

Dear Editors,

Re: Silk 700S handlebar fairing screen - The Sequel

Following the disaster which occurred when the fairing fitted to the Silk made contact with the handlebar of an adjacently positioned BSA [Yowl, December 2021, page 217], I thought that a steep learning curve lay before me regarding the manufacture of a replacement screen. However, a good friend of mine searched the internet and found several companies offering this service. The nearest was based at Weymouth, about seventy miles from Bath, and traded under the name of SkidMarX UK Ltd. I made contact with them, sent some photographs of the damaged item and they agreed to make a replacement. They needed the original in order to make a copy, so an appointment was made to take the complete fairing to their works the following Monday.

Monday duly arrived; crisp, frosty, not a cloud in the sky and brilliant sunshine, not much traffic, and a little more than two hours after setting off we were parked outside of their premises. Greeted by Matt, I was invited to take the fairing into the works and, after inspection of the original screen, he disappears deeper into the extensive racking which holds 'masks' and sample screens. He returns with a screen, offers it up to the one which I damaged and his matches perfectly even down to the position of the holes. Scratched into the plastic of the sample is the legend 'BMW R90' which SkidMarX UK Ltd can replicate. Next we discuss the possible tinting of the acrylic to be used for the moulding. Matt was not able to offer the 'light smoked' tint similar to the original, describing it as an 'in betweeny' to which I replied that having an 'in betweeny' appears to be very fashionable these days. Two samples of tinted acrylic were produced; one light grey and the other a dark smoke, so I opted for clear so as to be better able to see the road. On hearing this, my son asked if they did prescription screens? What a cheek!

The following may be judged to contain an element of intrigue. The day before I was due to visit SkidMarX, I received a telephone call from John Hopley, a Scott enthusiast and owner of an early Silk 700S which he purchased new. Now I hope I get this correct! Early in his ownership, John fitted a handlebar fairing to his Silk and in the course of events as one did at the time, took this motorcycle to the factory whereupon George Silk passed comment that the Churchward Mouldings low handlebar fairing suited the motorcycle and that he thought to offer the fairing as a possible extra with future orders. Sometime later John required a replacement screen and through a contact was directed to Wyke Regis, a district to the west of Weymouth. This resulted in an invitation to attend a demonstration of the process of manufacture of a screen: a suitable shaped 'mask', i.e. a stout sheet of material with a near elliptical shape removed from the centre, is securely clamped over a sheet of acrylic, heat lamps are lowered and requisite amount of heat is applied to soften the plastic, followed by the admission of air under the assembly until the bubble conforms to a template. The plastic is then allowed to cool and on release looks like a bowl, this can be cut across the short diameter and one now has two mouldings from which to shape the required screens.

Towards the end of my visit Matt showed me some blanks which had been cut in two ready for shaping, and these were for TZ Yamaha's, the method of production being as described above. I related the story of John's visit to Matt and enquired if the present business had ever traded by the name of Churchwood Mouldings? Matt seemed to recollect being told by a previous owner that this was the case. A sobering thought is that the two partners now running the business were not born at the time when Silk motorcycles were current. I was told

that a proportion of their work is derived from motorcycle couriers and auction houses where plastic items are damaged when machines are moved. Also, they use a hot electric soldering iron with a suitably shaped bit to make the holes as this lessens the chance of shattering the acrylic compared with drilling whilst reinforcing the holes.

Within the stated delivery time I received a telephone call to advise me that the two replacement fairing screens which I had ordered were ready for collection. Whilst at SkidMarX, I enquired as to whether the glass fibre fairing moulding could be supplied, and was shown a finish moulding laid up in black which I also purchased. Unfortunately, they do not have a mould from which to create the 'dash' which carries the water temperature and battery gauges.

This has been an emotional journey from despair to elation assisted by a most helpful and accommodating manufacturer with whom it has been a pleasure to do business. Only one decision remains - do I fit the original fairing with new screen to the Silk or do I risk tempting fate and use the new components?

Of all the potential suppliers of plastic motorcycle components which the internet presented I chose SkidMarX. Call this chance, luck, coincidence, what have you, I care to describe it with the word RESULT! Should one have a similar requirement or for a plastic bodywork component for a more modern motorcycle one may care to start with SkidMarX UK Ltd, DT4 9TJ, telephone 01305 780808.

Des Wilkey

Dear Editors,

I wonder if any of our members would be able to identify the riders in this interesting? picture that I picked up at an autojumble recently.

Mark Balicki

