

# ANY QUESTION

# ANSWERED ✓

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

Blocked valve may be causing CBR's mystery bounce



## OWNING & RIDING

### Q Why are my re-chromed forks bouncy?

Last summer, I had the forks on my Honda CBR600F2 re-chromed. When I refitted the forks the front end was very bouncy. A friend recommended using thicker oil; I've tried 10w, 15w and I've currently got 20w in, but it's still very bouncy. What can I do to get the old feeling back?  
James Bessell, Bristol

Answered by Gareth Evans, Reactive Suspension. Your Honda CBR600F2 will have damper rod forks which means that located inside the bottom of the tubes will be a shuttle valve. On the compression stroke the shuttle valve opens to fill the rebound chamber with oil, on the rebound stroke the valve closes to

push the oil through the rebound orifice.

When your forks were re-chromed the ends of the tube will have been plugged with wax. In some cases, if the wax isn't cleaned out properly it can seize the shuttle valve. You should be able to feel if the valve is moving with your finger. If it doesn't move,

try immersing the end of the tubes in degreaser overnight and brush the inside of the tubes thoroughly with a large bottle brush. In our workshop, we also use a large ultrasonic bath, where the heat and cavitation action help to remove the wax from the ends of the tubes, so you may have to get the forks to a bath like that.



The CBF's front tyre should be at 36psi

### Q Why has the right pressure spoiled my ride?

I have had my 2007 Honda CBF600 for about six months, and I had got it into my head that the front tyre pressure at 42psi seemed fine on the road. Last week I went to check the front tyre and the valve came off in my hand! I was able to wheel it down the road to my local dealer who replaced the valve and informed me the front tyre should be at 36psi. I double-checked this and they are right.

However, the bike now feels completely different. It turns in much quicker and the bars seem to want to turn in the direction I'm turning them. Also the feedback when going over white lines or parallel ridges in the road seems exaggerated. What on earth is going on?  
Owen Beaumont, Norwich

Answered by Chris Dabbs, MCN

I think you have got so used to a certain amount of steering input and feedback from the front end that you have got to mentally adjust, even though that's how the bike should feel. If the tyre pressure was so high for so long, it's possible that it may have introduced some unusual tyre wear characteristics which won't help. But stick with it and hopefully you'll learn to love it again.

If nothing else you've learnt that you should always get your tyre valves replaced at the same time as the tyres. Tyres that are more than five years old are no good, and it sounds like the valve was as old as the bike.

### Q Is it easy to fit a Triumph quickshifter?

I'm thinking of fitting one of Triumph's own-brand quickshifters to my 2011 Triumph Street Triple. Is there anything I need to look out for?  
Malcolm McArthur, Derby

Answered by Clive Wood, Clive Wood Triumph

It's pretty much a 'plug and play' job with an oval two-pin connector already in position under the tank to take the wiring. Triumph has compiled an online manual for all their accessories at: www.triumphinstructions.com. You can search it using the relevant Triumph part number (A9930222 in your case). The hardest part is getting your head around the fact that the aluminium rod has a left-hand thread at one end. Take a moment to stop and think before using your spanners and you won't overtighten it.



A battery trickle charger is a good idea, even if you ride everyday

### Q Should I always use a trickle charger?

I ride my 2006 Kawasaki Z750 most days and I was wondering whether I should attach it to a trickle charger after every ride, even though it's generally only left for 12 hours. Is it worth it and could it do any damage to the battery?  
Will Lloyd, email

Answered by Chris Dabbs, MCN

A bike-specific trickle charger will not damage the battery and it will only add 3-4p a month to your household electricity bill. Although your battery will hold its charge for several weeks without any problem, the advantage of keeping it hooked up is that it keeps the voltage slightly elevated at 12.6 volts. If the voltage drops to 12.4 or lower then sulphation, where lead sulphate starts to build up on the plates, can occur, which will reduce the battery's amp capacity over time.



## TRAVEL & TOURING

### Q How to travel on the cheap

Answered by Sam Manicom, adventure travel expert

The less you spend in advance on if-but-maybe kit, the more petrol you'll have to put in your tank. Make your mantra - 'do I really need it?' Each piece of kit should have two uses where at all possible. Your groundsheet is an example. Stick yours on the bed in cheapie hotels and if it's

a type that doesn't crinkle you'll have a peaceful and clean night's sleep. Don't be shy in first-world countries. Try cleaning people's cars and mowing the lawn in exchange for places to camp for free. In the developing world, stay in local hotels but don't arrive at the end of the day when the cheapies are full. Don't fear wild camping. Do it as much as

possible; it's amazing how many stunning places there are to tuck yourself away. Always carry some emergency rations such as biscuits or nuts. That way you'll not be tempted to splash out. On the subject of sustenance, don't get carried away with beer. This can be a major budget breaker. An evening on the booze can suck up a week's food money!

## TECH WATCH

### Q Why don't bikes have cars licked on fuel economy?

When Suzuki launched its C1500T Intruder in 2013 the big story was its alleged ability to get from Bournemouth to Nottingham on one tank. Suzuki's claimed 53mpg wasn't that great - about the same as the first Intruder, a 750 V-twin introduced to the UK in 1986.

Do riders care? Some do, some don't. If we take an average 6000 annual miles at today's prices, a C1500 that does 53mpg will cost you £513 rather than the £633 you could expect to shovel into a similar cruiser returning a more normal 43mpg. That's a saving of around £120. Shrink the mileage to a more realistic 2000 miles for a sunny weather cruiser and the difference

is £40 - hardly a deal breaker for someone who can afford an £11,000 bike.

Today's most economical bikes, ridden so they're still fun, manage low 60s mpg. Can we expect big leaps forward in years to come? After all, a cheapo Citroen C1 car can easily manage 53mpg, and it weighs 800kg - four times more than a bike.

The truth is, heavier vehicles use more fuel. It's just that lighter vehicles which are fun (like most motorcycles) use even more. The reasons are many: bikes don't have to sit behind lorries, so they do a lot of accelerating. They use engines with long-rev ranges and lots of power, which means that at typical road speeds they're deep in their inefficient zone. The shape of a bike and rider is aerodynamically rubbish. And some of the injection and ignition tricky cars use to save fuel aren't acceptable on bikes which don't generate enough inertia

to mask the associated jerkiness.

Motorcycle lightness would indeed count if all vehicles did similar - read slow - speeds. For years, electric bike expert Cedric Lynch has run a feet-first, torpedo-shaped motorcycle which uses a fraction of the energy a conventional bike needs. It does 60mph on two horsepower, he reckons. A normal bike needs 10. But for now, at least, cigar-shaped bikes aren't cool. Maybe if petrol returns to the days of skyscraper prices that will change.



The Intruder returns 53mpg, imagine what it'd do if it were bullet-shaped?

## MCN LAW

Your legal questions

### Q Driver is now denying blame but can I still claim?

I was knocked off my bike when a driver changed lanes on a roundabout. At the scene he was very apologetic and said I could claim on his insurance but now he's saying I was the one who was in the wrong lane and that the accident was my fault. Can I still try to claim on his insurance?  
Ed Green, email

There is a lot of confusion around the role of insurance companies in the claims process. When you are hit by a third party and you make a claim against that driver's insurance you are actually suing that other driver, usually for negligence, and that driver is being indemnified by his or her insurance company.

If the other driver denies your allegation, even if he admitted liability at the scene, then you

### 'When you make a claim against a driver's insurance you are suing them'

would need to pursue the matter in court to seek damages. In civil court the test which the judge will use is whether, on the balance of probabilities, your allegation of negligence is more likely to be true than not. It is for the claimant to prove his claim rather than for the defendant to prove their defence, so if the court was unable to decide then your claim would fail.

The way to persuade the court that your version of events is accurate would be to provide as much evidence in support of your version of events. Usually this will mean getting statements from witnesses, the police or in serious cases even forensic reconstruction evidence, though your solicitor should be able to advise you as to whether this is appropriate as it can be very expensive.



Andrew Campbell  
Solicitor and author of the MCN Law column for the last five years

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### Q How can I give my bike's lights a bit of a blue hue?

I'm impressed by those blueish headlights that more bikes seem to have, so I am looking at uprating the lighting on my GSX-R750 K7. What are my options?  
Frank Irving, email

Answered by Kim Bonard, ABD

The simplest upgrade is to switch to a halogen bulb that has been filled with extra Xenon gas. This technology gives a greater light output, typically between 50

and 130%. The next step is a HID system. HID light output is three to four times more intense than a halogen bulb, but requires an electronic control gear and starter. You can choose different temperature bulbs on a K-scale to give a different colour beam, from 4300K for off-white to 10000K for pale blue. But the higher the K-number the less useable light produced, so we recommend 6000K as the best compromise.



H7 Ring Xenon 130 (x2) £29.99



H7 Osram Night Racer £19.99



35w HID Xenon Bulbset £10.50



H7 HID Xenon Conversion Kit £35.00