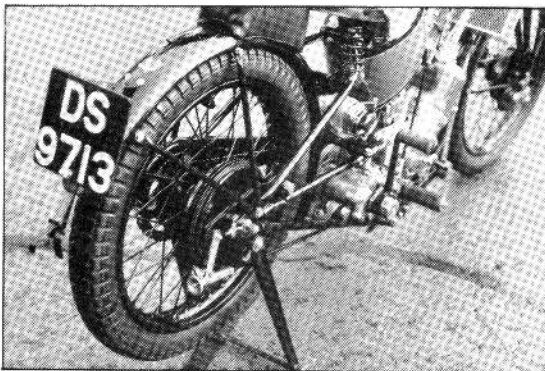
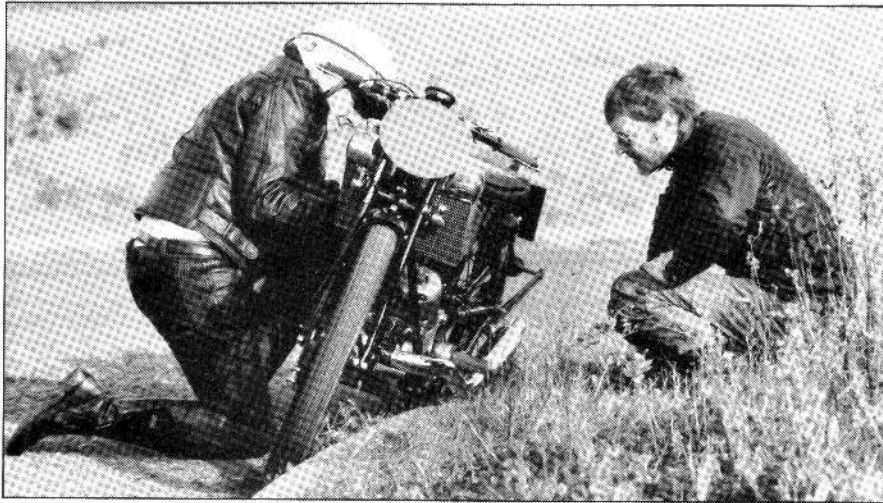


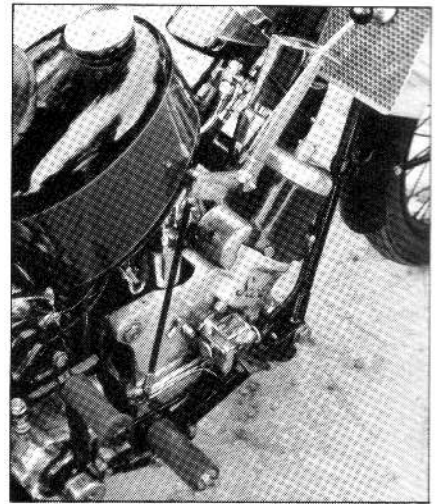
SPRINT SPECIAL



▲ Roadside workshop; Don takes a spanner to the clutch adjuster after the new plates bedded down during our test.

► Open frame leaves knees with nothing to grip. Forward mounted tank feeds oil to the Pilgrim pump.

◀ Rear brake drum was turned from a chunk of EN8 when the original was found to be cracked.



Scotting

THE TOY-LIKE Sprint Special can make an average sized rider feel as clumsy as a giant in a dolls house. If neatness came ready for the road, this would surely be the result; front and rear wheels connected by the bare necessities of motor cycling.

Few components rise higher than the slim mudguards, and the open frame and truncated handlebars support that sense of abbreviated function; a low lightness that might be at home on a 125, and is sure to mean fireworks with a 500. Everything about the Sprint Scott is geared to a single-minded purpose — going like stink.

The hand change knob sits close to the gate, and the movement is commendably short and encouraging of slick changes. The clutch, with two cork and three asbestos lined plates, felt as if it was there at the inverted handlebar lever, not skulking at the end of a Bowden wire.

Bars and saddle seem so close together that the rider might need a reminder that he was sitting on a 500, if the torque didn't do the job. The Sprint Special can rev, but it doesn't have to. Squeeze some low-down Scott juice from the twist grip and it delivers its zestful urge all the way through the close ratio gears, from a throat-clearing low to that glorious, yowling high; the Scott's long-range trade mark.

Two and a half inches of trail on the Webb forks makes the handling heavy on corners. It wants to fall inward if you're not moving quickly enough, but what else would you do in a corner but accelerate? Do the two-stroke pootle with this sprinter and it loses interest; four and eight stroking until you wind it open as if you mean business. Flat and saddle tankers have something to grip with the knees, and the open frame advertised its oddness at first. In practice the centre of gravity is so low that it can be controlled from the five existing contact points; feet, hands and bum.

The thermosiphon radiator runs on a solution containing Bluecol, because the owner has 'a quite unfounded but deep suspicion of anything else'. There is a slight haze around the tail pipe; the result of a Pilgrim pump set to deliver four to five drops a minute, backed up by a running-in 'cocktail' of upper cylinder lubricant, two-stroke oil and petrol in the tank. Don Hewitt reckons that passers by will put up with a bit of smoke better than the engine will stand a lack of oil. As I said, this Sprint Special goes like stink... ■

guard stays and the carburettor. Don tracked down a supplier of mild steel, using the Yellow Pages, and the firm offered to deliver for an extra £5.

"At 6.50am next day a 16-wheeler full of RSJs pulled up outside and unloaded 22ft of ½in 14G tube. It may have worried them at first, but my neighbours are less concerned about that sort of thing now. They think I'm eccentric of course. When they first saw me going out for a ride, someone asked my wife if it was the painter.

"But they're getting used to it now, and the smoke soon drifts away..."

The radiator was beyond satisfactory repair, so Don had Jack Butterworth make a new one in German Silver: a copper/nickel alloy which needs no plating and doesn't work harden and crack like brass. The twin-float carburettor was harder to flush out, and required 'an enormous amount of bribery and corruption' to secure it. Most of the rest was just hard graft.

"I soaked the silencer in a drum of caustic soda, washed it in cellulose thinners and flushed it through with boiling water, before taking the dents out by drilling holes opposite them and tapping from behind with a tommy bar. Then I brazed it up ready for plating. I've got my workshop set up so that I can do all the basic repairs and engineering. My wife says I don't think about anything but motorbikes since I retired, but it's not true. I think about money and sex while I'm working on them.

"Anyway, as I explained to her, I haven't really retired. I've simply changed my occupation." ■