

ROTAX 500R (reprint)

At a recent club event a remark was made that I, as a club member had run a 500cc Rotax for longer than any other member. I suppose this is true as I've had my Rotax for 5 -6 years, used as a longer distance and summer bike using the CZ 175 as a local and winter hack. The Rotax can be an absolute pig when it comes to starting. A change of the idle jet mixture can change to cold starting but then the hot starting suffers. I find that it is best to stall the bike on the choke then it starts a lot easier. My other hate of the Rotax is the clutch when the engine is hot in slow moving traffic the clutch grabs and snatches. This with the tendency for the engine to stall under these conditions makes for hard work sometimes. But, when I **LOVE** the Rotax is on A & B class roads. The bike loves changes in speeds, gears and overtaking. I suppose the top speed is about 95mph but it is happy at 80. The handling is good normally but fast bends 2 up can cause cork screwing. On this point the swinging arm bush has never been good even from 6 months old. Running costs - rear tyre every 3000 miles but the Barum lasted 4000. Rear chains - about 4000 miles I have tried heavy duty and cheap chains and found no difference. Petrol 45 mpg hard or slow so I drive hard. Front disc pads (I have the early type using the original drum to locate the disc) - good brake but beware one pad is fixed but the one against the piston is not. When it wears down it starts to move forward under braking. I replaced mine just in time - the back had worn so much it could have been discharged under heavy braking. Speedo drive - the Rotax engine has no drive, so it is taken off the front wheel - the drive is of mixed(?) origin and does not last long. Replacements are expensive - I have in the past adapted Tomos moped drives but they run 25% slower. Oil change - every 1500 miles. As the filters are so expensive I make the filter last 2 changes. I have also fitted an oil pressure light using the blanking screw on the filter cover (for peace of mind). Other expenses have been: Fractured rear petrol tank bracket (I believe through vibration) and fractured oil tank top bracket, both brazed by my local dealer. The only other expense has been rear chain guards. The fibreglass original was too long and fouls the front sprocket cover causing the chainguard to split. I have now fitted a chrome one off a Suzuki. **Would I sell it? NO!** but it is not an everyday bike. Tip when starting the Rotax **always set engine to TDC or the valves might stick and cause starting difficulties - plenty of bangs in the exhaust though.**

by Dave Widdowson From the original file info this was dated march 1998. I believe that Dave has now disposed of the Rotax and retains his Model 11 for Club events.

Members wanting a source of information about the Rotax should check out Ian Bridges' page on the web at www.jawa500r.org.uk There is a link on the site to email Ian who lives in Sheffield. The picture below is Ian's bike before it was modified.

