

ANY QUESTION

ANSWERED ✓

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

OWNING & RIDING

Q How can I keep my cool with VFR800?

My 2006 Honda VFR800 overheated in the summer when a coolant hose split. Luckily I smelled the coolant on the hot exhaust so I caught it before it did any permanent damage. But now the spark plugs have fouled up for the second time and I am beginning to wonder if the two problems are related? Piers Rickard, Bedford

Answered by Steve Scully, GT Motorcycles They could very well be connected. The engine temperature sender works in the same way as a thermostat, with wax that changes consistency to give a different resistance that's read by the ECU. But this could have been damaged when the bike overheated.

When an engine is cold it needs a richer mixture, so the ECU will increase the injector period, shortening it as the bike warms up. But if the sender has failed, the ECU will keep pumping in a rich mixture, which is fouling the plugs. If we suspect a sender problem we'll use an infrared temperature gun aimed at a coolant hose and compare the reading with the dash.



Frazzled temp sender can make VFR800 run rich

Q My Tiger 1050 is a nightmare to get into neutral

When there are no hold-ups my 2011 Triumph Tiger 1050 will select neutral at junctions and traffic lights. However, if I get stuck in traffic and it warms up, the bike will not go into neutral. I have been told the solution is to remove the clutch plates and soak them in engine oil. Is this the correct solution and will it be a permanent one? Or is this a design issue that means it will have to be repeated during the clutch's lifetime? Barry DeHaan, email

Answered by Adrian Clancy, Total Triumph

The cause of the sticking clutch plates on the Tiger 1050 is a moly grease used during gearbox assembly at the factory. The input shaft is hollow and provides a pressurised oil feed to the clutch. If too much grease is used or it gets onto the inside of the input shaft it ends up on the clutch plates, gumming them together. The plates also dry out because the oil can't get between them while they're stuck together. The clutch assembly has to be removed so the clutch plates can be cleaned and oiled. If they are badly contaminated they may have to be replaced. The problem seems to have been sorted on the most recent models.



Sorry officer, my Tiger's clutch is a bit grabby. Bit of cleaning and it won't happen again...

Q Can I smooth my MT-09's throttle response?

I've just bought a used Yamaha MT-09 and I'm finding it a bit snatchy in A-mode, but too bland in the others. Can I get a different tune from Yamaha to sort this out? Patrick Donovan, Haverhill

Answered by Charles Manvell, Flitwick Motorcycles

Yamaha do offer a replacement map that is similar to the one on the Tracer – more mellow. Personally, I think that sharp feel is part of the bike's appeal, and you should be aware that once that tune is changed, you can't go back, so I'd advise you stick with it. It will help if the chain tension is spot on, as it's pretty tight at 5-15mm for the MT-09 and the Tracer, instead of the more usual 30-40mm.



Mellow map is available but it's permanent

Q Lexmoto 125 won't turn over. What's gone wrong?

My Lexmoto 125 scooter has only done 1000 miles, but it won't start. The fuel is flowing, and the battery's got 12.4 volts, which should be plenty for a small bike like this. Where next? Robert Jobson, Alnwick

Answered by Richard Hewitt, RH Motorcycle Services

The Lexmoto has a pretty feeble green earth wire from the alternator and this can overheat. Replace it with some thicker gauge between two good earths and it should turn over and start no problem.

Q I need to crack Yamaha's code

My son has a Yamaha WR125 and it keeps flashing up a '19' fault code. I've found out that it refers to the sidestand switch, but that appears to be working perfectly. Tim Mead, Hindhead

Answered by Colin Barnes, Chas Bikes

The WR has a lot of thin wires coming out of the ignition barrel that relate to different circuits. We had one in recently showing the same code and we traced back it to a break there.

TRAVEL & TOURING

Q My mates have bailed on our tour, should I go anyway?

Answered by Andy Davidson, MCN adventure expert

Definitely, 100%, yes. Why wouldn't you? Let's weigh it up – the cons are you'll be alone should you get into trouble and... you haven't got your mates with you. Now for the pros – you will have the freedom to do what you want, when you want

to do it. It's a million times easier to meet new people as you're not part of a big group of biker boys. People are more likely to help if you're stuck and 10 times more likely to take you in should you need a place to stay. The experiences you will have as a solo rider are completely different to the ones you have

with a group of mates. You'll be more likely to take your time and explore places at a leisurely pace. And that's a big part of motorcycle travel, the freedom it offers. Go on your own, take your time, meet new people, try the online phenomenon of couchsurfing and enjoy your time on the road.

A solo adventure can offer more freedoms



TECH WATCH

Q Why has the world gone mad for triples?

The three-cylinder engine is either a compromise or the best of both worlds, depending on exactly what you're after. But in terms of power it's not the halfway house between twin and four which you might expect – in fact it's closer to the four.

The maximum power you can get out of an engine is broadly determined by the maximum piston speed – if you start to go much above 21 m/s on a road bike engine, reliability and durability will suffer. But for big power you need lots of revs, so you need to find ways to achieve this while keeping the piston speeds as low as possible. One way is by having a short stroke compared with the bore size (oversquare), another is to increase the number of cylinders, so each one is smaller and its piston travels less far with each engine revolution.

A one-litre triple with square dimensions (equal bore and stroke) has a stroke of 75mm, only 7mm



Triples like the MVF3 offer a thrilling sound

more than the four, but 11mm less than a twin. The triple will still lose out to the four in outright power, but the engine designer will tune the motor to its strength and give it more midrange power instead, which for road bikes can often be more useful. Triples can vibrate though. Although they have near-perfect primary balance, the firing of

the cylinders at each end of the crankshaft causes them to rock. They need balance shafts, which can sap power and add weight, although fours need them too and in a four they rotate at twice the engine speed, creating more friction. Yet there's something about the exhaust note which makes a triple sound as if it's snarling. And for lots of riders, that's enough.

Q It's starting to get chilly on my commute, is heated kit worth getting hot under the collar about?

Lee Boyce, Southampton

Answered by Tony Hoare, MCN Consumer Editor

If your journey is less than half-an-hour then a decent base layer, mid-layer and outer jacket should do the job without using heated kit. But if you really feel the cold, or your commute is nearer an hour each way, a battery-powered heated vest will help. A rechargeable battery

lives in a pocket and will last for a couple of hours on full heat (if you can charge it during the working day, all the better). If you have a longer commute and can't charge the battery during the day, a jacket that takes its power from the bike's battery will be warm whenever you're riding. Some jackets that come with a connection for the bike battery can be powered by an optional rechargeable battery.



£109.99

Keis X10 bodywarmer



£149.99

Oxford Hot Vest (battery powered)



£179.99

Exo2 StormRider heated vest



£169.99

Gerbing 12V heated jacket liner

MCN LAW

Your legal questions

Q Will the guilty party pay for private surgery?

I need an ankle operation after an accident last year. Despite admitting liability the driver's solicitor is insisting I have the operation on the NHS. But there is a very long waiting list and my local private hospital has a very highly regarded foot and ankle surgeon available now. Can I make the other side pay for the surgery privately? Kathryn Evans, Pontyclun

You definitely do not have to use the NHS for your surgery. It is very common for insurers and defendant solicitors to attempt to insist that claimants undergo surgery on the NHS, because it is cheaper for their clients. They often refuse to make an interim payment of damages to allow the treatment to go ahead but this can be dealt with by way of an application to the court for the funds. You are entitled to obtain private treatment and the other side has to pay for it. The relevant legislation to bring to the attention

'You are entitled to private treatment and the other side has to pay for it'

of your solicitors is Section 2 (4) of the Law Reform (Personal Injuries) Act 1948.

I suggest your solicitor explains to the insurer that refusing to pay for the private surgery is (a) delaying your recovery and thereby leading to a potentially increased compensation payment (b) preventing you from complying with your common law duty to mitigate your loss and (c) it will lead to increased legal costs if you are forced to make a court application for the money. If the surgery is medically justified then this should be brought to the court's attention when making the application for funds, if your opponent does not back down and agree to pay for it.



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