

The Rider of Old British Motor Cycles: Look at me! I am the embodiment of past glories — Spitfires, ton-up vicars, birds with big knockers, Arsenal, pints of ale!

Corrr! This small group is dedicated to such machines as Triumphs and Nortons — so notoriously unreliable that they destroyed the British motor-cycle industry.

Refusing to accept this, as they refuse to accept most reality, Brit bikers continue to repair them, restore them, repair them, ride them and then repair them again.

Look for dirty fingernails, a limp, bad teeth and breath (from petrol siphoning) and a permanent expression of helpless resignation.

On the other hand, Brit bikers do not spend much time flaunting it, because they usually can't get it to start.

The Rider of an Italian Motor Cycle: Look at me! But hey, as if you have any option! Narcissus fell in love with his own image, reflected in a pool — which explains the mirror-like polish of Ducatis and Moto Guzzis, and the hours their owners spend just staring at them.

At last, they zip into their kid-skin leathers and glove, bring their engines to bellowing, macho like, carve the traffic up like so many slices of Bologna sausage, and are gone, to where the gods go, trailing the faintest mist of cold-pressed, extra virgin olive oil.

Nothing, and lots of it, characterises Japanese motor cycles and their riders. There are also scooter devotees, but this is simply and indictment of the mental health profession.

And yes, women ride motor cycles too. But they were done no favours, some years ago, by a young Marianne Faithful in Naked Under Leather, with that broken zipper. If that was the beginning, let this be the end of the male motor cycling menopause.

Peter Wear,
Brisbane Courier Mail.



Arthur Fogg's Silk doing duty in the Isle of Man. The bars at the rear of the bike are to prevent the throw-over panniers fouling the suspension units. Supplied and captioned by Arthur Fogg. *See overleaf.*

THIS AND THAT ...

by Arthur Fogg

I continue to ride and enjoy my two Scotts, but the Silk has brought something extra to my motor cycling. The TT Rep special, although providing good handling and ride, is now with my advancing years, proving to be less attractive due to its weight; nevertheless my mechanical companion of 53 years will always remain with me, even though our relationship may soon be confined to my sitting on a stool in my workshop and feasting my eyes on the bike! The Super Squirrel is more attractive as regards weight, but the excellent handling and flexible engine are offset by the ride on our Lakeland roads. Whereas the spring saddle looks after the lower part of my body quite well, arms and shoulders now suffer from the inadequacies of the front suspension and the narrow beaded edge tyre. Nevertheless, it remains my favourite for riding in S.O.C. and V.M.C.C. events.

What does the Silk bring to my motor-cycling experience? The most important attraction of the Silk is the light weight, said to be 310 lb (sorry, sorry — 140.616 kg — please don't report me!!). Looking at the bike it is difficult to believe this figure, but it is right. Then the handling — it is a joy. The Spondon bicycle (I do not use the description chassis, as this applies to cars and trucks) is, based on racing experience, really good and the bike is the most untiring machine I have ever ridden — it steers to a hair with no effort or worries. The ride is more difficult to praise. On good roads the suspension matches well with the steering but on poor roads, most of which are encountered in urban areas in my part of the world, comfort is not of a high order and sunken grates are to be avoided. Trips to the Island of Man, where poor roads abound and sunken grates are the norm, are made less enjoyable as a result of the firm suspension. Conditions are better when carrying my holiday luggage by panniers and small holdall when the ride is improved with no effect on the handling.

The engine has more than enough power for my requirements. It doesn't much like to run below 2,000 rpm, doesn't do a lot between two and three thousand, starts to go some above 3,000 and then really goes from 4,000 upwards, though as the revs then rise the vibration also increases. I haven't explored the upper reaches of the rev range so I am unaware whether the vibration increases or reduces. The gearchange is easy and positive, left foot operated and up for bottom. The use of MZ flexible tubes provides excellent enclosure of the rear chain. The twin disc front brakes are very effective, requiring only two fingers for normal applications. The rear brake I hardly ever use due to the awkward position of the pedal; this is not good as the stop light is only applied by this brake. Fuel consumption seems to be in the 55 mpg region.

Two factors are of concern. First noise: the silencer could be more effective and I am conscious of the sound pollution the bike creates. Then add the second factor, that on urban riding low traffic speeds cause the motor to noisy four stroking and so makes such riding less than enjoyable.

I have referred earlier to some problems I have experienced and I have another and more serious failure to report which occurred during a visit to the Isle of Man. Having met up with Scotters Peter Mitchell and Tony Cook at Ballaugh where they were starting on a V.M.C.C. run, I set off round the TT course, not speeding but cruising enjoyable at 60 or so. At Glen Vine I was halted by the traffic lights. At green I let in the clutch and was horrified to hear a graunching sound followed by the steering pulling strongly to the left: it almost felt as though I had a flat tyre.

Examination showed that the effect on the steering was due to the pull of the speedo cable. Further investigation provided the explanation: a countersunk retaining screw from the rear wheel sprocket had come out, fouled the speedo gearbox which was turned round on the spindle and thus pulled the speedo cable!! My first thought was relief that it had not happened when I was cruising over the mountain!

I had to seek help with the removal of the rear wheel as the bike does not have a centre stand! Through the good offices of Peter Mitchell at Ballasalla Marine and Engineering the damaged bits were removed, a replacement retaining screw and a distance piece to substitute for the speedo gearbox were made and all the screws, found to be finger tight, were replaced with Loctite. So, speedo less, I was able to continue my holiday.

I was interested to see what looked like an 'Esway' prop stand on the four-speed Scott in the June issue. I used to think this device was a desirable fitment as it allowed safe parking on various angles of sloping ground. It wasn't the most elegant addition to a bike, but what was that when compared to its practicability? It would not do on modern machines, but I am sure it would find some favour on vintage and classic bikes if put into production again.

It was pleasing to see that John Bentley's, Bob Brougham restored, 1927 works TT bike gained the award for best in the motor-cycle racing class in the prestigious annual Louis Vuitton Classic at Hurlingham. But even more so was the award for Best in Show. *Motorcycle Sport & Leisure* reported that this bike "stole everyone's heart" and "when it ran, it sounded, looked and smelt superlative!" The competition included such bikes as Lawrence of Arabia's Brough and Sammy Miller's Low Boy Manx Norton.

Scotland provided me with pleasure in August when I rode in the V.M.C.C. Stirling Section S & T Rally and later the V.M.C.C. Scottish National Assembly. At both these events I was the only Scott rider, which was disappointing. I commend both events to S.O.C. members as the runs are on quiet roads with excellent scenery and the hospitality is first class. In between these events I went up to Hopeman, near Elgin (by car, I confess) to join the five (or was it six?) hardy souls who made the lengthy journey to participate in Ted Parkin's Scott event and, as I found, had thoroughly enjoyed themselves as I did in the conviviality of the evening.

The V.M.C.C. Manx Rally had a disappointing fall in the number of Scotts entered — five. Four riders participated, three gaining awards. The remarkable event of Manx week was the lap of the TT course by motor cyclists in memory of Joey Dunlop. I have never seen, and I am sure never will again see, such an event. Several thousand (some said 6,000) riders took part and the Island residents turned out in thousands to watch. A fitting tribute to a remarkable man.

I have long been a reader of the *Daily Telegraph* and for most of that time I have been disappointed that, like the British press in general, the use and advantages in today's modern traffic congestion of the powered two-wheeler, has long been ignored. The paper has surprised occasionally, such as when obituaries of Freddy Frith and Georg Meier were published and last winter when it featured a nice picture of a vintage Sunbeam sidecar outfit carrying home a Christmas tree. These did nothing to promote the two-wheeler. So my eyes suddenly widened when a little while ago I saw a major article with the headline — quote — "I have seen the future and it has two wheels". Yoicks, I thought, they have wakened up at last. And so it