



JAWA Motorcyclist



A Classic year

Since it's now just over a year since I collected my **Jawa 650 Classic** from David at F2 Motorcycles, I thought I'd better give you an up-date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: *I still love it. It still turns heads. I've done more miles on it than on either of my other two bikes this year.*

I'm a bit of a customiser. That's not to say that I buy lots of chrome from Milwaukee to bolt onto my "ride". It means that if I think something can be improved upon to suit me personally I will probably have a go. Nearly all my riding kit, from boots to helmet comes in for the same treatment. So if I list the things I've done to the Classic it doesn't mean there was anything really wrong with it in the first place.

I don't really like to see exposed rear chains, but you have to take what comes sometimes. The Classic has a pretty hefty 530-size chain so it should have a good life. To make it even more cushy, and more importantly to save me lots of maintenance time, I fitted a chain oiler. It's the "Loobman" type. You squeeze the plastic bottle to deliver a measured dose of oil over a period of time as you ride. I run the rear suspension at the highest setting to ensure as much ground clearance as possible. I also calculated that the chain needs a bit more slack than the manual says with the suspension high. I give it 30 to 40 mm.

Although the cruiser-style seating position is comfortable for a whole day out I found the profile of the seat would annoy me after a few hours. I re-shaped the foam cushion without changing the cover, and now I like it much better. It doesn't actually look any different. I found the top box quite handy, having not used one before, but I can't get along with the image of a pizza delivery boy. I like the look of the bike much better with just the hard panniers and showing the curve of the back mudguard. I even removed the pillion seat, but I put it back again as my helmet sits on there when I chain it to the bike. There is a charging socket cum power take-off to match by BMW. Having three bikes, some of them stay in the garage for long periods so they are hooked up to a charger delivering a very low current all the time.

After the running-in period the fuel consumption settled down to about 56 mpg. I was a bit disappointed with this as I don't thrash the bike at all. Of course the gearing is very low on the Classic and that won't help. I looked at the spark plugs. They weren't bad but there was just a hint of soot on them. I decided to try a leaner mixture in the mid-range by dropping the needle down a notch in the carburettor slide. (Bing CV carb.) This brought an improvement to around 61 to 62 mpg. There's no noticeable change to anything else, except the plugs look a bit cleaner, so I'll leave it at that for now. I want to try a higher gearing. It's not for fuel consumption or to go faster, but it's a cruiser. I'm happy to bowl along at 50 to 60 mph, depending on the roads, but I'd like the engine to be going a bit slower. It just sounds a bit busy.

I did just 5000 miles in the year on the Jawa, along with some more on the other bikes. The rear tyre was getting pretty close to the wear limit so I changed it. The replacement is the same as OE because the front tyre has lots of tread left and I want to keep them matched. The front looks like it will go to about 20000 miles! At £30 plus £8.50 delivery charge, my 5000 miles of rubber are pretty cheap. I changed the tyre myself. Haven't done that for a few years. I'd do it again, but perhaps not when I'm getting over a cold! You can get modern V-rated tyres from Avon in the right sizes for about three times the price, but why bother?

When I first saw the Classic I thought how good a sidecar machine it would be. I'm still of that view and I might get a sidecar again, mainly to carry camping gear. At the moment I use my BMW with a trailer. A sidecar outfit has some advantages and some disadvantages over the trailer option. Despite having a tubular steel frame it is not easy to find good attachment points for the chair.

I like all three of my bikes a lot. They are quite different and I like them for their different characteristics. I don't have a favourite. My wife says, "Why do you need three? You can't ride three bikes at once." I ask her, "How many pairs of shoes can you wear at once?"

John Osborn.