

The Grimeca brake, as used on the rear wheel, is identical to the one fitted to the military Armstrong so spares are available. One source is AJS Motorcycles of Andover (www.ajsmotorcycles.co.uk).

David Grant reported that after chatting with the guy at Eurocarb he changed his idler jet for one that was two sizes smaller, with the result that both tickover and pickup are now spot-on. He was also reassuring about my worries that using car-type 20/50 oil might have a bad effect on the clutch. Years with a Rotax-engined Armstrong has convinced David that the vital thing is to do regular oil changes and clean the sump filter, as the oil runs hot in these engines.

From the same source, I learn that the dancing tacho needle that one or two of us are suffering from is most likely due to a bad earth (possibly the connection on the inside of the instrument, if the wiring is OK).

The Harris was once criticised by IK in *Motorcycle Sport* (September 1989) for allegedly using the least powerful version of the Sportax motor. I read that piece last year, and found it a bit hard to believe, seeing as the one I was riding had such superb acceleration. There was a drawback, though, in that riding in towns was something of a pain. An answer, or at least part of the answer, has since come to light. Phil James put me on to this one – there was more than one kind of camshaft fitted. It's easy to check this on a Rotax, you don't need to do any serious dismantling. Just remove the cover over the cam belt, and unscrew the bolt that secures the camshaft pulley. When the washers come away, you will see a three-digit number. Use a dollop of Loctite when refitting the bolt.

The "soft" camshaft, as fitted to military Rotaxes, is 665 ("the Neighbour of the Beast") but mine turned out to be type 800, which is a rather lumpy object. Having found a good, used 665 camshaft and being fortunate enough to be able to borrow the tools, I did the swap. Not too difficult a job, as it can be done without removing the engine or even the cylinder head, but the two special tools – one to remove the camshaft pulley, the other for the camshaft itself – really are necessary, as is a suitable drift for replacing the ball bearing. So is a 10mm bolt for extracting the rocker arms. Result: maybe a few bhp less, but it's more tractable and it's even been possible to get the engine to tickover.

Talking of tools . . . the special feeler-gauges from Sportax were worth buying. They are long and flexible, and if you've ever tried setting the valve clearances with an ordinary, short feeler-gauge you'll know how [insert your own expletive here] awkward it can be.

If troubleshooting the ignition and checking for a spark, you *must* ensure that the plug cap is fastened to the engine somehow. It's a powerful spark, and if it can't get to earth it can not only damage the amplifier but can seriously harm the tester's health as well.

If you have electric start, advice is never to stop the engine by switching off the ignition, use the exhaust-valve lifter. Seems that the sprag clutch can be damaged otherwise.

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