

1964-66 Singles

I have been interested to read of the Editor's problem of excessive oil loss on his late single. I believe he is right in thinking that it is the Norton-type oil pump which is the problem, because the overhaul manual for the Norton ES2 recommends using a lower level of oil in the oil tank for long, fast runs. This seems like a recipe for an early seizure! The reason for this recommendation was that the engine breather vented into the oil tank and thence to the rear chain, and excess lubrication here tended to blather the rear tyre in oil.

I have the same problem with my 1966 G80. I have tried to turn the vice into a virtue by directing the oil from the breather onto the lower run of the rear chain, and then making a lower chain case to catch the surplus oil. (I made the lower case by butchering a spare upper chainguard....Sorry!). The chain now needs to be adjusted only once a year, but.... the rear tyre still gets blathered! If anyone has found a solution to the problem, the Editor and I would like to hear it. (I think I am getting close, something to do with the bikes with the most clapped out oil pumps running the best! Ed)

Apart from this, the late singles have very sturdy motors. The big end is of similar dimensions to that of the 7R and scramblers, and the timing-side main-bearing is a roller, not a plain bush. The cylinder is held down by through-bolts, not cylinder-base studs. If it were not for the galloping oil consumption, the engine would be fuss-free. I haven't had to adjust my carburettor or points in 18 months - and the bike has been to Poland and Czechoslovakia during that period. Mind you, I fitted a compression plate so the motor is very soft-tuned. I was able to use 72 octane fuel in Poland with never a hint of pinking!

I have found that pattern rocker-box gaskets available nowadays tend to bed down and allow oil to leak. Evidently they are being made of an unsuitable material. I have dispensed with the gasket now and just use Hermetite "Instant Gasket", which works perfectly. (You can also use silicone rubber bath-sealant available from hardware shops. This is exactly the same but is cheaper and comes in prettier colours. Ed) The engine itself is now oil tight. It just disappears out of the breather..

It has to be admitted that the '64-'66 singles are noisy. The piston slap and tappet clatter reflected back from my windshield has given me irreparable brain damage. All this combined with the exhaust racket can make the bike downright hateful at times. But before twin owners start sneering, may I point out that it doesn't suffer from unpleasant vibration!

The electrics, of course, are the other source of woe. They are reliable, provided you remember to top up the battery after every run, but they are so feeble! Perhaps that nice Mr. Grew could explain how he fitted that new fangled batteryless 12 volt system to his TCS. And can coil ignition be used with this system?