

classic **mechanics** motorcycle

the best bikes of the 70s and 80s



KAWASAKI F8 BISON

You don't see many
of those about

SUZUKI T350

Rebel with
a cause

YAMAHA TZ350 YPVS

Yes, it's road legal



YAMAZAKI

We ride Stan Stephen's
wild roadburner

plus >

YAMAHA XT500 PROJECT + WASTED SPARK IGNITIONS +
ALL ABOUT OIL SEALS + THE TRUTH ABOUT FORK RECHROMING

**YOUR
BIKES...**
More of the
best from
our readers

No 231 January 2007 £3.40





1: All customers' stanchions are logged in as they arrive, and progress is recorded through the system to ensure nothing gets misplaced.

If that's not enough the poor old stanchions are the first thing to get bent in even the gentlest front-end impact. So what can you do about it? Well, the factory option, of course, is to simply fit brand-new parts. But if you're restoring an old or rare bike that simply might not be an option, and we're increasingly finding that good, aftermarket reconditioning actually works out cheaper than factory replacements, and offers a standard of finish that easily rivals factory parts.

AM Philpott are one of a handful of specialists who can handle this kind of work. They not only have top quality specialist machinery to do the job,

they also have years of experience and know exactly what they're doing with your rare and valuable motorcycle forks. "We manage to restore forks that arrive in what most people would think of as in terminal condition," says Philpott's owner and manager Andy Morgan. "After the initial inspection we put all stanchions between centres on a hydraulic press and true them up, and provided the metal isn't actually creased we can continue with them."

All customers' fork legs are logged in and engraved on a non-visible area inside the stanchion, so nothing gets lost or mixed up. Dimensions are measured before the stanchions are checked for straightness and corrected

as necessary. "We measure the tubes on a non-wearing area before they're stripped," says Andy, "we've plenty of experience of all the major stanchions, and can look up any extra information we need."

The bearing surface is then ground back to remove any pitting on a centreless grinder, and the fork legs are hard chromed to restore metal to the working surface. This kind of hard chrome is not to be confused with the bright decorative chrome you'll find on mudguards and headlamp shells, and again it requires highly specialist equipment to get it right. Finally the stanchions are ground back to size.

With prices starting from only £115

Hard Chrome

Telescopic forks have a hard life. Apart from all those braking and acceleration forces, the vulnerable bearing surfaces of the stanchions frequently spend their entire working life out in the elements where stone chips and corrosion can wreak havoc with the precision surface. And havoc wrought here invariably results in leaky fork seals, and MoT failure.



2: Before work commences, the stanchions are engraved internally with the customer reference, so there's no danger of your fork tubes getting mixed up with anyone else's.



3: Measuring the stanchion on an unworn section gives a reference dimension to work to for reconditioning. All figures are cross-referenced against existing records to double check.



4: Next step is to check the stanchions for truth. Even undamaged forks can show slight bending due to the braking forces encountered in several years hard use. Bent forks are straightened in the press before proceeding.



5: All pitting and surface damage is then ground back on a Cincinnati 220/8 centreless grinder.



6: Before chroming, the ground surface is finished off and checked. Any remaining pits means the stanchion goes back to the grinder.



7: Recesses at the stanchion ends, such as those machined for fork bushes, have to be protected from the chroming process, so the tubes are wax dipped at the ends and dressed back to ensure only the bearing surface receives the new chrome.



8: The industrial hard-chroming process deposits new metal onto the stanchion surface. The material gives a durable surface which, in many cases, is more resistant to pitting than some factory finishes.



9: The tubes are chromed oversize to ensure there's enough new metal to be ground down to size.



10: Then it's back to the grinder to machine the new surface. Accurate setting up means the centreless grinder can machine the finish to very close tolerances.



11: The final check. The reconditioned stanchions should be correct to factory tolerances, and are frequently better than standard.



12: Each reconditioned stanchion is individually packed and despatched back to the customer by City Link. Turnaround on the whole job is usually no more than one week.

for a pair of stanchions, pricing is keenly competitive with new factory parts and in many cases actually works out cheaper. And for that you're not only getting a precision job, you're getting individual attention from professionals instead of something churned out by the thousand from a computer-driven CNC process.

If you're wary about dismantling and reassembling your fork legs, for a small extra charge Philpott's will do it

all for you, taking your old bent or pitted forks and returning them completely refinished and rebuilt with new seals and oil, ready to pop back onto the bike.

They also offer full alloy polishing and anodising facilities, and can apply the same refinishing techniques to worn shafts and bearing surfaces. And to cap all that, average turnaround is only one week, and Philpott's will arrange door-to-door delivery by City

Link, so you don't even have to post them off!

So far two of our project bikes have been given the Philpott's treatment, our rebuild project XT500 (see page 24) and a Z1A we're working on for a series next year. We're impressed, and we think you will be too.

AM Philpott are at Unit D, Cradock Industrial Estate, Luton, Beds, LU4 0JF, Tel 01582 571234, or click onto www.pittedforks.com