

Royal Enfield Bullet TLS front brake improvement kit.



The Enfield India Bullet has been fitted with various types of front brake over the last 50 years of production. A disc brake was even offered 10 years ago on 'Superstar' models, but by far the majority of Indian Bullets in the UK are fitted with the full width 7 inch TLS drum brake.

Braking has always been relatively poor in standard form which can make riding on modern roads a hazardous and trouser colour changing, if not character building affair. The current new model Bullet replacement, the Electra X, is fitted with a disc brake as part of it's apparently intended 1970's cosmetic appeal and it provides safe stopping and lower maintenance.

Question is, what do you do if you want to retain the period looks of the drum brake or want to avoid spending hundreds of pounds rebuilding the front wheel or even replacing the front wheel to fit a disc brake kit?

Well, there is a number of good improvements that can be made to the TLS brake so I thought I'd put pen to paper and offer this sage advice by listing the best way to get safer stopping power and better reliability. I would suggest that ALL the following suggestions are carried out at the same time as an afternoon fettle to sort the brake once and for all.

Hitchcock's Motorcycles in Solihull is where I choose to purchase my Enfield spares. They are passionate about these bikes and develop kits to restyle, rebuild and even totally transform your Bullet from a humble chuffer into a fire breathing Goldie contender or even a green lane trials iron. Service is second to none. All parts mentioned here can be obtained from Hitchcock's by mail order online from their web site or by selecting from their excellent printed catalogue.

Firstly, replace the front brake cable with a British made heavy duty item.

The heavy duty operating cable will provide reliability and a much better feel to the action of the front brake.

Secondly, by sheer coincidence I discovered very recently why newer Enfield Bullets have better front brakes thanks to a chance remark by a friend called Horst. It's a little known fact that in April 2003, the Indian factory under pressure from their overseas importers such as Watsonian Squire, made quality improvements to a number of components to the TLS brake. A number of part numbers were revised which led me to this discovery.

Qty.	Part Number	Description
1.00	145735	FRONT BRAKE PLATE (FROM 3B 623870D)
2.00	145585	7" BRAKE SHOE **EACH** FROM 2B512788F)
2.00	145754	FRONT BRAKE OPERATING CAM (FROM 3B 623870 D)
2.00	145593	FRONT BRAKE SHOE PIN

However, the best and actually the cheapest solution would be to simply order a complete brake back plate with all these parts ready fitted complete with new operating levers and linkage rod. Basically the newer item is simply better made with extra wide fillets in the casting and better quality linings.

Price is just under £100 from Hitchcock's, which is good value compared to the cost of outright softer shoes only, and much cheaper than a disc rotor for my winter bike.



Thirdly and finally, carry out a simple modification to the brake adjustment lever linkage to provide simpler independent shoe adjustment.

The standard design uses a partly threaded rod with both left and right-handed threads on different ends. Simply reverse the rod so the left hand thread and trunnion is at the bottom then drill out the new top trunnion's right hand thread so that the threaded part of the rod passes through freely. Refit the trunnion nut and an additional locknut for safety.

With these three basic changes, the cable, the back plate and the adjuster it is now possible to have an effective front brake commensurate with the performance envelope of the motorcycle. More feel and progressive bite and even tyre squealing is possible on my scrambler. A remarkable improvement.