



JAWA Motorcyclist



The Classic takes shape



My last report was a re-print drawn from my files and so the bike is not actually just a year old. When I bought it I always intended to fit a sidecar, chiefly for carrying camping gear. David Angel showed me the details of the fittings kit which had been produced for a right-hand sidecar but it wasn't useable on the left side. In the event I had to wait eighteen months for a kit to arrive. Velorex made an excellent job of the kit but it can't have been an economic success as I'm probably the only customer.

In the mean time I'd had a few interesting episodes. I found that the engine was liable to die of fuel starvation

when the tank was about a quarter full. After a few minutes it would re-start and continue as if nothing had happened. I finally traced this to an air-lock in the fuel pipe. Since the Classic is a cruiser-styled bike, the back end of the tank is quite low. Also the engine is quite tall, putting the carburettor quite high. I had tried various in-line filters, thinking that they might provide too much restriction, but the real problem was the downward loop of the fuel pipe. After I re-routed the pipe to provide a steady downward slope the problem was solved. This may not affect the Style but it's just a fact to file away just in case.

I have found it necessary to develop the habit of turning off the fuel tap. It's not so easy when your other bikes are not so fussy. The float chamber valve does not make a perfect seal. If the fuel is left on for a few hours, excess fuel finds its way down the inlet tract where it pools on top of the inlet valves. The first time this happened the starter motor would not turn the engine over against the fluid lock which was created when the fuel entered the cylinder. Removing one spark plug and cranking the engine cleared the excess fuel, but what a mess! Petrol goes everywhere. Some of the plastic panels are not petrol proof!

There were some issues concerning the final drive. Initially I was pleased to find there was a spring-link joiner in the chain. This simplifies some maintenance operations. However, on one occasion I was surprised to find that the pins of the joiner link were showing some wear. After about 18000 km I fitted a new link and kept it under surveillance. Eventually after another 5000 km, the new link was wearing as well. It was fitted into worn holes of course. I decided to replace the chain although the bulk of it was in very good condition. This time I ordered a riveted continuous chain from "Sprockets Unlimited" and changed the front sprocket as well. Fitting the continuous chain involves withdrawing the bearing bolt from the swing-arm but that's not difficult. My conclusion is that the very small extra clearance required for a removable link allows too much flexing and wears out the o-ring seals, leading to water ingress and failure of the lubrication. My friend Ian Bridge of the Swindon Group has a similar but slightly later bike which doesn't have a spring link. Perhaps Jawa decided to change it.

While riding the Classic as a solo machine I decided the gearing was too low. By comparison, the BMW 650's which have almost the same engine have 16:47 final gearing whereas the Jawa has 16:64. This is a huge difference. I expected to be able to get a different gearing from the Style but in fact it is the same as the Classic. The BMW has a narrower chain so the sprockets are not interchangeable. While still pondering the options, the sidecar fittings kit turned up and that was a kind of solution. The standard gearing is pretty well perfect for sidecar use so now I'm happy to keep it as it is.

John Osborn.