

INVENTING THE ALLOY WHEEL

In 1899 a patent was filed for one of the world's first motorcycles. The 'Motor Wheel' was developed by Edwin Perks and Frank Birch, former employees of Humber bicycles. They strapped a 222cc four-stroke engine and petrol tank to a Singer bicycle. The Singer motorcycle was born.

The engine powered the rear wheel, which was the world's first cast alloy spoke wheel. The motorcycle cost £63 at the time but recently one went to auction, expected to sell for £21,000. Alloy wheels are now central to the motoring world, a major innovation from a tiny Coventry workshop.

