

# ANY QUESTION

# ANSWERED ✓

If we don't know the answer, we'll find the person who does

## OWNING & RIDING

### Q Can I buy back my written-off bike?

I crashed my Yamaha FZ-6 and it looks like it'll be beyond economical repair. I would like to buy it back to repair myself. How do I go about it? **George Warren, Small Heath**

**Answered by Chris Evitt, Carole Nash Insurance**

In the event of a total loss, the bike will become the property of the insurer. You may be given the option to purchase any remaining salvage at the amount your motorcycle will attract on the open market in its damaged condition, but this is at the discretion of the insurer. If you have an agreed value policy (free with our 'Classic' and 'Vintage' policies), this is included as standard, so check your documents. If you are interested in retaining your bike in the event of it being a total loss, you should express an interest as soon as you register a claim. If it's a cat A or B write-off they are not allowed to put the bike back into circulation. However, the majority of write-offs are category C or D so hopefully you stand a good chance of getting the bike back to repair yourself.



It's at the insurer's discretion but you should be able to fix your written-off Yamaha

### Q What's the best trackday tyre for me?

I want to do some trackdays on my BMW S1000RR. What tyres should I use? **Rob Smith, email**

**Answered by Michael Neeves, MCN**

Each tyre company produces dedicated trackday tyres and the good news is they're all hugely capable. But the best of the bunch for 2015 is Metzeler's new Racetec

RR K3 and the Pirelli Diablo Supercorsa SP. Hot on their heels are the Bridgestone RS10, Dunlop D211GP, ContiRaceAttack and Michelin Power Cup Evo. These all have more dry grip than general sports rubber, are stable and unlike race tyres don't need tyre warmers to get them up to temperature. You can happily use them on the road, too.



**Metzeler Racetec RR K3**



**Pirelli Diablo Supercorsa SP**



**Michelin Power Cup Evo**



Check how you have wired in your clocks

### Q Why are my clocks only on when my bike is off?

I've fitted some digital clocks to my KTM LC4, which went on really easily. But I am only getting them to read when the ignition is off! **Michael Joseph, email**

**Answered by Stuart Gaines, Herne Bay Motorcycles**

You need to double-check which auxiliary power feed you've used. I think you have used a live switch as an earth. So as soon as you switch on, the power goes. It's just a case of picking up a genuine earth and checking that it is still an earth in three different states. When the bike is off; switched on; and switched on and running.

### Q Why is my Busa hard to start?

My Suzuki Hayabusa seems to have a 'lazy' battery. When I press the starter, the engine only turns over slowly and the battery soon loses its oomph. A new battery, starter solenoid and starter motor haven't helped. **Harry Kelly, email**

**Answered by Dave Ball, Fowlers**

When the Busa came out there were isolated cases of the crankshaft twisting if the bike backfired at start-up. So Suzuki introduced a torque limiter, a little clutch between the starter and the crank which allows it to slip if there's a backfire. The trouble is it can wear enough to allow so much slip that it stops the motor turning over fast enough to fire up. It's a 30-minute job to get the right-hand engine case off and replace it.

### Q Where is my fuel starvation coming from?

My Kawasaki ZXR750 P has been suffering from major fuel starvation since I changed the fuel filters. I've taken them off again and checked they are on the right way and are flowing properly. But the bike will still only fire up for a minute, then you have to leave it for an hour to get any signs of life. **James Bain, Plymouth**

**Answered by Dez Martins, Alf's Motorcycles**

It sounds like the problem could have happened when you put the tank back on. If you don't route the fuel line carefully it will get pinched between the tank and the Kawasaki's frame. The best way to check once the tank is back in position is to feel for the fuel pipe. If there is some slack and you can move it, it isn't trapped.



Your R6 may need new valves

### Q What's gone wrong with my R6's engine?

My 2009 Yamaha R6 seems to be holding back at times, then running cleanly for a while before getting all vague again. It's also becoming reluctant to start. What's wrong? **Charles Button, Needham Market**

**Answered by Keith Ball, Street Bike**

These were the first R6s that went to titanium valves with anodised coatings. If the coating strips off it allows the valve stem to 'wander' in the guides. It's a pretty rare condition as I've only seen it three times in the last six years. If you pick it up early enough you can get away with new valves. But you should use the old valves to cut the valve seats back or you'll be in the same boat with missing coating, then drop the new valves in. Get a cylinder compression check done, and see if any valve clearances are really high or low.

## TRAVEL & TOURING

### Q How do I prepare for the German autobahn?

**Answered by Tony Hoare, MCN Consumer Editor**

The first time on a German motorway, or autobahn, can be a huge culture shock for us Brits. If you take the risk of travelling at over 100mph on a UK motorway, the only reason to check the mirrors is for the blue lights as they chase you down with the words 'driving ban, sunshine'. On an autobahn, even at 130mph your mirrors could be full of a car that would really like you to move out of the way. First, make sure you're

on a derestricted stretch by looking out for white signs with three diagonal bands. It's also worth sitting back for a while and watching how it works. Checking the locals' speed will confirm the road is derestricted and also give you a chance to acclimatise. Give yourself plenty of space from the car in front before getting up to the big speeds, and keep an eye for limit signs as

derestricted zones often don't last long. Keep an eye in your mirrors for looming vehicles and always let them pass. The driving standards, and especially lane discipline, are far superior in Germany to the UK, so try to live up to their benchmark and not hog the outside lane. Filtering is illegal in Germany and the locals don't like it, so prepare for horned rebukes (and/or a ticket) if you do decide to slip through to the front of a traffic queue.



German autobahns offer safe, high speed runs if you plan ahead

## TECH WATCH

### Q Is running-in a waste of time?

Few manufacturers study running-in, so a few years ago MCN spoke to scientists at Castrol's Technology Centre in Pangbourne, Berkshire, as they've made detailed technical analyses of engines from brand new to falling apart and worn out.

What they say is that a modern motorcycle engine should be run in for only 500 miles, by which point you should be revving it right to the red line. Take it too easy and you prevent the formation of the ideal surface finishes on the pistons and bores. You get a head start with modern bikes as they're already plateau honed. This means the finish, when looked at through a microscope, has broad flat areas broken up by valleys – this is ideal for lubrication without high oil



Running-in is all about getting the surfaces just so

consumption, and on older bikes you used to have to achieve that effect in the initial running in period.

In plain bearings such as the big ends and mains, the new finish under a microscope is jagged and pointy, like a mountain range, and the aim here is to gently knock the sharp tops off the 'mountains', as these poke through the thin film of oil. Do this too hard and you can tear chunks of metal off, which damages the surface, but too gentle and the surface hardens with the sharp peaks still in place.

You're also trying to achieve conformability, which means the shapes of different components are gently worn so they fit each other perfectly. With older bikes this was very important but modern machining is so good, there's little conforming needed these days.

If you don't run an engine in at all you might end up doubling its thirst for oil, but in many cases this means little, as oil consumption will still be very low anyway. Engine life will be reduced by poor running-in, but it will still last many, many miles.

## MCN LAW

Your legal questions

### Q Can I get cash for automatic?

Just under two years ago I had a collision with a lamppost after someone pulled out on me. I broke my tibia and fibula and had an external fixator frame attached for four months. Once the frame was off and following physio I found that clutch use in my car was too difficult so I bought an automatic car with an interim payment my lawyer got me. The third party insurer's lawyers are refusing to cover the extra cost of buying, replacing periodically and running an automatic car. We have seemingly reached an impasse in the negotiations on this point. Should I pursue it further? **Will Hurst, email**

The basis for a claim for financial losses is to put you back into the position you would have been in had the accident not happened. This is obviously difficult in terms of injuries but easier in terms of monetary loss. Automatic vehicles are often more expensive, which will mount up over the years. Your solicitor needs to obtain supportive medical

### 'The expert should focus on your ability to use the clutch safely'

evidence from a consultant orthopaedic surgeon. His evidence will need to show not only that it is reasonable but also that the need for it is accident-related as opposed to being related to, for example, a pre-existing condition. The expert should focus on your ability to use a clutch safely, without pain or functional deficit.

You will also need solid evidence of the actual cost difference. If your medical expert supports this claim then hopefully your opponent's expert will also support it. If not then ultimately the experts will prepare a joint statement on areas of agreement and disagreement and the judge will decide whose evidence he prefers.



**Andrew Campbell**  
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