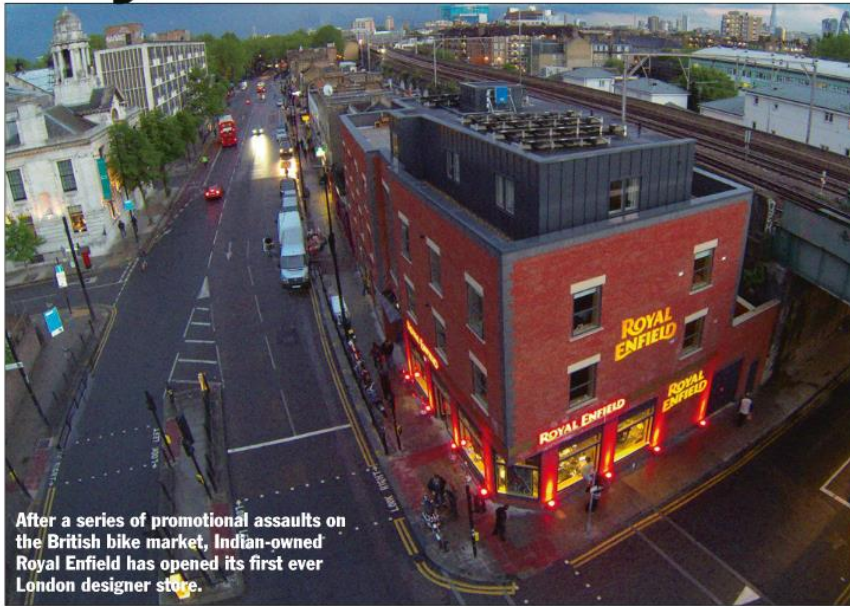




Business news

Royal Enfield marks 'return



After a series of promotional assaults on the British bike market, Indian-owned Royal Enfield has opened its first ever London designer store.



Photos by Johnny Jackson, Paul Bennett and @openactions.co.uk

ROYAL ENFIELD call it a "Concept Store", and it's only the second of its kind in the world. The first is in Delhi, India. This one is located on Poyser Street, Bethnal Green, London E2. The store was opened on Tuesday, 13 May by Royal Enfield CEO Siddhartha Lal and was attended by numerous RE personnel, with celebrity biking guest John Cooper on hand to discuss (in particular) the minutiae of Enfield's recent Top to Tip (John O'Groats to Land's End) Revival Ride (see panel, right).

The new concept store is owned by 51-year-old Andy Treloar, the man behind TTT Motorcycles which has been trading on the Poyser Street site for the past 17 years. TTT is a parts, clothing and repair shop, and also a long-time MotoGB dealership trading in Sym, Keeway, Daelim and Benelli motorcycles.

Following an eight-year planning-permission campaign by Treloar, the original building was recently demolished and redeveloped by a UK property firm. The location now boasts two related motorcycle businesses on the ground floor (Royal

Enfield and TTT Motorcycles, a total of 2000sq.ft), an MOT station at the rear, and nine flats above. The £1.6m rebuilding deal has left Treloar with ownership of the freehold plus a motorcycle brand (Royal Enfield) to add to his portfolio.

Said Treloar: "This is a new departure for me. We've got five staff at present and we're quite excited by the move. We're very happy about taking on Royal Enfield and are hoping to sell around 50 bikes per annum. We'll also be selling a wide range of Royal Enfield branded goods, from T-shirts to crash helmets to armoured jackets."

Certainly, the catchment is huge. The nearest Royal Enfield dealers are Hartgate in Mitcham, roughly eight miles south and across the Thames; Scooter City in Wembley (around eight miles to the north-west); and Steads of Romford (about seven to eight miles east). That leaves Treloar with possibly a million people, or even more, within convenient travelling distance.

Broadly speaking, the profile of established RE owners is aged-60 plus.

However, Royal Enfield is looking for a much younger market for its product and has aimed its recent Continental GT at that sector. To that end, the neighbouring district of Shoreditch is an upcoming hive of young "creative types" with whom RE might well find favour.

Local parking is less than ideal, but there is a nearby bike bay, and although the two businesses occupy the same building, there is a clear demarcation line between the franchises, with separate entrances.

Left and top: Stylish new store. Centre: Siddhartha Lal and the Enfield team celebrate. Above: Tom Bray, Lisa Hale and Doug Young.

Whether or not the concept store, in view of the inter-dependency of the retail outlets, can justifiably be considered a "solus" venture is a matter of opinion.

Other UK Royal Enfield stores are planned, but no details are available at present.

TTT Motorcycles/Royal Enfield Store: tel 020 7739 0343.



'Massive investment refreshing', says UK importer

STEVE OLIVER, general manager of Royal Enfield's UK importer MotoGB, is delighted at how the series of promotional events has gone, and reports positive spin-off in terms of motorcycle sales and the age profile of customers.

Asked about the scale of the marketing drive by the Indian manufacturer, Oliver said: "It's commendable and refreshing – a massive investment. I know what the Ace Cafe launch budget was and it was well over £100,000.

"Royal Enfield is well aware that the UK is the shop window for the world, which is why, after the first flagship store opened in Delhi, it chose London for the second.

"MotoGB has 40 multi-brand dealerships for Royal Enfield and the manufacturer wants to open another five stores in the UK, but they won't be on quite the same scale, and they will not be solus showrooms."

Oliver said sales and interest in the brand had spiralled

since the launch of the Continental GT. "It's brilliant. We are seeing quite a dramatic move in the average age profile of buyers. Whereas previously bikes were sold predominantly through renovation and classic bike shops and the average age of customers was in the sixties, now it has shot down to an average age of late thirties, early forties. We are now putting bums on seats among the 20 to 23-year-old age bracket, which is a bit of a first in this country, certainly for a long time.

"With the London store, it's a cool, trendy place to be, and it opens up the customer base, while retaining customers in their sixties and seventies."

Oliver, who said the promotional effort would not have been made without the manufacturer's permanently UK-based European marketing head Vikas Gautam, would like to see Royal Enfield broaden its product portfolio still further to ensure the growth is sustained.



Ex-racer James Toseland with MotoGB general manager Steve Oliver and Roger Boss, who helped to develop the original Continental GT.

to home soil'



Top to Tip revival was dream come true

WHEN ROYAL ENFIELD was looking for a publicity stunt to help promote the opening of its first exclusive retail store in the UK, a 50th anniversary Top to Tip revival must have been a dream come true for its marketing gurus.

And the John Cooper/Silverstone connection was the icing on the cake.

The Top to Tip ride, from John O'Groats to Land's End via Silverstone, was first run in 1964. As part of the ride, Cooper lapped the race circuit at a record-breaking 73mph, making the 1965 Continental GT 'Britain's Fastest 250'.

So Royal Enfield teamed up with social enterprise charity Riders for Health, and invited celebrities, motorcycle racers and enthusiasts to take part in a repeat of the challenge.

On Saturday 10 May at 10pm, five teams were flagged off from John O'Groats on the all new Continental GT which had been launched in September last year.

Each team had six riders, who formed a relay, changing over at pre-determined points along the route. The aim for the riders was to reach Land's End in less than 24 hours.

To keep the ride in line with its historical roots, the riders had to reach Silverstone by 1pm on Sunday 11 May, where 76-year-old racer John Cooper (pictured) took to the circuit, this time for a lap of honour. Recalling his 1964 record, Cooper laughed: "It's 50 years ago and I can't remember a thing about it. It was a nice comfortable bike to ride today, though, which is what you want when you're getting older. I'm enjoying myself, but then I've always enjoyed motorbikes. Everybody should ride one."

A tired but still enthusiastic and smiling Steve Oliver of Moto GB who, with his son Tom, had been accompanying the anniversary ride from John O'Groats to Silverstone, said: "It's taken months in the planning but it's going well."

Royal Enfield auctioned off a place on the ride in aid of Riders for Health – which will use the donation to maintain the motorcycles, ambulances and other vehicles that deliver health care in seven countries across Africa. Royal Enfield will also donate a bike used on the ride, which the charity can then raffle off in order to raise further funds.

As well as appearing at Silverstone, Royal Enfields will be showing the bikes at Mallory Park, Leicester, and TV personality Vic Reeves, who rides a 500 Bullet, is scheduled to reel off some laps at Oliver's Mount, Scarborough.

www.riders.org