Twitter Thread by Pulp Librarian



Pulp Librarian
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Today in pulp... I look back at Raleigh bikes: the most exciting bikes on the planet! #ThursdayMotivation #cycling



Raleigh was the all steel bike that defined a generation of cyclists: for many it was their first introduction to the joys - and perils - of cycling!


RALEIGH

The brand was named after Sir Walter Raleigh - inventor of the cigarette. And it was built in Nottingham - home of the cigarette. So obviously everyone who rode one smoked...


RALEIGH

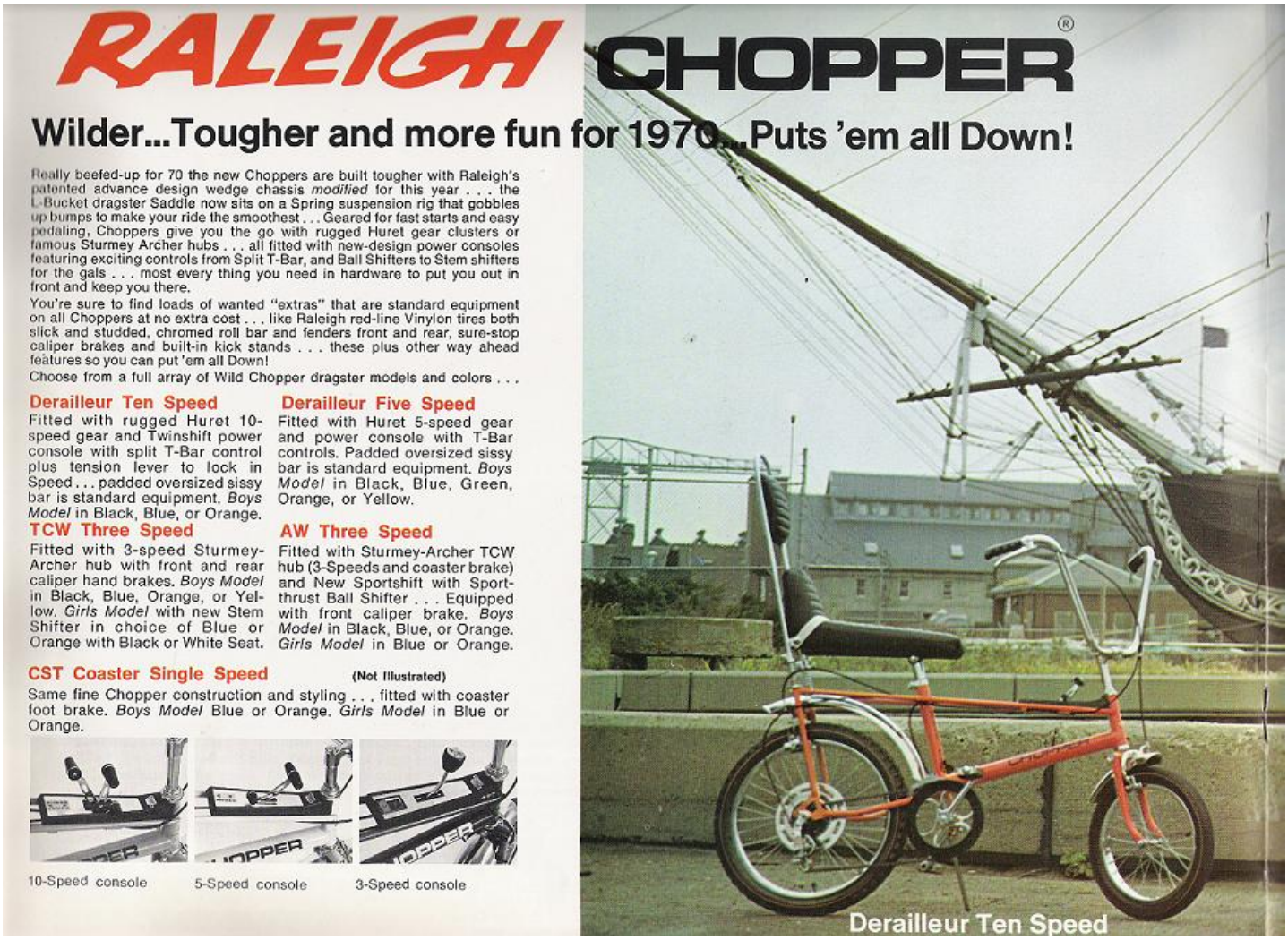
Now of course British cycling has a long and noble history...



...but you didn't come here for that! You want a big fat hit of nostalgia, so let's get right to it.



Let's start with the good stuff: the 10 speed Mark I Raleigh Chopper! Possibly the most dangerous - and therefore best - bike any child could own. I mean, look at it!!



Bizarre wheels, an unbalanced banana seat and a frankly lethal gear lever placement made the Mark I Chopper a bike that required strong nerves to ride!



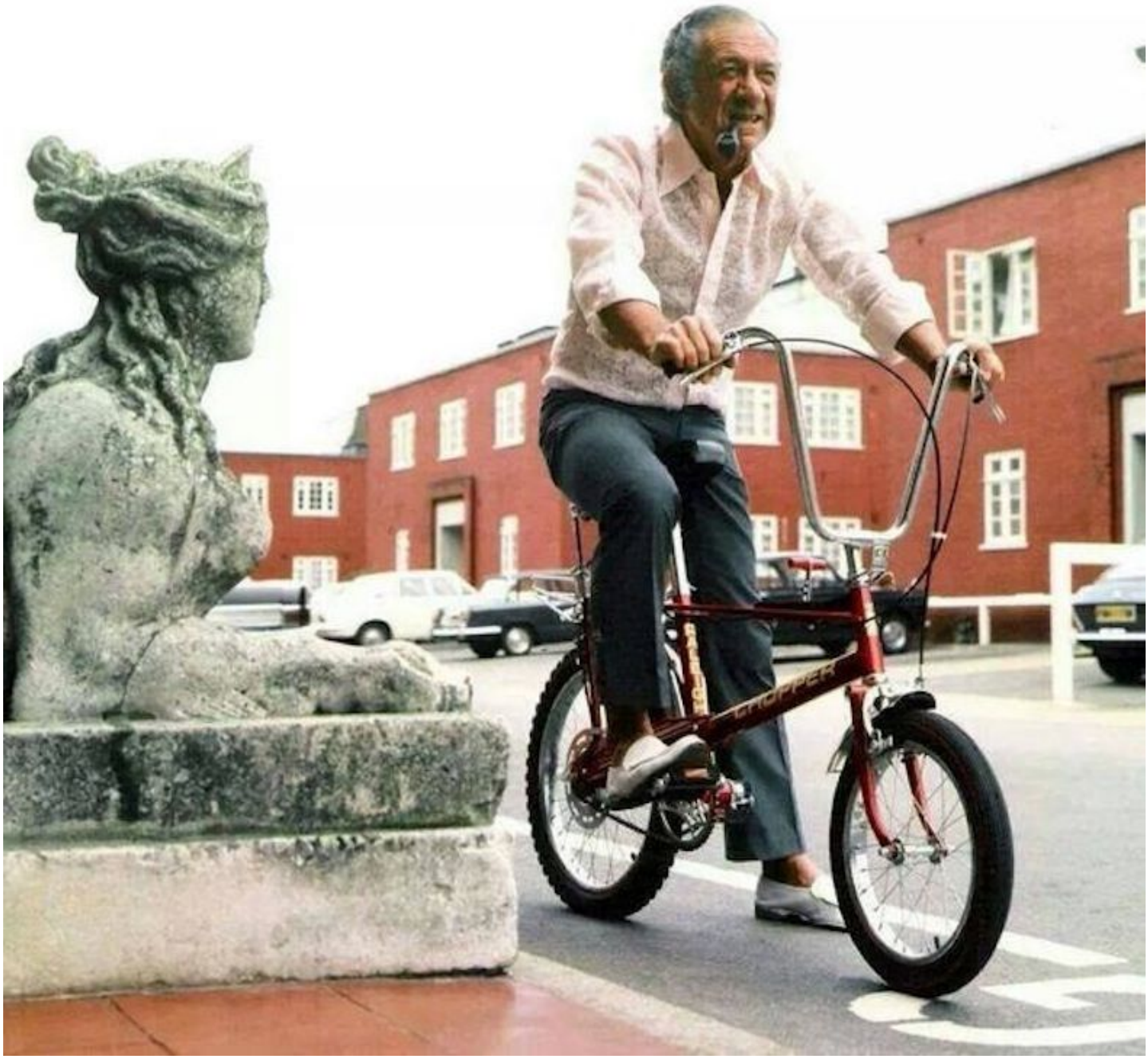
Junior Chopper options were available: the Budgie and the Tomahawk let you slowly build up your confidence, along with your bruises, blisters and minor fractures.



By 1976 Raleigh had released the Mark ll chopper: less unbalanced but still next to impossible to ride safely in flares. Couldn't they give us a chain guard or something?



The Chopper was the bike of the '70s that's for sure. But times they were a changing, and as the Summer of Punk came around so did a new, tougher kind of bike for the nation's youth...



The Raleigh Grifter was made of pig iron and could withstand a direct nuclear blast. Never was a bike so heavy to ride or so unforgiving on the cobbles...



...but it looked boss! With a three speed twist-grip gear shifter and a mean padded crossbar this is the bike Bodie and Doyle would ride to school. It was mean. And very heavy.



Grifter XL

The fabulous new Grifter XL will be available from Summer 1981. All the rugged style and exciting looks of the Grifter plus useful built in rear carrier and studded Redline tyres. A great looking bike with its satin chrome handlebars on a black double clamp stem and a sporty red handlebar cushion pad. There's also a new narrow, padded and quilted saddle and super 'Laser Light' graphics on the frame.
Colour: Gloss Black with Hot Red guards.

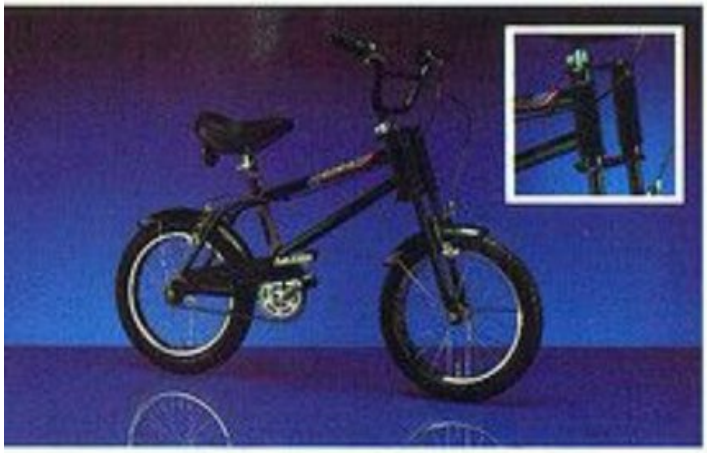


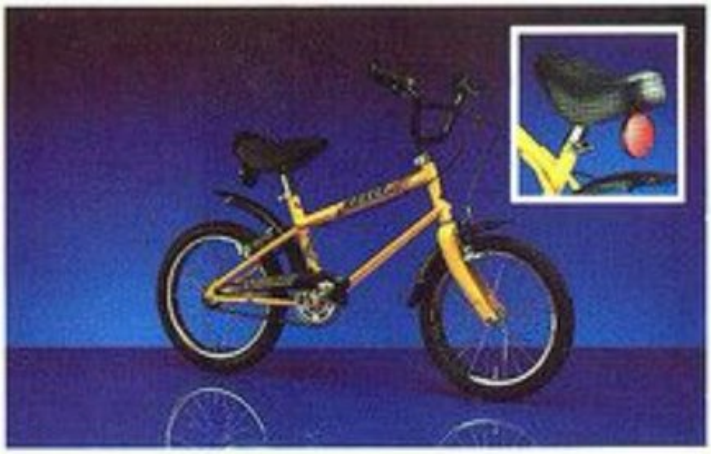




Grifter

The original Raleigh Grifter, the toughest there is. Low slung frame, triangulated for maximum strength with built in propstand. Unique moulded foam saddle and matching handlebar pad. Tough studded tyres and flared mudguards rugged enough for rough country. Now with the all-weather protection of Raleigh Raincheck brakes.
Colours: Infra Red with Matt Black forks, Horizon Blue or Silver. All with Matt Black guards.





Strika

Another winner from the same stable, scaled down to size. The handlebars have the unmistakable Grifter feel. Tubular front fork that takes all the rough treatment you can hand out with its 'mock shocks' that make it fantastically rugged. Twin caliper brakes with all-weather Raleigh Raincheck blocks.
Colours: Gloss Black, Silver or Hot Red. All with Matt Black trim.

Boxer

Last in line, the Boxer owes a lot to the Grifter. Like its saddle, its handlebars and its studded tyres. This is a tough, sturdy bike for the younger rider, with its distinctive flared mudguards. Twin caliper brakes with Raleigh Raincheck for safer stopping in the wet.
Colours: Yellow or Space Blue with Matt Black trim.

Grifter Gangs soon sprung up across the country: ITV-watching toughs who smoked Bensons and knew the lyrics to Sham 69 songs! They probably read Battle Action too!



But nothing - genuinely nothing - could compare to Raleigh's next triumph: the Burner!

BMX RALEIGH 'BURNERS'

BURNER
£89·99

A

ALSO AVAILABLE IN BLUE

SUITABLE FOR INSIDE LEG 22 to 30 ins

MINI-BURNER
£77·50

B

SUITABLE FOR INSIDE LEG 18 to 22 ins

BURNER II TUFF
£135·00

C

SKYWAY TUFFWHEELS

SUITABLE FOR INSIDE LEG 22 to 30 ins

IMPORTANT! PLEASE CHECK INSIDE LEG MEASUREMENT BEFORE ORDERING

IN A CHOICE OF BLACK OR SILVER

ULTRA BURN
£149

D

- DIA-COMPE BRAKES
- COMPETITION MACHINE
- TANGE 1200W FRONT FORKS
- SUGINO CRANK WITH DETACHABLE ALLOY CHAIN RING

SUITABLE FOR INSIDE LEG 22 to 30 ins



SUITABLE FOR INSIDE LEG 22 to 30 ins

604

J Boys' glove in quality leather. Elasticated wrist and padded back for extra protection. **Red-black.**
JW 228 Gloves

Size **7** (ages 7 to 9 yrs)	£9·99	20 wks 50p
Size **10** (ages 10 to 12 yrs)		
Size **13** (ages 13 to 15 yrs)		

A The BMX 'Burner' has a high tensile tig welded frame with matt black BMX front forks, spoked wheels with chrome rims and yellow tyres. One-piece forged crank with rat-trap pedals, gold-coloured chain, alloy brakes with 45° bend levers. 'V'-pattern matt black handlebars with foam grips. Sakae 4 bolt stem. BMX racing style saddle fitted with crash pads, rear reflector and chain wheel disc. **Red or blue.** *Delivery normally within 28 days from receipt of order.*

UL 509 Cycle £89·99 20 wks **£4·50**; 38 wks **£2·37**

B Mini burner BMX-style cycle with 16-in wheels. BMX front forks, spoked wheels, crash pads, rear reflector and chainwheel disc. Padded seat. Twin caliper brakes. Red. *Delivery normally within 28 days from receipt of order.*

UB 688 Cycle £77·50 20 wks **£3·88**; 38 wks **£2·04**

C BMX 'Burner' II Tuff – has all the features of the BMX 'Burner' but with yellow skyway Tuff wheels. Blue. *Delivery normally within 28 days from receipt of order.*

UL 696 Cycle £135·00 20 wks **£6·75**; 38 wks **£3·56**; 50 wks **£2·70**

D The BMX 'Ultra-Burner' has a high-tensile tig welded frame with Tange TX-1200W BMX front forks. Features include spoked wheels with alloy blue trims and blue gum-wall tyres, Sugino one-piece chrome moly crank with alloy BMX pedals, Sugino MX2 detachable alloy chain ring, Dia-Compe alloy brakes with 45° bend levers. Also alloy V-pattern handle bars with foam grips, Suntour 4-bolt stem, BMX racing style saddle. Crash pads, rear reflector. **Silver-colour or black.** *Delivery normally within 28 days from receipt of order.*

UL 725 Cycle £149·99 20 wks **£7·50**; 38 wks **£3·95**; 50 wks **£3·00**

E Special 'BMX' helmet by Toptek, fit all sizes. Louvred p drag. Special ventilation cool when competing thermoplastic. **Red.**

AK 516 Helmet £16·99

F Team BMX decorative prints front and back. Foam elbows and shoulders. **Royal-gold. AH 601 Je**

To fit chest **26/28, 30/**
£7·99 20 wks **40p**

G Team BMX trouse trimmings repeatin BMX' logo. Belt at front, back. Foam padding knees. *Fibre:* nylon. Ro **AH 605 Trousers**

Waist **24, 26, 28 ins £**
20 wks **45p**
Waist **30 ins £10·99** 2

H Dunlop boot with and sturdy sole **blue. JX 200 Boots**

Sizes **13, 1, 2 £4·50** 2
Sizes **3, 4, 5 £4·99** 20
Sizes **6, 7, 8 £6·99** 20

BMX fever gripped Britain in 1980, and only one bike would do for the country's bunny-hopping youth. The Burner had it all...



The Mark ll version in sky blue and banana yellow, with tuff wheels and dipped crossbar remains a thing of beauty to this day. Why it's not in the Tate Modern is beyond me. Raleigh had reached its peak...



...and it was all downhill from there. The Bomber? The Maverick? Please! Raleigh failed to really get the mountain bike craze of the mid-80s and as BMX sales slumped so did the company's fortunes...



It's last radical idea was the Vectar: a computerised bike designed by a man with a ruler. It was cycling's answer to Street Hawk, and lasted about as long.

VEKTOR

MACHINES BY RALEIGH



Raleigh bikes were crazy, energetic and innovative in their own British way. For example the 1970s Raleigh Strika anticipated the front fork shock absorber concept decades before other manufacturers...



And there is still a frisson of excitement to be had every time you grab a vintage Raleigh and go bombing around the local park. That feeling will never leave us. Nor will the minor concussion from falling off it and hitting a tree. Happy days!

More stories another time...

