

# ASK THE EXPERTS

Got a problem? MCN's team of specialists has the answers



**GENERAL**  
**Chris Dabbs**  
MCN's agony uncle and former road tester with 30 years' biking experience



**SUZUKI**  
**Steve Scully**  
Service manager at GT Motorcycles, Plymouth, 30 years' Suzuki experience



**HONDA**  
**Scott Bullett**  
Workshop manager and a Honda-approved diagnostic technician at Doble Motorcycles



**TYRES**  
**Bryn Phillips**  
Works in product support at Cambrian Tyres, the UK's biggest trade tyre supplier

**Q** I ride a Triumph Speed Four all year round and have a bellypan fitted to it. Unfortunately, every winter the paint on the tip of the bellypan, closest to the front wheel, seems to disintegrate with all the road salt and crud that hits it. Short of either removing it or covering the front with cling film, do you know of any ways to stop the paintwork chipping and degrading in this vulnerable area?

**A** You have got a couple of options to give your bike's paintwork a more robust finish. The hardest wearing option is an adhesive-backed urethane covering developed by 3M called Ventureshield. There is a network of fitters for both cars and bikes, but the bike kit has been designed to be DIY fitted and comes as a pre-cut kit for each bike's fairing panels and headlight lens. Every sheet is fitted in much the same way as an Airfix transfer using the supplied soap solution to slide it into place. The water is then squeegeed out from under the film and any air bubbles are smoothed away. But because the covering is so tough even if you mess up the fitting you can peel it off and start again.

Prior to fitting you have to ensure all the surfaces are scrupulously clean and the ambient temperature has to be over 15°C, but Ventureshield should be more than capable of resisting any crud thrown up by your front wheel, and comes with a five-year guarantee.

Prices range from £55 for a naked bike, up to £120 for a full-dress tourer. Allow two hours to fit it. Oxford Products offer a similar product called Paintsaver (£23) that you cut yourself.  
**Chris Dabbs, MCN**



## How do I protect my bellypan?

CHARLIE DYSON, EMAIL

Bellypans always bear the brunt of grit, stones and bad weather, but they can be protected

## How do I bleed an oil pump?

**Q** I've lovingly restored a 1974 Suzuki TS125L and I'm having some trouble bleeding the oil pump. I've managed to get oil through the pipe that goes to the top of the barrel, but trying to get oil through the other just isn't happening. Am I missing something?  
**Gungoss, MCN forums**

**A** The best way to bleed the system is to have a 50:1 petrol mix in the tank while you are coaxing the oil through. That way there will be sufficient lubrication whether the pump is working or not. You'll only need a couple of litres of the mix, and that extra lube will help if you're running in a new piston and rebore anyway.

The pump has a bleed screw at the bottom (it should be recognisable by its copper or red fibre washer). Remove the screw and allow oil to run free until there are no more air bubbles, and then replace the screw and sealing washer. Drain the carb at the float bowl to remove any neat petrol and allow the 50:1 mix in, then back off or remove both banjo bolts on the engine to allow the pump to push the oil through without any resistance. The oil pipes should be clear so you can watch the lube travel up the pipes. Start the engine and wait for the oil to seep out around the bolts, tighten them and it's done.

**Steve Scully, GT Motorcycles**



Using premix after a rebuild will help as you prime the oil pump for the first time

## What should be on my present list to Santa?

DAN SHARP, EMAIL

**It's that time of year when I'm getting asked what I want for Christmas by the family. Instead of socks or aftershave I'd like to get some bike-related kit up to a £40 limit. What gear has MCN used over the year that's impressed?**  
**Dan Sharp, email**



Senior Editor Richard Newland really rates Motul's Insect Remover and E4 Perfect Seat spray, which he says is very good on even the

most tired looking vinyl saddle. The SDoc100 gel cleaner, a must-have for winter riding, gets a thumbs-up too.

Production Editor Emma Franklin thinks that SDoc100's chain cleaner is also "fantastic, if a little pricey" at £10 for 300ml. Senior Reporter Andy Downes is a fan of angled tyre valve adaptors that start for as little as £2.99 and make using car-centric garage airlines so much easier. They shouldn't be left on the tyre though, so make sure you have a sealing dust cap fitted before you unscrew it each time to minimise pressure loss. A neck warmer would feature on Andy Downes' Christmas list too. He uses an Oxford ChillOut Essential Turtleneck that is waterproof. Simple

fleece warmers start at £2.99 and go up to £29 for combined neck warmers and balaclavas.

If you value your paintwork (and eye sockets), Staff Writer Andy Davidson's advice is to switch from 'lively' bungees to Rok Straps which loop back on themselves and are adjustable from 12 to 60 inches. A twin pack costs between £10 to £19.

If you've already got a rear paddock stand then consider a Halfords trolley jack for £24.99, like the one Senior Editor Tim Thompson's got. If used carefully under the sump with a rear stand, it allows you to lift the front end off the ground slightly to check headraces, bearings, brake pads and disc run-out.

Books are a predictable fallback option and Executive Editor Phil West has already earmarked Continental Circus - The Races and the Places, the People and the Faces from Mastix Press. Riders, wives, mechanics, and drivers: they are all here in over 400 photos with extended captions chronicling a vanished world.

**Chris Dabbs, MCN**

- Motul E4 Perfect Seat - 250ml** £7.99
- Motul E7 Insect Remover - 400ml** £4.99



### BEST BIKING GIFTS



**SDoc chain cleaner**  
£10



**Halfords trolley jack**  
£24.99



**Oxford Turtleneck**  
£18.99



**Continental Circus**  
£35



**Rokstraps**  
£10-£19

## Why is neutral so hard to find?

**Q** I'm having trouble selecting neutral on my Honda CBR900RR after short rides of around 30 mins. What should I check?  
**Gavin Walden, Facebook**

**A** It sounds like once your clutch is warmed up it's expanding and starting to drag. So the first place to start is the cable itself and the freelay, which should be about 3-4mm.

If this doesn't help, it's going to be the clutch internals. Either the plates are worn or they have warped slightly, or the basket has developed notches that are not allowing the plates to separate properly.  
**Scott Bullett, Doble motorcycles**



There's now a fair choice of rubber for the XR1200

## What rubber will suit my XR1200?

**Q** I need new tyres on my Harley XR1200. The Dunlops it comes with have been OK and I'm on my second set, but are there any other makes I can consider?  
**Chris Roberts, Facebook**

**A** There's plenty of choice these days. Dunlop has the RoadSmart II and they're also about to reintroduce the original RoadSmart. But if you want a total change, there are Bridgestone's T30 and the older BT-023, while Continental offer the RoadAttack 2. From Metzeler there's the Roadtec Z8 Interact and the older Roadtec Z6. Michelin has the Pilot Road 3, and Pirelli have the Angel GT.  
**Bryn Phillips, Cambrian Tyres**

## MCN LAW

Your legal questions

### WILL BENEFITS STOP ONCE I'VE CLAIMED?

**Q** I have an ongoing insurance claim following an accident which I had nearly 18 months ago. It was a typical "sorry mate I didn't see you" case. My beloved Triumph Daytona was written off, but as it was insured fully comp I have been paid out for it. I am still not back to work as a self-employed plumber and am currently on benefits. But with settlement approaching I am wondering what will happen to my benefits if I receive what is likely to be about £100,000 in compensation? I am still not fit to return to work but don't want to spend my compensation for day-to-day living as I need to save it for the future.  
**Gavin, Hayes**

### 'A Personal Injury Trust has to be set up for any compensation to be paid into'

**A** There is a way to continue to claim benefits despite receiving a significant amount of compensation, however certain rules apply. You have not said whether or not you have received any interim payments to date and this may have a bearing on whether you can receive benefits despite receiving your compensation. A Personal Injury Trust has to be set up for any compensation to be paid into. If you have received an interim payment of £6000 or more the Trust has to be set up within 12 months following receipt of the first payment.

Once set up, you can continue to receive benefits in addition to having the funds available in your Trust account to be spent as you feel fit subject to Trustee approval. Trustees should therefore be close relatives or trusted friends (or your solicitor plus one other).



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

**Andrew Campbell, Bikelawyer.**  
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**Bikelawyer**  
Motorcycle Accident Solicitors

**CHOOSE BEFORE YOU LOSE UPGRADING FROM AN SV650**

[MCN bikesforsale.com](http://www.mcnbikesforsale.com)

After my SV650, I'm torn between a sports 600 and a Triumph triple. I have £5000. Supers1201, MCN forums



**MCN CHOICE**  
**The combined option**  
**TRIUMPH STREET TRIPLE £3299-£8495**  
Here's a bike that combines three-cylinder grunt with a top-end howl a lot like a sports 600. It will keep all but the most hardcore riders entertained.  
98bhp | 167kg | 17.4l | 800mm seat



**The Japanese option**  
**SUZUKI GSX-R600 £4200-£8799**  
In 2011 the GSX-R got more midrange, a close-ratio gearbox, Big Piston Forks and Brembo radial front brakes. If only it looked a bit more special.  
126bhp | 187kg | 17l | 810mm seat



**The big option**  
**TRIUMPH SPEED TRIPLE £3750-£10,999**  
Triumph's big triple makes similar power to a supersport bike, but that 1050 triple generates amazing torque, all wrapped in a great chassis.  
128bhp | 189kg | 18l | 815mm seat