

Originality

I've had my Z650 for just over 46 years, I bought it new in 1978 and so it's all original - apart from the exhaust system and the brake line and the headlight and.....

What is originality and how long does it last? I could say that the bike was original on the 6th May 1978 when I collected it from the showroom and that was probably the only time it could be truly considered original. Regular maintenance items such as tyres get changed from the originals (thank goodness!), in keeping with the late 70's fashions the headlight was changed to a Cibie system and the standard brake hose was changed to steel braided equivalent, so within a few months the bike was no longer "original". Mud on the road prompted a minor off and that led to a 4-1 exhaust system. Later changes included Hagon rear shocks, different sized front sprocket and Z400 handle bars.

Looking at the bike now, I'm beginning to find it difficult to identify the original parts! Due to a crash in 1981, I had to replace the frame, forks and all of the headlight area. More recently, during a restoration project, I've replaced the fuel tank, installed a different starter clutch from a Zephyr, added engine crash bars, new front mudguard, etc. The wheels are original, but the time will come when it needs new spokes and rims.

So is the bike original? No, it isn't but I know its complete history and I can identify the bits I have changed from standard either due to damage or modern parts improvements. So is any bike original? Only the ones that are still in their crate or have moved from a crate to a display cabinet. As soon as a bike is used, we will inevitable change something – it's just a matter of degree to which you define "originality" and we all have our own views on that topic.

1978 (one day old)



2024 (46 years old)

