

ANY QUESTION

ANSWERED ✓

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

Want to boost your RSV4's performance? Never mind the emissions, think about the volume levels...



OWNING & RIDING

Q Will an aftermarket pipe leave police officers fuming?

I want to fit an Akrapovic exhaust kit to my 2013 Aprilia RSV4 SE and keep my bike legal as far as emissions are concerned. But can I fit either the open link-pipe version or the catalyst type and

still stay within the law? I have been given conflicting advice from Aprilia dealers and would very much appreciate clarification. **George Fox, Polegate**

Answered by Griff Woolley, Aprilia Performance Unlike cars and trucks, motorcycles are not subject to emissions testing during the MoT, so there will be no issue with

either pipe on that score. However, getting an aftermarket can through a noise test may not be so cut and dried if you are going to use an Akrapovic pipe without any baffling.



If your bike is on SORN, this is most likely the only type of cover you need

How do I get an insurance refund?

Q As I was working in Qatar for a while I put my 2013 BMW R1250GS on SORN a month before the insurance ran out and headed to the airport. My UK mail takes several weeks to be forwarded to me, and I've just had a letter informing me that my expired insurance has been automatically renewed and payment taken from an account I don't have online access to. I'm happy for it to be off-cover as it's stored securely, so how do I get a refund? **John Allison, Co Durham**

Answered by Chris Evitt, Carole Nash Insurance Although auto-renewal features on a number of policies, it normally allows you to opt out, either by the customer contacting their broker directly, or responding to the renewal notice that should go out up to a month before the premium is due.

If a customer has already purchased a new policy with a different provider, or sold their bike, we will give them a full refund. The same applies if the customer wants to 'self-insure' while their bike is on SORN and contacts us within 14 days of the renewal date. Sometimes cancellation charges are levelled because you have been on cover, albeit inadvertently. That provision should be covered in the terms and conditions of the policy. It's always worth calling them if you are in any doubt. If you feel you still have a dispute with the broker or insurer, contact the Financial Ombudsman Service on 08000-234567 for an individual case review.

Q What are the best tyres for Scandinavia tour?

I'm doing a Scandinavian tour in the summer on my 2003 Honda Blackbird, so that will be a couple of thousand miles with some spirited riding thrown in. What's the best rubber for my bike and plans? **Matt Kinnersley, email**

Answered by Michael Neeves, MCN I was really impressed with the Metzeler Roadtec 01s I tested at the back end of last year. They give good mileage and they are fantastic in the wet. When I was on Metzeler's wet-weather test track I was getting my knee down within a couple of laps. It really does almost feel like you are riding in the dry. Michelin's Pilot Road 4s excel when it's relatively cold and wet, too, so they are a good UK winter tyre, while the proficient Pirelli Angel GTs can also be found keenly priced.



Corroded connector block could be cause of misbehaving Pan Euro lights

Q Why are my ST1300's dash lights on the blink?

The dash lights on my Honda ST1300 sometimes dim, then stay on when the key is out of the ignition. Please don't say they need replacing - it's £290 for a used set online. **Leslie Webb, Sheffield**

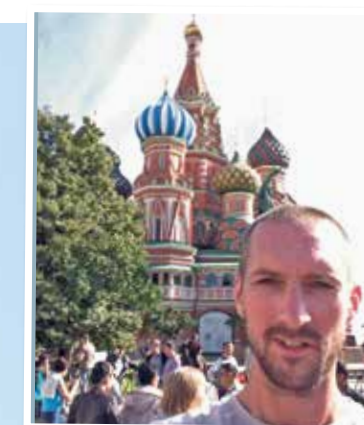
Answered by Scott Bullett, Doble Motorcycles At most you'll need some contact cleaner, pliers, decent electrical connectors, spanners and maybe a soldering kit. There's a big connector block on the left side of the fairing that feeds the sub-loom for the dash and lights. This gets drenched regularly and will corrode. The same goes for numerous plugs in the same area. The green earth wire in the block can overheat and look nasty, too. If it won't clean up, cut it back and bridge it across the connector.

TRAVEL & TOURING

Q How easy is it to ride to Russia?

Answered by Kevin Turner, adventurer and author of Hapless Biker. www.haplessbiker.com A few months ago I put some new tyres on my 12-year-old Ninja, strapped on a £40 tent and a week later found myself riding along the twisting contours of the Trollstigen Path in Norway - cold, wet and grinning like a loon. A week later I was in Moscow, gazing up at the swirling domes of St Basil's and shuddering at the prospect of returning to

the crumbling Russian road network. All in, I rode through 11 countries and covered 6000 miles in a three-week tour. It wasn't a global trek and it didn't take years to complete, but a motorcycle adventure, like a motorcycle, is a personal thing and its value shouldn't be measured in distance or time. It's about what you put in and what you take away from it. Even a weekend in Wales can give you more smiles and memories than you'd get sitting at home reading about someone else's travels.



You don't need an expensive bike; just strap on a tent and spend a few weeks riding round Europe, or head down through Spain into North Africa. It may not be Long Way Round, but you'll find it equally exhilarating and rewarding, and be amazed at just how much adventure you can cram into a fortnight



Just strap on a tent and turn left at Dover

TECH WATCH

Q Do we need electronic aids?

One of the criticisms of traction control in particular, and electronic rider assistance in general, is that it takes the skill out of riding. "This is my traction control, mate," people say, rolling their right wrists in imitation of multiple 500cc champ Mick Doohan's famous riposte to the "do you use traction control?" question. Mick was notorious for refusing to test Honda's technical advances, battling away fuel injection and traction control among others, telling HRC he'd only use it when someone beat him with the same hardware. It's a familiar refrain from racers, who see rider aids as gimmicks at best, hindrances to their undoubted skill at worst. But they have no bearing on the quality of racing, as

anyone who survived Doohan's astonishing, but dull, five world titles in a row will attest. And you can hardly say a traction-controlled Casey Stoner or Marc Marquez is dull. The 'rider aids are bad' mantra is often less convincingly repeated by a few road riders, as if preventing a front wheel lock in the wet that would otherwise result in a crash is somehow lacking machismo. The absence of electronics is even used to market bikes. See Suzuki France's advert for the traction control-free GSX-R1000 last year: "World Endurance Champs without traction control, without ABS... just by turning the throttle in the right direction," it boasted, conveniently forgetting the three-position power mode switch. And electronic management controlling power delivery. And 186mph top speed limit. Not that it needed it because, ironically, stock French GSX-R1000s are restricted to

100bhp. By electronics. And forgetting how the GSX-R's secondary throttle valve opens independently of the rider-controlled primary valve, as fitted to every GSX-R since 1996 (the same secondary throttle valve Suzuki brazenly labelled 'semi-ride-by-wire' on the C1500T cruiser earlier this year). Seems there's no escaping the rise of the machines, like it or not.



Just 'cus Doohan didn't need traction control doesn't mean we don't

MCN LAW

Your legal questions

Q Exhausted by chase for item I paid for... in 2012!

In 2012 at a bike show I paid £350 cash to a company for an aftermarket exhaust. They said it would be delivered within 10 days. It wasn't, and all attempts to contact them were fruitless. Likewise my attempt to get a refund. I contacted the manufacturer, who was aware of the problem but said they couldn't do anything about it. I have the receipt and letters but no papers confirming the delivery time - that was agreed orally. I still get cross about this. Is there anything I can do to get my money back after all this time? **Baz, Braintree**

In your case the claim would be governed by contract law as you had a contract with the supplier to provide you with the exhaust in return for the payment made.

'The time limit for bringing your claim is six years, so you'll still be fine'

The company has not fulfilled its contractual obligations and you are therefore entitled to recover the £350, plus interest. The time limit for bringing your claim is six years so you'll still be fine. It is great that you have the receipt and the letters as evidence.

I suggest that you go onto www.moneyclaim.gov.uk and pursue the matter through the small claims court. There is a small issue fee to be paid which you will recover from your opponent on success. However, depending on your financial circumstances, you may not have to pay the court fee and your local county court will be able to give you guidance on this. If the defendant does not respond to your claim then you can ask the court for judgment in your favour and, when granted, enforce the debt.



Andrew Campbell, **Bikelawyer**. Visit www.bikelawyer.co.uk or email andrew@bikelawyer.co.uk or call 01446 794169

Bikelawyer
Motorcycle Accident Solicitors

Q How can I access hard-to-reach areas of my bike?

I haven't got dextrous hands like a concert pianist, so I'm in the market for specialist tools to help me get into those tight nooks and crannies on a bike. **Peter Bower, Harrogate**

Answered by Simon Relph, MCN The other day I had to remove a carburettor from my Yamaha XT500 - never the easiest of jobs due to there being very

little room to manoeuvre. My Laser Micro Ratchet set was the answer. Other tight situations have been sorted by Venhill's 1/4-swivel ratchet while Apex Tools Xcelite ratchet screwdriver lets you work on those tucked away Phillips screws so beloved by the Japanese. If something is really locked up solid, a Dremel will have the right attachment to slice the offending piece off.



£26

Laser Micro Ratchet two-piece set



£27

Apex Xcelite XL75 Offset Ratchet screwdriver set



£15

Venhill 1/4-swivel ratchet



£56

Dremel 3000 kit