



Brian Slark in the workshops at the Barber Museum: better conditions than at AMC

South London to Alabama

Most of the staff at Barber are good ole boys with southern drawls, but one has more than a trace of south-east London in his voice. So how did Brian Slark end up in Alabama?

"I started at Associated Motor Cycles in Plumstead as a test rider in 1958," says Slark. "We rode every production bike for about 20 miles, come rain, snow or mud.

"Bud Ekins came over to ride the ISDT, and I loaned him my scrambler to ride a few warm up events. He drowned me in a bottle of whisky at a motorcycle club meeting and then invited me over to California.

"I was there for a year in 1964 but my wife was expecting. We went back to England and I got my old job back, but it was a miserable winter and I soon thought, 'I could be back in California.'

"I went to work for BSA's western US distributor, then Norton asked me to head up their service in the US, so I moved to the tiny Norton shop in Long Beach.

By '74 or '75 it was all over so I opened my own shop selling bikes and Norton parts. I kept the shop until '86. Then I worked with Dave Mungenas who had a big classic bike shop in St Louis. I sold a few bikes to George Barber. In 1995, I came to work for Jeff (Ray) and Mr Barber. I wanted a chance to pass on what I'd learned in fifty years.



Brian Slark on a Triumph desert racer in the Sixties