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Historic bike all fired up for rally

Published Date: 21 September 2007

By Alex Christie-Miller

A Hurstpierpoint man is crossing the Channel to fire up a historic bike at a classic vehicle rally in France.

Andy Smith will ride the bike owned and raced by renowned former endurance motorcyclist Peter Darvill at the Weekend of Automobile Excellence at the Reims-Gueux circuit in France this weekend, along with his friend Steve Haffenden, of Hove.

Andy, 43, who collects historic racing vehicles, knew Peter Darvill by reputation as an endurance racer in the 1950s and 60s who won the Manx Grand Prix in 1963, and competed extensively around the UK and Europe.

He said: "It is a great privilege to be able to use Peter's bike. It was lent to us by his family and the Classic Endurance Racing Team, and it's very valuable because of its history."

He said the bike, a Honda CB750 which Peter imported in 1969, was the very first of the model to reach the country. He bought it because it was unique in having a starter motor, unlike British bikes of the time which had to be push-started, thus giving him an edge on the starting grid.

Peter was one of the most renowned 'privateer' racers, meaning he was not sponsored and supported by a company, and did all maintenance work on his bikes himself.

The rally will have added significance because the bike was almost certainly raced by Peter himself at Reims-Gueux in 1969.

For the full story see this week's Mid Sussex Times.



Andy Smith on the Honda


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