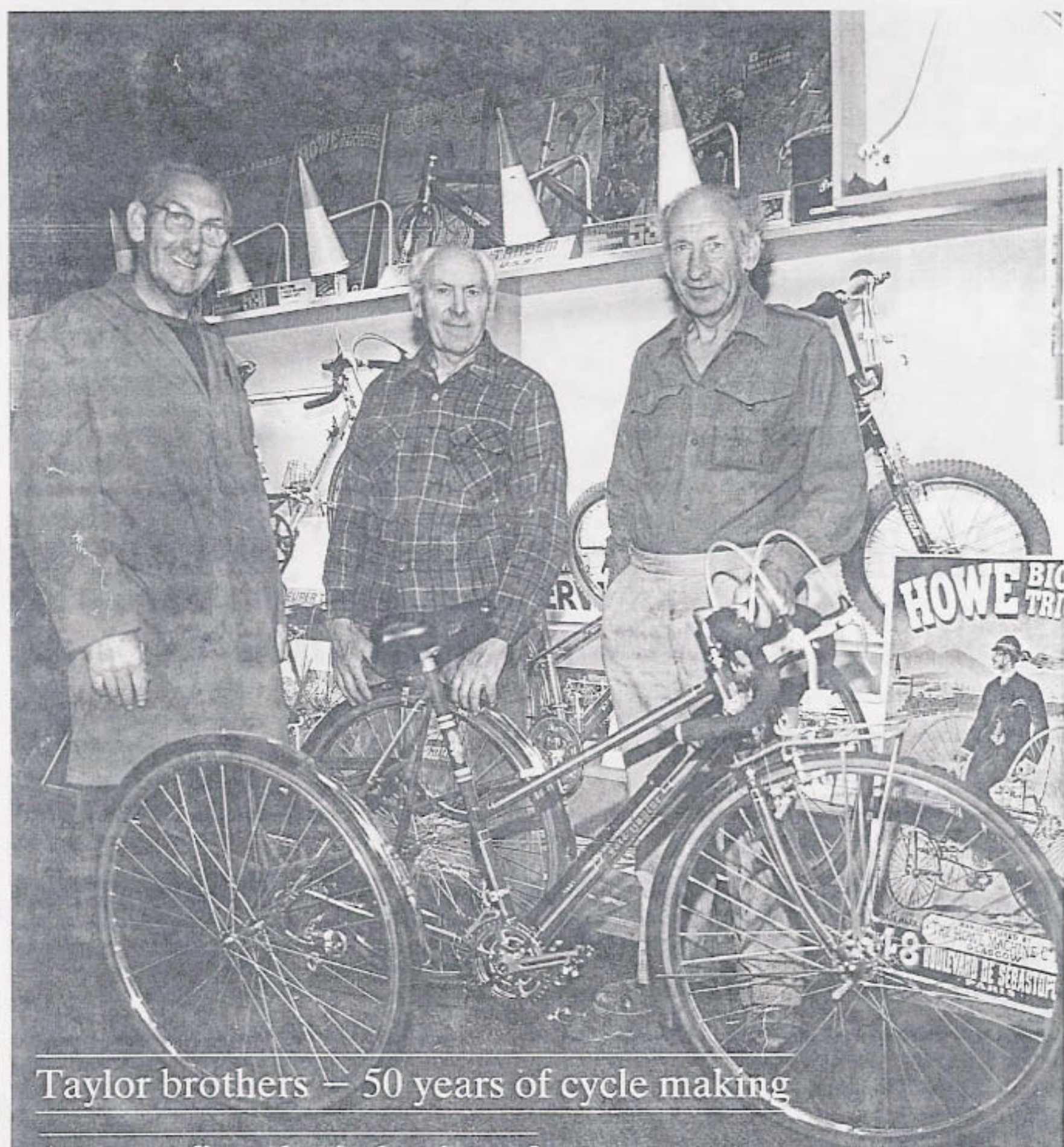


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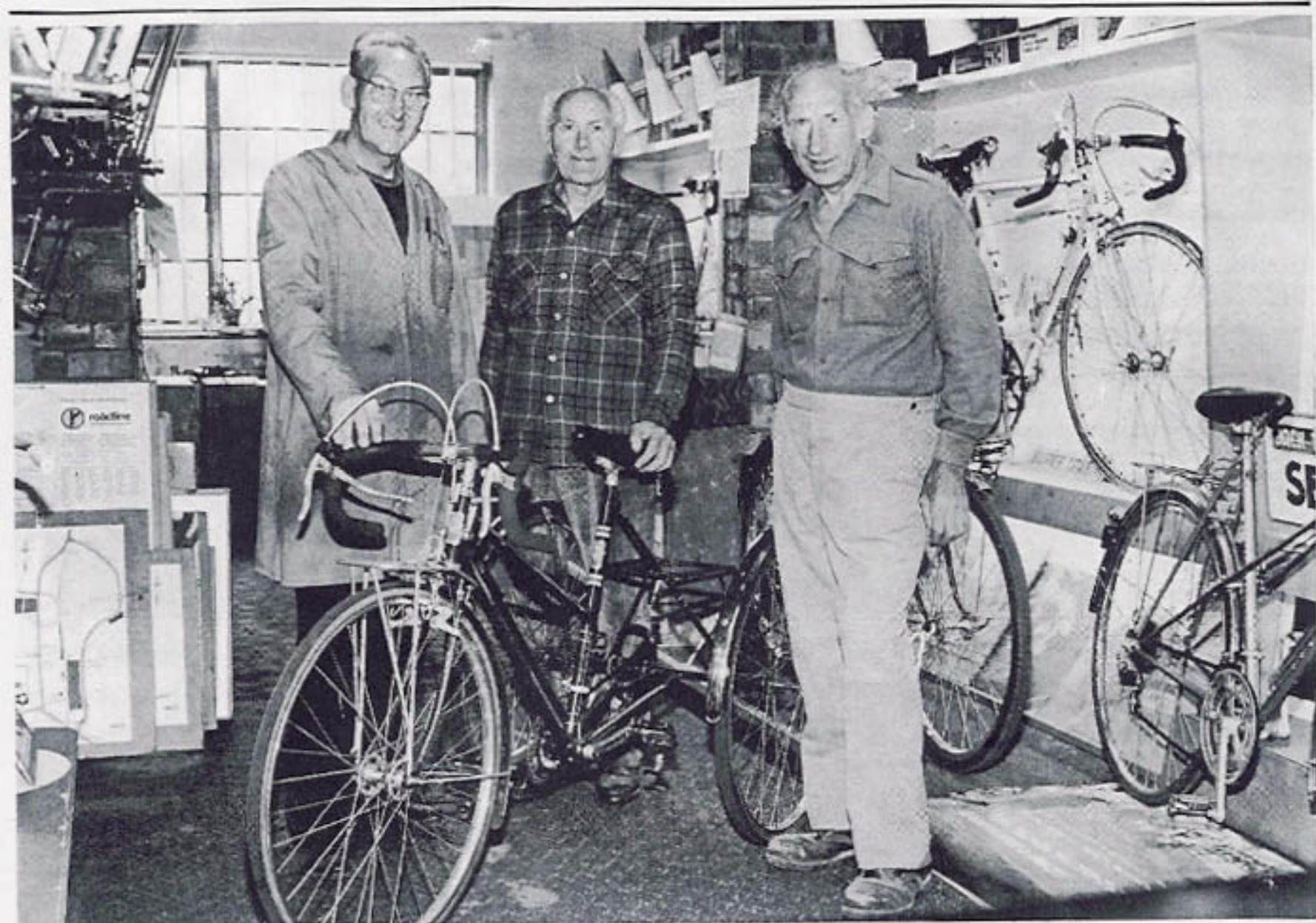
Taylor brothers — 50 years of cycle making

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The Taylor brothers — 50 years of beautiful handmade cycles.

The Taylor Brothers — 50 years of bicycle perfection

Jack Taylor's little green shed, which stood in the garden of his Norton home, is now legendary in the cycling world. It's where Jack started building racing cycles back in the 1930's. He was a keen and successful cyclist and just couldn't afford the light-weight cycle he really wanted, so he started to build his own in the shed. Now, 50 years later, a Jack Taylor cycle is still a prized possession to thousands of dedicated cyclists all over the world.

The garden shed has long since gone but the Taylor brothers — Norman and Ken — were also keen cyclists and soon joined Jack — are still building their beautiful machines in the same building in Church Road, Stockton where they started their workshop in the 1940's.

In the heyday of the popularity of the bicycle, a total of nine people were employed at the workshop. Now it's just the three brothers, and it seems that they really prefer it that way. For no-one else can match their

craftsmanship and attention to detail. Norman builds the frames, Ken puts the cycles together and Jack is the painting expert — each machine comes complete with fine linework that is rarely seen today. Jack also does the bookwork, filling in his account book in beautiful copperplate with a dipping pen and inkpot.

They are all over 60 now and adamant that there's no way they are going to retire.

They are just going to keep on turning out the handful of machines they make every week, the same way as for the last 50 years. In the current climate of encouragement for small businesses the Taylors are a great example. But with a wry smile Jack points out: "There is so much help for businesses these days. When we started we just had to struggle on by ourselves. I wonder how long these new businesses which are given so many grants will last." And what does rankle with the nor-

mally amiable Jack is the £4,000 a year that has to be paid in rates on their premises.

But his annoyance is more than outweighed by the pleasure he and his brothers get from their work. These days Jack Taylor cycles are even better known abroad, particularly in America, than they are in this country. They are used to finding foreigners waiting on the doorstep of the Church Road workshop, having made a pilgrimage to the place where Jack Taylor's are built. Tandems are especially popular abroad and it's not uncommon for honeymooners to arrive and order their own bicycle-made-for-two.

Every machine really is Taylor-made to fit, and most customers arrive with detailed specifications of what they really want. All the components used are the very best. And if you want the best you have to pay for it. A basic model costs over £300 and a special tandem could be around £2,000.

The price does not seem to deter the bicycle enthusiasts who'll go to great lengths to get a Jack Taylor machine.

The remarkable brothers and their machines have not escaped a certain amount of media coverage, which they take in their stride and now accept as simply part of business. For they have made the headlines since the days when they rode the Brighton to Glasgow road race — the forerunner of the Milk Race — as a team in the 1940's.

They were recently quietly amused to have a BBC television camera crew following them around for days making their life story. The programme is due to be screened later this Autumn.

They are still enjoying cycling and the thrill of completing a new machine ready to be packed in a special box and sent to its owner. And each box bears the same handwritten message from the Taylor brothers — "Have A Nice Ride".