



The day I found her was the day I faced a challenge I couldn't walk away from.

I'll never forget the day I found her. My brother Raymond and I were up in the islands.

We had just shifted base to a little fishing village and our first concern was to find someone able to refill our air tanks.

It turned out to be Jean-Luc, a

crotchety old character whose grass hut looked like it needed mowing.

He took our tank, pushed aside a curtain

of bougainvillea and disappeared inside.

Suddenly there was a loud bang. It sounded like

someone kick-starting a motorbike that kicked back.

As the engine chugged away, something gnawed at the back of my mind...I knew I'd heard that sound before. I headed straight for the source.

Of all the places you'd expect to find one of the finest motorcycles ever built, this was the least likely.

There, bolted to a plank on the earth

floor and running an air compressor,

was the better part of a 1926 Indian Scout.

"Got the rest of her 'round here someplace" grumbled Jean-Luc, nursing a bruised shin. Shifting a mountain of junk he revealed not just an Indian Scout, but *the* Indian Scout, the one I'd heard about in New Zealand,

but never expected to see. A scratched and faded, but still just-visible insignia on the sidecar told me everything I needed to know.

'The Wandering Washerwoman' it said. That would mean nothing at all

to most people. But to me it meant Mary Watson, a New Zealand hero I had read about.

The Wandering Washerwoman

During the thirties and forties Mary Watson rode all over New Zealand on an Indian Scout, bringing the magic of the washing machine to the backblocks.

That much was recorded, but what became of the motorcycle was never known. And now here I was looking at it, thousands of miles from home.

Two minutes, \$100 and a bottle of Jim Beam later, I was the proud owner of a derelict Scout.

Restoring her wasn't going to be easy—but had Mary Watson (or any of our pioneers for that matter) taken the easy road?

"You're mad," said Raymond. "You'd be better off paying decent money and getting a new bike. That old relic will never run again."

I must have worn out a complete set of fingertips over the next few months.

The hardest bit was finding replacement parts. A friend in the States sorted that out.

He's a regular guy. He'd slipped a bottle of Jim Beam into the package of parts for me to christen the bike with.

Raymond turned up the other day with a neglected Japanese job he wants me to help him restore.

I think he's missed the point.

