

Silk Scott

Dear Sir,

I have been so grateful for the articles by Ged Rumble on the restoration of his Silk Scott, and the personal advice he gave me, as I am on the same track. Silk Scott owners I have contacted had to rebuild to a greater or lesser degree.

I obtained my own in 1992, being only the second owner. It had a true mileage of some 1,200. The previous owner was very tall and found the bike too small for him. He stored it well, so cosmetics were reasonable, just some rusting on the pipe which I am now having replated. However, recession overtook me in 1993 after I had just done about 100 miles, so I, too, stored the bike, firstly in a greenhouse until I had a dry shed built for it. The next three years were spent in rebuilding my own life as I had to earn my living, still do.

This last autumn I decided to make it roadworthy. The first problem was piston slap, and the pistons didn't suit the bores. A regrinding job and new pistons (+ .80) were done by Tim Sharp, and on his advice, I am having him skim out a morsel from the heads to suit the bigger pistons.

I didn't like the fixed timing, I like to retard the spark for starting, and Dave Lindsley did a great job in fixing me up with a manual advance/retard spark box, the usual thing, a 'floating' plate. I think this was my best mod. I also had to sif-bond a stop to the kicker, cutting up an old spanner made a neat stop, but the little spring gadget which folds in the kicker had to come out. It's a slight inconvenience to tuck it in by hand, but it saves barked shins.

All the wiring went to a side panel without a multi-point connecting plug, so I fitted one so that the panel can be taken right off. Like Ged, I needed to have the saddle remade, into one piece. Cylinder head bolts had corroded, this is the usual Scott electrolysis, I think. My recollection is that stainless steel is not immune to this. The bottom end seems rock solid, I hope I don't have to disembowel the motor. I am lucky in having an adjustment bolt for the primary chain, some SSs don't have this. I'm also lucky in having wheels and tyres in good condition. I know Ged has some more advice on mods for the Silk Scott, so I won't steal his thunder, the above is what I have done so far.

By frame number I guess my bike was the 11th, and I'm told the Replica motor was probably a post-war one about '47/'48. By carbon deposits, which were quite light, given the low mileage, it seems as if lubrication was reasonably even between the two cylinder when it was run, but I shall know more later when I've put in a few miles this coming summer. The handling of the bike is superb, that is common to Silk Scotts, and the light weight is a boon, though a centre stand would have been useful. The side prop stand is a joke, too short and flimsy, I'll have to replace that. The gearbox would clearly leak oil, being a Velo one the wrong way up, and the sensible thing is to use a good quality grease. The clutch is on the heavy side, but keeping the cable well oiled is a help. Some owners told me that the gearing was on the high side with a 21-tooth drive sprocket, but my area is quite urban and I found no problem in poodling around the town streets. The original riding position was uncomfortable, there was a short,

straight bar *à la* Vincent. I got an old Honda cow-horn bar from a breaker, which gives my ageing spine a nice sit-up and beg riding position, with less pressure on the wrists, also more space for control levers and buttons.

What is obvious is that no two Silk Scotts are alike, so you really need to check it out when you get one. This surprised me, as I thought they were a small, but standard production run. There was no instruction book made and the details in Jeff Clew's book are rather vague. I like a clean bike, but I'm not a concours man, having to use elbow grease, not all these wheel mops and grinders. I use bikes, I don't just stare at them.

There you are, that's my own experience to date, and I think my three good ideas were to fit a stop to the kicker, the multi-point plug to the panel and the contact-breaker adjustment via double handlebar control lever (the second one being for the oil pump). I would have preferred a slightly lower compression ratio, kinder to cranks. My friend and I had an interesting discussion insofar as there's an old biking legend that con-rods stretch slightly when the engine warms up, even though the pressure is clearly downwards. What do other readers think?

I hope Ged carries on his fascinating Silk Scott saga, and I also hope other SS owners chip in, for whatever we may say about it, it was the most dramatic change to the age-old design, and those Brummies were so darned heavy; I know, I had one....

**Geoff Bucknall,
Bromley, Kent.**

Smoke and crank pins

Dear Mr. Wess,

I have noticed recently that quite a few comments have been made regarding excessive smoking of our beloved Scotts. It's nothing new, of course, but nowadays it is most definitely frowned upon, and even worse, provides the bad publicity which some groups would gladly use to legislate us off the road.

A few years ago, I bought a '47 Flying Squirrel which needed a complete engine overhaul and I asked Ian Pierce if he would do the work. Ian agreed to do the work and asked me if I wanted it converting to petrol at the same time. After a short discussion, I agreed. I believe it involves some machining work on the crankcase and the use of modern crankcase seals, and the engine then runs of 30:1 petrol. The result is a transformed motor cycle. No more four-stroking, no more clouds of smoke, not even after a downhill run. the bike is a real pleasure to ride.

I have to say that I have no connection with Ian Pierce except as a very satisfied customer.

Whilst I have pen to paper, I would like to make some comments on the new cranks being produced. When Brian Lilley asked for comments on the proposed design, I suggested that the crank pin should be one piece, i.e. no bush, but the design team felt that it would be unwise to dispense with the facility of being able to change the bush when necessary. However, I could not help thinking that a solid