



ANTIQUE MOTORCYCLES - ACCESSORIES AND RELATED ITEMS

LEA FRANCIS 1920 500CC 2 CYL IOE



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PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Lea Francis 1920 31/2 HP 496 cc MAG V-twin frame # A 1563 , engine # 2 C10 No. 43040

In 1895 Richard Henry Lea and Graham Inglesby Francis formed a partnership to manufacture high quality pedal cycles in Coventry.

Around 1910 it was decided to go into motorcycle manufacture.

A prototype was built in 1911 and by August 1912 the product was thoroughly tested and ready for introduction to the press and public.

Important features of the machine were the enclosed all-chain transmission, thoughtfully sited Bosch magneto, a sliding dog two-speed gear and a quickly detachable rear wheel.

Quality of workmanship and engineering were on a very high level, comparable to the high standard set by John Marston's Sunbeam machines. For the 1914 season an additional model was introduced with a somewhat bigger 496 cc engine and at the end of 1914 a three speed gearbox was introduced.

After the war the customer could choose for a JAP or M.A.G. engine of 496 cc.

In 1920 JAP and MAG engines of 3 ½ HP (496 cc) were employed, from 1921 on also a 5 HP (592 cc) power source was available.

By mid 1924 motorcycle production came to a halt and Lea & Francis Ltd. concentrated entirely on the production of light cars.

Some typical Lea Francis features – seldom seen on a motorcycle – are the metal conduits for the spark plug high tension cables and the flexible metal downpipes of the exhaust system.

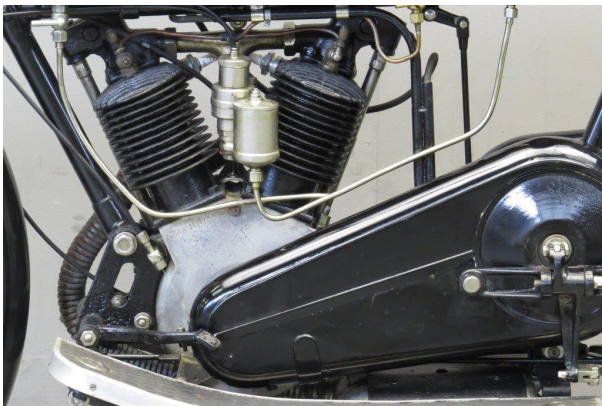
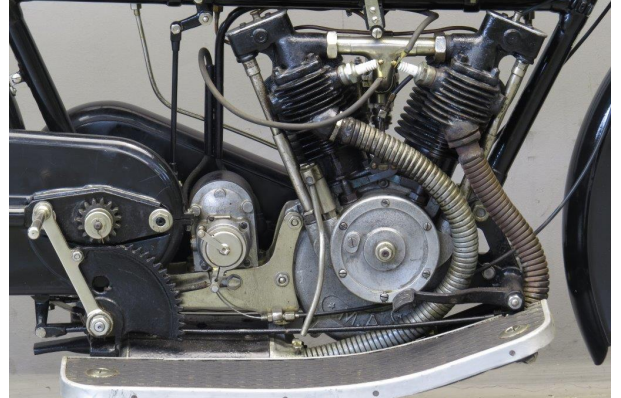
We gather this machine is a 1920 model, since the MAG engines were available late in 1919 and 1921 models got a shorter steering head.

It is recorded that some 1,500 machines were made, of which around two dozen remain with us today.

The Lea Francis story was recorded by Ken Hallworth in "OLD BIKE" number 18, summer 1996.



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