Jack Stevens. Two years later they produced the first machine which was entered into the Isle of Man TT, but it was three years later that success in the TT came and with it expansion, with numerous other successes. The company was taken over by Matchless in 1931 up to which they produced a wide range of machines & in 1930 the company held 117 world records despite being in financial difficulty by that time. Matchless was the trade name of Collier & Sons who originally produced pedal cycles in the late 19th century.

After producing their first motorcycle in 1902 they too manufactured a wide range of machines until their take-over of AJS when the two marques started to conform. In 1935 the Clubman range of 250, 350 & 500 cc singles evolved to provide the basis for the post-war AMC singles, which are so well known today.

In 1938 Associated Motorcycles (AMC) were formed & eventually encompassed the marques of AJS, Francis Barnett, James, Matchless & Norton. A glorious array singles & twins filled the post war years until AMC became bankrupt in 1966. The company was taken over by Manganese Bronze Holdings who formed Norton-Villiers to run the operations.

Four-stroke production ceased within a couple of years although the two-stroke trials and scrambles machines are still manufactured today under the AJS banner.

The superb range of four-stroke machines, which included the legendary racing AJS 7Rs, Porcupines & the Matchless G50 passed into a history which the Owners Club is now proud to preserve.

Model 8 1960-62 348cc ohv single, 350lb, 70mpg, 80mph

This is the bigger version of the Model 14 & G2, which has increased performance.

Model 14 1958-66, 248cc ohv single, 330lb, 66mpg, 70mph

At a time when most other manufacturers were going to unit-construction, AJS produced this single, which retained a separate gearbox. Employing butterfly valve springs & an oil tank in the engine case casting it was a brave attempt, which never succeeded. Heavy for a lightweight the handling improved with the AMC front forks on later models. The 14CSR was the sports model with improved styling & suspension.

Model 16 1945-66, 348cc ohv single, 400lb, 80mpg, 75mph

A good British single, which was not particularly spectacular for its time. The rigid versions had bad handling characteristics.

Model 18 1945-66 498cc ohv single, 400lb, 55mpg, 80mph

This was the 500cc version of the models 16 & G3. It had slightly better handling & was more pleasant to ride.

Model 20 1948-61 498cc ohv twin, 410lb, 60mpg, 90mph

These were introduced when twins were vogue. Late ones have alternator electrics & better frames. The early have odd handling characteristics & very poor brakes.

Model 30 1956-58 593cc ohv twin, 410lb, 60mpg, 90mph

This 600cc twin is difficult to come by & is slightly better than the 500cc. There is also a sports CS version.

Model 31 1959-66 646cc ohv twin, 430lb, 55mpg, 100mph

The enlarged 600cc engine improved in build after 1960 with new cylinder head & lubrication system. They acquired Norton forks & wheels in 1963 along with 12v electrics. The sports CS & CSR versions are more sought after but this also has a more fragile engine.

Model 33 1964-69 749cc ohv twin, 420lb, 45mpg, 110mph

AMC put the Norton Atlas engine into the Matchless cycle parts. It was very powerful, but they did vibrate a lot & the engine is fragile.