



What Oil do I use in my Gearbox?

One question that comes up with great regularity is "What oil should I be using in my Kettle gearbox?" The general consensus....well...there isn't one! Some people choose mineral, others (like me) use semi-synth and some use fully synthetic oil. So it comes down to whose advice you listen to and personal preference. But then I found this email in my inbox, from a mate who designs oils for a living.....
"Hi Cobby, Doing more digging ref your question on the correct oil for use in classic bikes: There is a growing school of thought that modern oils are unsuitable for classics, as they are designed for different or additional purposes, in modern engines. A modern engine wants better fuel saving, better cooling, much lower oil viscosity, reduced ZDDP (Zinc dialkyldithio-phosphate) levels, reduced friction, extended oil life, increased detergents and less HTHS. (High-temperature, high-shear). Classic vehicles need: Higher viscosity due to larger clearances, optimal ZDDP levels for maximum protection, limited detergents to avoid blockages and bearing failures due to 'solving'. 20/50 grades all have more preservatives for maximum protection against corrosion even

when not being used and lastly; classic oils have additives for regenerating seals/gaskets and removing stubborn/encrusted dirt. This is especially important on all aluminium engines and coolers. So: CLASSIC OIL MODERN OIL High viscosity Low viscosity High ZDDP Low ZDDP Mild or no detergents High detergents High HTHS Low HTHS Quietens gear train noise No sound deadening qualities It would appear that when I said that you could use even diesel oil in your bike, my assumption was correct. Obviously there's a lot more to it but, I know this is a solid basis that all your club members can make their own decisions on. My own personal opinion is that; if I had a classic bike and/or car like yours, I'd use either 20/50 classic oil or semi synthetic diesel oil, but definitely not fully synthetic. Oils change from year to year, so stick with what you are happy with. Just remember that fully, and semi synthetic oils, have not been available long enough to get solid data on how they perform, when used in classic engines".

So there you have it, from an 'expert'.

Cobby