



History - from the 1998 Website :

Dave started his bike career restoring an early CB750. Buying bits from a breaker led to him buying job lots and before he knew it he was dealing in new and used Honda parts in London. That was back in the mid-80's, just when older Japanese bikes were beginning to earn serious credibility as significant classic machines.

But many restorers found that Honda's spares prices were too much for their pockets. There was obviously a demand for discounted parts. At the same time dealers and parts distributors around the world found they were stuck with crate loads of parts for old Hondas. He then started building up contacts and found himself being offered the entire spares stocks belonging to army units in Africa and even Arabian police forces. Now he travels around the world buying stock. He has an amazing recall on Honda part numbers making it possible for him to scan a printout of parts and know exactly what's on offer. It's a skill that ensures he does not inadvertently end up buying a container load of moped offside indicator brackets.

The next job is to get the material to England; most of the stuff comes into the port of Felixstowe in containers. "We moved out of London at the height of the 1988 property boom - it just cost too much to rent space in London and with a business increasingly based on mail order (it accounts for 95% of the £2 million annual turnover), being based in Suffolk was as good as anywhere else and a lot cheaper". We have 25,000 square feet of storage space and every inch of it is choke-a-block with those distinctive brown Honda boxes with the red label.

We specialise in Honda motorcycle parts from the early 1960's to the 1990's. Because we buy stock from around the world, for all models, there is a good chance that even if the part is not available in your country we may still have the part in our stock. Also, due to the way we purchase our stock we are able to pass on huge discounts to our customers, (25-80% lower than Honda) all parts are new and original unless otherwise stated. We have on our shelves in the region of 60,000 different Honda parts. This probably makes us the largest stockiest of early Honda parts in the world. An addition to the business is the importation and sale of second hand motorcycles of all makes.

David Silver Spares, 2005 :

From £200 worth of tanks and mudguards to...
NEW HONDA PARTS WORTH £15 MILLION!

David Silver buys up Honda spares from all over the world (Bolivia, would you believe?) to keep classic Hondas on the road at knock-down prices. But Brian Tarbox discovers how it started almost by accident.



Mr. Honda himself, David Silver with classic CB72 and modern Interceptor.

MORE than 40,000 Honda owners ride motorcycles fitted with parts bought from David Silver Spares. Note the company's telephone number: 01728 833020. Every Honda owner should scrawl it on the cover of their workshop manual. Whether you run an early classic, a recently minted superbike or a grey import such as a CBR400 or RVF400, that number will come in handy sooner or later.

David Silver built the business that bears his name with the supply of new 'old stock' genuine Honda parts bought from dealers and distributors all over the world. He began 16 years ago with the purchase of a couple of hundred pounds worth of obsolete petrol tanks and mudguards and now carries a mountain of spares for more than 1000 different models.

The massive inventory includes the most comprehensive range in Europe for machines of the Sixties, Seventies and early Eighties and the company can supply just about any component for post-85 models (up to and including those in the current Honda UK fleet) at hard-to-beat prices. The company's web site quotes savings of up to 80 per cent on Honda list prices.

Strong spares demand, to keep in action the ever-increasing number of grey imports on Britain's roads, has been another lucrative step in the development of the business, which has 25 staff and an annual turnover of £2.7m... and rising.

The sales counter is in recently-built offices opposite the warehouse.



It is a success story that has far exceeded David Silver's own expectations. The 41 year-old chemistry graduate said: I didn't think I would be anything more than a one man band doing a little buying and selling. I remember visiting the Honda dealers Mocheck and saying I was going to give up my day job to sell new obsolete Honda parts. They said, 'You will never make any money doing that'.

Thousands of classic Honda owners are glad David took the gamble instead of remaining a sales rep with his father's kitchen gadgets and utensils company. Ask anyone with a recently restored Sixties or Seventies Honda where they got the parts. No prizes for guessing their answer. A journalistic exaggeration? Try the experiment for yourself at the VJMC's Lotherton Hall Show (July 21) or the Mechanics Show (October 19-20).

The restorer of a CB550 told me that he used the company so often he had their phone number added to his BT list of 'Friends and Family' to qualify for special discount. Many others send David photographs of their restorations with thank you notes for having made the project possible.

Obviously, there are a finite number of genuine Honda-made parts for the older classics, but the supply has not been exhausted. Hondas were sold world-wide and used by the military and police forces in numerous countries. Unused parts in their original boxes are still being discovered and just about everyone in the trade, from the jungles of south America to the deserts of Africa, knows that David Silver is a potential buyer. Don't phone if you have a few odds and ends in the back of your garage to sell. David Silver buys in bulk. Tons of spares have been bought from the Middle East, a horde of Sixties parts came from Bolivia and the cheque book came out again when parts stockpiled by Honda's first distributor in Switzerland came up for grabs.



David has also plugged several crucial gaps in his stock list with pattern parts. Take the Honda CB400F as an example. He said: We sell more parts for the 400/4 than any other classic. The silencer bracket is a discontinued item. Without that you can't fit an original exhaust system of which we sell 150 a year, so we had it re-manufactured. We did the same thing with exhaust brackets for the 500/4 and have had CB72/77 silencers re-manufactured in New Zealand. We are demand led. If there is a very strong demand for a particular part we will invest in having it re-manufactured but it is a very expensive process and it has to pay. One in every three orders is for export. Launch of a web site shopping facility in 1996 played a major role in bumping up that side of the business. America is the company's top overseas market. Number two is more of a surprise. Would you have guessed the Scandinavian countries?

The explanation is simple lots of old Hondas on their roads and sky high parts prices in their showrooms.

David runs his business from the Masterlord Industrial Estate in Leiston, Suffolk. It's a few miles from the coast, convenient for shipments of new stock from the nearby Felixstowe docks.

He and his sales staff work from a recently built open-plan office which stands in stark contrast to the rundown-look of the rest of the estate. Parts are stored and despatched from the building opposite.

Its facade is far from glamorous. Paint is peeling from the small company sign and the humble main entrance makes the impact of discovering what lies within even more breathtaking. You enter a huge warehouse stacked to the gunnels with spares - and there are is a network of four more chambers just like it providing 25,000 sq-ft of storage space. The stock has an estimated retail value of about £15m and runs to 60,000 different items.

Between 1995 and 1998 the company also sold used motorcycles imported from the United States. David said: 'We stopped because prices gradually got more and more expensive in America as the dollar gained in strength, while prices were falling here because the market was flooded.

Honda caught his eye

BRITISH prices seemed a lot higher when he was 16 with his nose pressed against the window of a London dealer's showroom. The bike that caught his eye was a new Honda SS50.

I owned it for a year but it spent most of its life being repaired he said. A friend had an FS1E which was a better machine and much faster. I don't think it was the bike so much as the incompetence of the dealer I bought it from. One time they put oil in the petrol tank thinking it was a two stroke.

Next up, a second-hand CJ250 which was hit with...

...camchain problems. Still, he passed his test on that twin and nominates the six-cylinder CBX1000B he went on to own many years later as one of his favourite motorcycles.

University was followed by a summer camp job in America before he returned home to London to work for his father. The business was struggling. To make ends meet he began buying motorcycles to fix and sell and got a Saturday job working behind the motorcycle spares counter at Sondel Sport.

His big break came in 1986 when Honda dealer and parts distributor, Parks of Lewisham, had a stock clearout of petrol tanks and mudguards which they displayed in their showroom window at knockdown prices. David happened to be passing and bought the lot. They were such a bargain he reckoned he could pass much of the saving on and still return a rewarding profit.

Doubts quickly crept in. What if he had been too hasty? Within two hours he had hedged the bet, striking a deal with a bike breakers to whom he sold half what he had bought for twice what he had paid. A three or four line ad in Motor Cycle News proved his original plan sound.

The phone never stopped ringing, he said. I realised I could make money doing this. The demand was there but people with older Hondas were buying used parts from breakers while distributors were stuck with stock they could not sell because their prices were far too high.

He got to work phoning Honda UK's regional distributors. Deal followed deal. For the first few months he worked from the house he rented in Ealing, West London. A flat above Bill Bunn Motor Cycles followed. It was better because it had a floored attic he could use for storage. He took on a part-time helper when the business moved to a warehouse in Kilburn in 1987, and Leiston has been the company's address since December 1988.

David has travelled the world buying stock but has now delegated much of that work to senior staff in order to spend more time with wife Paula and their 2 1/2 year old daughter Anna.

Where to next for the company? David cites the cut-price sale of official Honda accessories as a growing market and notes an increase in America in Seventies Hondas which classic owners there had, until recently, dismissed as scrap.



Warehouse, piled high with parts bought in bulk from as far afield as South America.



Ready to take your order, Anne Miller has been with the Company since it moved to Leiston, Suffolk, in 1988

The sales team handle orders from all over the world. Most Exports go to the USA, followed by Scandinavia



Your tank sir? Jason Slaymaker gets ready to despatch another part in the warehouse



<http://www.davidsilverspares.co.uk/>
<http://www.davidsilverspares.com/>

This PDF document was made by www.honda-v4.com Norway