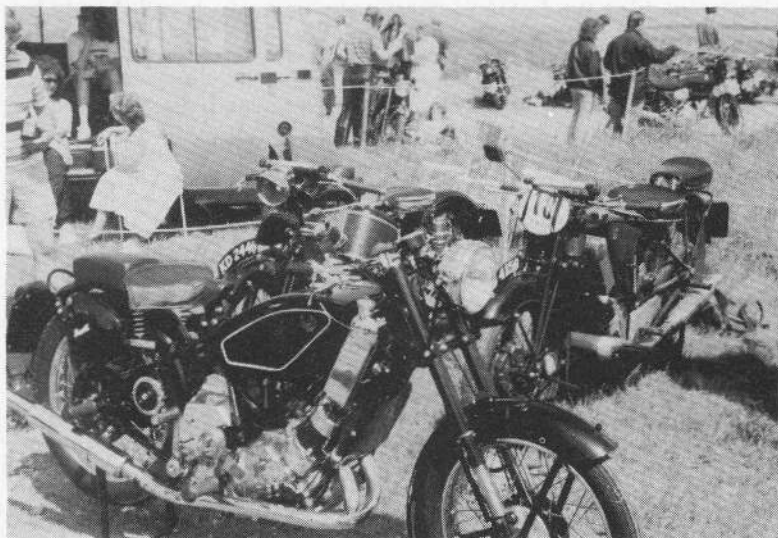


of the Three that had been loaned to Sammy during the course of restoration, and it was obvious that steering head angle, rake and trail had been scaled off the picture. Perhaps the head angle has been altered, thereby improving the handling??



4. Terry Lloyd's 1947 Flying Squirrel in foreground and Velos in background. No. 18 is the 1929 Flyer of Bill Newton - owned for 30 years and extensively rallied.

MORE ON THE SILK SCOTT

Geoffrey Bucknall

As I said in my previous article, there is nothing in the Yowl Index on Silk Scotts, and to initiate a remedy, there follow my impressions from taking over a 1973 model which hadn't been on the road since 1985 — judging by its tax disc. And let me respect anonymity of those who I contacted in lieu of the absent instruction book, since none was ever produced. The only published information I could find was in the book by Jeff Clew. A telephone call to Silk Engineering produced no help either, whilst a letter enquiring about basics — timing etc. — was never answered.

The machine has been stored well, and apart from peeling cylinder paint, it appeared immaculate. First kicks produced irregular and loud firing, a reversed engine and a barked shin. This revealed two apparent design faults. The kick starter has too long an arc at the end of which the foot slips off the peg and the shin comes into violent contact with the kick-starter housing. This we hope to remedy by welding a stop to shorten the swing-arc. A fellow member and (previous) Silk Scott owner kindly sent me drawings for this.

It is a reportedly common fault for the oil seal on the pump to allow seepage of oil into the timing case, fouling the points. A first-aid remedy would seem to be to drill a drainage hole in the base of the case, later to explore a better seal. Timing is difficult, each set of points requiring a different gap. There's no manual or automatic advance-retard which would benefit the machine and first impressions are that adjustment

via a handlebar control would be possible. The timing case was cleaned up, points cleaned and adjusted, and this got the engine singing. Compression tests showed that this motor was apparently in fine fettle, the mileage showing that it had only just been run in.

A small point, the silencer soon comes onto the exhaust pipe bend without blocking the tiny holes in the pipe-join which had then to be sealed with a stopping compound. Some owners complain of softish radiator pipes but this doesn't seem to be a problem so far on my machine. Some rewiring was necessary, especially the fitting of a jack-plug between the ignition key point and the main harness, this to allow the side panel to be removed completely from the bike when necessary. The system on my bike is positive-to-earth and the only way to get the indicators to work well was to isolate them from the main wiring system.

The gear box is a Velo four-speed one, but not running at its usual Velo position, and it is said that owners find that the Clutch shaft, being below the oil level, allows irritating spillage. In the old days, felt washers would have cleared this problem, but today, I am advised, the box should be filled as necessary with either grease or a grease-oil mixture. This I have to study.

The Silk oil pump is efficient, but sensitive, so much so that absent-mindedness to reset the bar control leads to funny happenings when engine speed is varied. It seems feasible to fit a dual throttle and oil-pump control, either by junction box or twin cabled throttle, and this is on the agenda. The final awkwardness for shortish guys of advancing years is the short racing bar which has to be reached over a long tank, but a sit-up-and-beg bar was located to give a nice riding position (when some sponge grips are fitted).

What else? A tachometer would have been pleasant, plus a proper tool box and a central stand.

Overall impression is that the bike is typical of hand-building where long runs of production part-making are not possible, and this shows. Some things are brilliant, such as the rear chain adjustment via the swinging arm which avoids that realignment. The primary chain is a pig to adjust. In fact, the shortcomings discussed above are probably due to the hand-building (even improvisation) of cycle parts. One can see why the kick-starter is such a brute, coupled with the huge advantage of the four-speed box, and how to align it?

Other owners report a heavyish clutch with quite a bit of drag on declutching so that neutral has to be found quickly, say at traffic lights and road junctions. Any answers to this problem, prior to an exploratory strip down, would be welcome?

Yet I know that when I finally tailor everything, I'm going to grow fond of it. It handles like a thoroughbred racing machine, that firm, hard feel. I suppose it represents the final point to which the 'old' Scott engine could be used without radical change. The great ideas which reduced weight and developed engine power are so well discussed in Jeff Clew's book that I need not repeat them here. Also, dare I say it, the bike comes from an era when many riders still expected to 'make a few changes' even to new machines, something we have forgotten since the advent of the Japanese superbike, with all mod. cons. I had a Brum Scott, didn't much like that hefty old lumpkin, and compared to the Silk Scott, it's say a Shire horse against a Derby entrant.

Came the time when folk were expecting self-starters, oil recuperation and sophisticated instrumentation. The Japs did it, we didn't, and bang went the old-tyme Brit motor cycle industry. Then all of us SOC members are left over from a bygone age, aren't we? Thanks to those guys who helped me spruce up this bike, and I let them remain anonymous for respect.