

FAMOUS CUSTOMER: Top Gear presenter James May collects his motorbike from David Silver at David Silver Spares in Leiston. Below, TV star James riding the bike, a 1970s Honda CB400F lovingly reconstructed by the Suffolk firm



Photos:
PHIL MORLEY

Celebrity bike fan gets dream machine

LEISTON: TV presenter James collects lovingly-restored classic

By Tom Potter

STAR of *Top Gear* and motorcycle enthusiast James May has taken delivery of another classic – a 1970s bike lovingly restored in Suffolk.

Presenter May could not wait to get his hands on the Honda CB400F – meticulously reconstructed by Leiston-based David Silver Spares – and even stayed to meet staff and tour the warehouse.

May, who hosts the hugely popular BBC motoring show alongside Jeremy Clarkson and Richard Hammond, placed an order for the bike last month after discovering David Silver and his team had embarked on a project to revive almost 60 classic CB400s.

The motorcycle, which first

rolled off the production line in 1975, was among the most popular bikes to ever be sold in the United Kingdom.

And the specific bike he had his eye on was originally sold by a Fulham garage less than two miles from his current London address.

Mr Silver, who typically deals in parts for vintage Honda motorcycles, decided to buy dozens of the old models from people who no longer had use for them and return each to its former glory.

He said: "We e-mailed every customer we had sold a CB400 part to in the last 15 years and asked if they were still using their bikes. We expected about 10 or 15 to respond, but ended up with almost 60 bikes.

"The project has received a lot of publicity in the biking world."

May's visit was engineered by the editor of *Classic Bike*, Hugo Wilson – a friend of James May's – who helped set up the visit when he heard about the purchase.

Mr Silver said: "Never for a minute did we think he would actually come here. He had a tour of the warehouse and loved seeing all of our classic bikes."

The company has been going for 26 years, starting out with a handful of spares bought from dealers and distributors, and now recognised worldwide for carrying parts belonging to more than a thousand different models.

The 30,000 sq ft warehouse at Leiston's Masterlord Industrial Estate employs 28 staff and ships to customers across the globe.



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