TECH TIPS

plunger being held off its seating, thus upsetting the carberation.

While the tank is off you can check out the electrics at the front of the machine. Roy says you can spray all the wiring with WD40 or similar, to good effect. He also advised filling all electrical connections with silicon grease. Silicon grease is a little like WD40 in a solid, rather than a liquid form. It is not an expensive substitute for normal grease.

The multi-pin connectors are not treated at the factory and tend to corrode quite quickly--once exposed to the British climate. You should pull all connectors apart and clean off all signs of "growth" then pump in plenty of silicon grease. This also applies to the ignition switch and the switch on the prop stand. If you bought your Ducati from Sports Motorcycles, this treatment will have been carried out for you before you took delivery.

Another important point to look out for concerns the fuse box. The lid of the box fits up under the tank, just where rain water can drain into it. There should be a drain hole in the cover, but the chances are it will be missing. It takes only a second or two to drill a couple of holes which will let the water out again. It's a small point but one which can produce a lot of headaches if neglected.

Warning light failure is another small, but irritating, fault with the Ducati. A lot of owners ask for these to be replaced when their bike is being serviced, not realising that the labour amounts to nearly a full hour. You have to pull most of the headlamp assembly apart to get to the warning lights. The confusion arises when you try to locate the bulb. Strictly speaking there isn't one! The coloured lamp glass IS the bulb. The picture will make this clear.

Although you may have Marzocchi or Ceriani front forks, they both take 185cc of oil after draining. The actual grade is AGIP "OSO25", but most owners experiment to find the weight best suited to their riding technique; AFT fluid makes a fair starting point.

The brake pads can be inspected after removing the cover over the caliper. The minimum wear limit is 4mm. When you consider that the pad starts life with only 7mm of material this does seem an awful lot of brake pad to throw away. Don't be tempted to let them go any further. Roy assures us that once under 4mm the friction material starts to break up.

There are more than just one or two points to look out for when setting up the clearances on the Desmodromic valve gear. However, Roy says that any owner with average intelligence and a little patience can tackle the job. Checking the clearance is fairly straight-forward, but watch out for oil spillage when you remove the lower cylinder's cam cover.

With the valve gear exposed, set the crankshaft to TDC, on compression, and measure the clearance under the top rocker. This should be 4 thou. to check the lower clearance you have to force a feeler gauge under the "top hat". You will be working against the pressure of the "helper" spring on the bottom (closing) rocker arm. This does complicate matters, and add to the confusion Roy says it is a good idea to turn the motor over and check the clearance over the whole base circle of the cam--the clearance will wary. Anthing from zero to two thou is within tolerance, although Roy does re-adjust at two thou because he says it will need doing shortly once it reaches this clearance.

If the valves need attention you are going to have to replace the shims to alter the clearance. Start by removing the side cover on the head and this will reveal the end of the rocker spindle. The end of this spindle should have a threaded hole in its centre. If it hasn't then some clown has done the tappets before and put the spindle back the wrong way around. Take care you don't make that mistake.

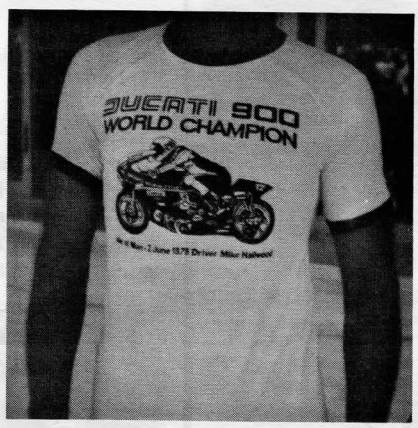
The spindle can be withdrawn using the Ducati special tool, or a 5mm screw clamped with some Mole grips. As the spindle comes out, watch out for the shims fitted either side of the rocker. They MUST go back on their respective sides. The rocker is shipped side to side so that the arm clears the closing rocker. Get them back the wrong way around and the two rockers clash.

Having laid out the rocker and its shims in their correct order, you can remove the valve clearance collars. You now need a micrometer to measure the thickness of the two collars. The top is simply measured with the micrometer sitting as the valve would. The second "top hat" has to be miked from its base to the ridge on its inside.

Once you have determined the thickness of the present collars, or shims, you have to select a shim that much thicker, or thinner, to give the required clearance. After refitting recheck the clearance to make sure it is within limits. If you haven't got a supply of shims--and who will have?--you can simply measure the clearances, strip out the shims, and send them to Sports Motorcycles, Liverpool Road, Manchester. These kind souls will then mike up the shims, compare these to your present valve clearance and then send you the correct replacement.

Please note that when you measure the valve clearance you must have the side covers fitted in place. These support the outter end of the rocker shaft and affect the reading of your feeler gauge. You may also find that when you get the new shims back they will not be spot on for clearance. The range of shims is limited and you just might have to resort to a little "grinding" of the races to get them spot on. If all this bothers your brain more than just somewhat, you might be better advised to let a dealer do the job for you, but at least you know what you are letting yourself in for.

Our thanks to Sports Motorcycles, and Roy Armstrong, for their help with this feature.



ISLE OF MAN T-SHIRT

This beautiful shirt was created to commemorate Mike Hailwoods tremendous comeback win on the fabulous Ducati racer. The shirt is on white 50/50 material, with red collar and sleeves. Printed on both sides in green, red and black. The drawing is very detailed. An absolutely beautiful shirt. $6.95 plus $1.25 shpg. Overseas shipping is $2.50 for Air Mail service.