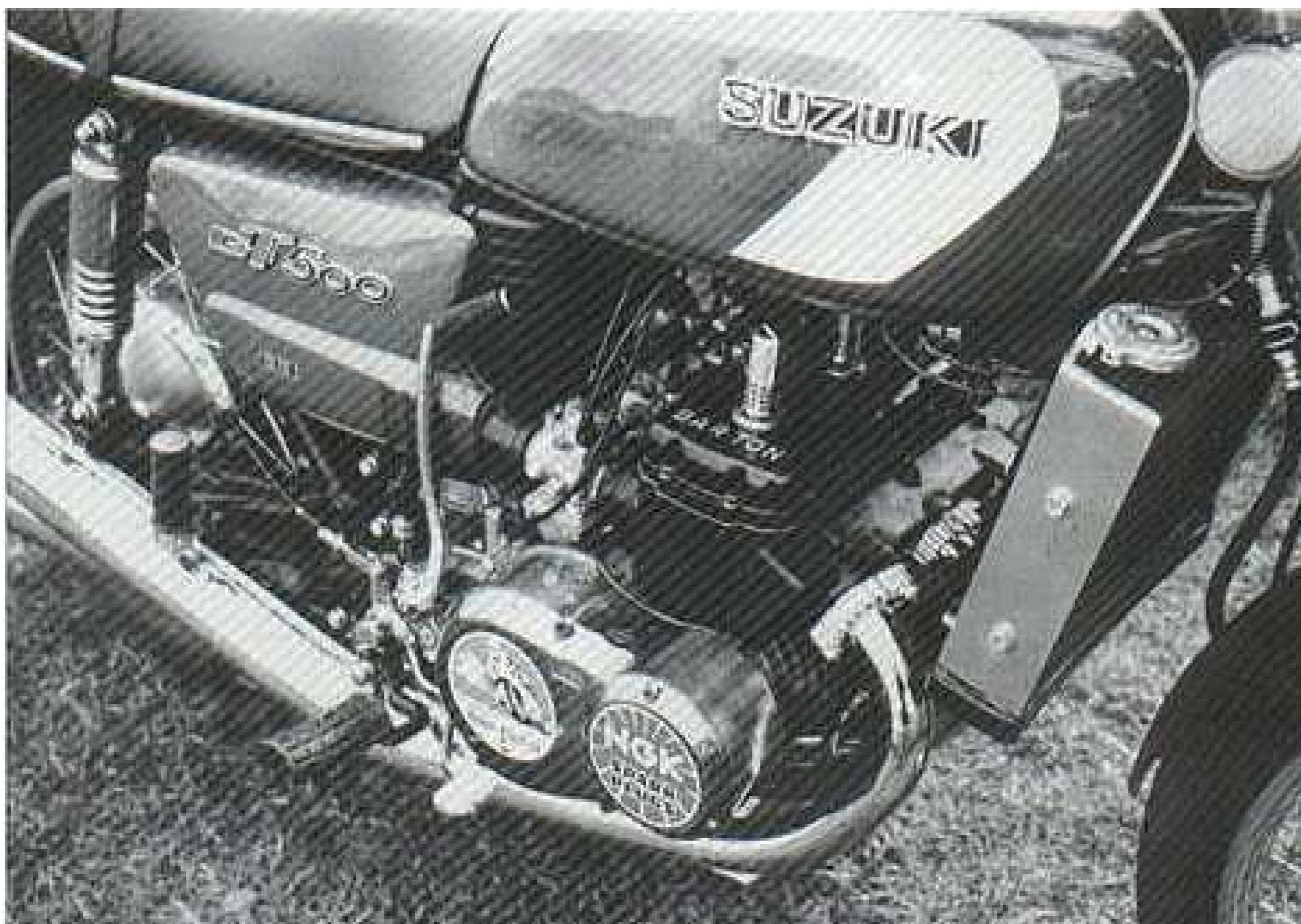


Barton Suzuki 500

GT380 conversion



Above: An eye-catcher at the 1974 Isle of Man TT was this Suzuki — a watercooled 500. But this was no factory prototype — it had been made by Barton Motors, of South Wales.

Terry Hart, the man behind the project, rode the machine from Caernarfon to Liverpool and used the TT period to get in some miles on the bike, which was completed only hours before his departure for the island. Basically the machine was a 380 Suzuki triple. But the cylinder block was replaced by a Barton watercooled block with larger cylinder bores (61 instead of 52mm) which, using the standard 54mm stroke, gave a capacity of 472cc. Carburettors were 28mm Mikunis and compression ratio was 6.8:1. It would have cost very little more than the standard aircooled GT550 of the time, but with the advantages of a six-speed gearbox and watercooling.

Sadly, the factory never adopted Hart's design — it was very much a case of a good idea going to waste. Later, Hart became the chief engine designer for Armstrong, who built several race-winning 250cc track mounts in the early 1980s.