



## BURNING BRIGHTLY FOR 75 YEARS

There's nothing that our American friends love more than a parade, except an anniversary ... or an anniversary parade. It's probably got to do with a sense of history, seeing as theirs doesn't go back very far in the grand scheme of things, but it does mean when they hit landmark anniversaries they know how to make the most of it.

To be fair, seventy five years is a long time, and it's certainly worth celebrating when in honour of an icon that has been around in largely unaltered form for those seventy five years, giving truth the the 'if ain't broke, don't fix it' adage, and making Harley-Davidson look like radical technocrats. Yes folks, it was seventy-five years ago that George G Braidell took it upon himself to design a lighter that would always work, would be easy to use and could be used single-handedly, redesigning a cumbersome but delicate, windproof Austrian lighter to create the first Zippo. The original lighter is in the Zippo/Case museum in Bradford, Pennsylvania, but 425 million lighters produced since are scattered to the four corners of the globe - it was that long ago, people still believed that globes had corners - each one carrying its famous lifetime guarantee: "It works or we fix it free".

With most of their output adorned in a massive range of designs that will suit any sort of hobbyist, it is only fitting that Zippo should celebrate their birthday with a design to promote themselves, and they've done two. There's a limited edition, featuring a genuine Swarovski crystal - that's a luxury branded precision-cut lead crystal glass to you and me - which has been through five different customisation processes, inset into an Armor chrome case; and this still-stunning commemorative version based on the same graphic, and with its self-display case but which you're more likely to take out with you.

You really don't need me to tell you where to get a Zippo from, but you might need to go to Zippo themselves if you want to catch the limited edition anniversary model.

[www.zippo.com](http://www.zippo.com)

## HELLS ANGELS PAY THEIR LAST RESPECTS TO "GENTLEMAN GERRY"

We consider ourselves apolitical here at American-V, but we couldn't let Gerry Tobin's funeral pass unacknowledged, because it was the biggest outpouring of grief of its kind in a generation - said by some to have been the world's largest biker funeral - bringing the city of London to a standstill as crowds estimated by the police to be in the region of 3,000 took their last ride with "Gentleman Gerry",



the Hells Angel shot and killed on the M40 on his way back from the Bulldog Bash.

It took an hour for the bikes from the London Chapter's clubhouse in Hackney to form a single cortege with another group who had ridden in from Nottingham, where Gerry had worked as the Chief Mechanic at Warr's out-of-town branch, and the police

had to close roads on an ad-hoc basis due to the volumes of traffic on the route down the Victoria Embankment, Westminster Bridge, Putney Bridge and Hammersmith Flyover as the sombre procession rode slowly to the service at Mortlake Crematorium, straight through the heart of the city at noon on a Saturday. Early shock from regular shoppers is reported to have been replaced by sympathy and respect for the way in which it was handled.

The Hells Angels have set up a memorial fund in Gerry's name, and our sympathies are with his partner, Beckie Smith, and all of his friends, who will miss a man who was known for his compassion and selflessness.

