

GL1800 Overheating? How About A Clogged Radiator?

I thought you might like to see these. They are the radiator and hoses from a 2002 GL1800 with 7977 miles on the odometer. The temp gauge was above red-line and Honda said, "Ignore the gauge."

The bike was purchased one year ago in September 2001. The manufacture date was July 2001. I know the owner (I took the photos for him).

If you notice, the tube is crimped. We found it that way when we removed the hose. It came from the factory that way.

By the way, that photo was taken with a mirror. The tube faces the center of the bike.

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Fascinating, we wonder how widespread this problem might be, after all the letters describing overheating problems on the GL1800. If a GL1800 owner were experiencing overheating problems, it would be prudent to check for this condition.

Voyager XII Headshake Confirmed

My name is Frank Cheek, originator and former owner of TWO in Suches, Ga. I have been a Voyager XII owner for 15 years. I've had three of them and done nearly 200,000 miles of XII riding. The problem that Mr. Forest Burns of Novato, Calif., has with his is common with all Voyagers!

If you remove both hands from the handlebar at 35 mph, it will begin a headshake that would spit you off if you let it continue. A friend got spit off a GL1200A at 30 mph when he removed his hands from the handlebars to fasten his jacket. He experienced the same headshake and broke his arm. All the lengthy possible causes listed would have little effect on his arm!

It seems that the 35 mph headshake (no hands) is the nature of the beast. Kawasaki solves it this way. The owner's manual states: "Keep both hands on the handlebars at all times." I belonged to the American Voyager Association for many years and this problem arose many times. The worst front

tire I ever tried was an Avon—very unstable. The best tire setup was a Continental TK-17 (rear) mounted on the front with the rotational arrow backward. Applying brakes has the same effect on the tire as accelerating to the rear. It works either way, but it will still headshake with that setup!

Overall, good work MCN.

Frank Cheek
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Frank, thanks for your letter. Just to clarify for our readers, the point of directional arrows is to keep the tread band, which has a diagonal splice when it's applied to the green tire during manufacture, from attempting to unpeel in use. The power of acceleration is the most important direction to counter at the rear, but braking is the most important in the front. You are absolutely correct about mounting a rear tire backward when it's used on the front (although we have no direct knowledge of the application you mention and can't share in the recommendation).

Stalling Suggestion

Re: "Forward Weight Transfer= Stalling?" in the April 2003 issue:

Mr. Ratti had a problem in that his Nighthawk would stumble under hard braking, but then continue to run smoothly. I'd suggest that he should check the float levels in the carburetors.

I had a similar problem with my wife's 1995 Suzuki GS500E. After a friend cleaned up a gummy set of carbs, the bike would die under braking. I found that I could kill the engine, even when standing still, just by grabbing the front brake and pumping the fork. The problem was misadjusted floats. With too low a fuel level in the carbs, the forward dive and deceleration sloshed the fuel forward, momentarily starving the carbs and causing the engine to die. Setting the floats to the proper level cured the problem.

Jerry Kreifels
El Dorado Hills, CA

Shaking BMW R1150RS

My wife's new Bimmer is great except for one fault, the handlebars shake and vibrate at over 65 mph. Are there any quick fixes for this problem? One person told us to fill the bars with shot?

Bill Ready
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Actually, it sounds like you are trying to fix a symptom, rather than to fix the problem. The bars should not be shaking that badly.

Inspect the tires, tire balance, wheels, wheel bearings, suspension and steering

head—something is wrong. There are many products for sale that clamp onto the ends of the bars to suppress vibration, but they are mostly designed for V-twins and other bikes that do have natural vibration due to their design. Your bike, however, should not have that problem.

R6 Battery Leakage

I want to notify you about the battery leakage in Yamaha's R6 and R1. A lot of owners are upset with Yamaha since, in my opinion, they are avoiding the issue.

People are getting stuck with paying a large amount of money for a manufacturing defect, and I'm one of the people who is upset. I'm the second owner of a 2001 R6 that had just 3100 miles on it when the leakage happened. I found out that my warranty ran out in March and I'm stuck with a bill for more than \$1500 because of a faulty battery problem. Just wanted to try to get this problem out in the open to help others.

Brannon Weatherly
via Internet
Fort Worth, Texas

Vulcan Question & Ignition Switch Cure

I read in the April 2003 issue about the Kawasaki Vulcan that had an oil pump failure because the pump had plastic or nylon gears. The bike mentioned was a 1999 Nomad. I have a 1996 Vulcan 750. Could you let me know what material its oil pump gears are made of? I called two dealers and they said they didn't know. Yeah, right.

In the for-what-it's-worth department, my 1996 Vulcan started having an intermittent electrical problem that I traced back to the ignition switch. Kawasaki does not sell the switch alone. It is only available with the ignition lock assembly. I was able to remove the switch from the lock after I removed the headlight bucket and unbolted the switch and lock unit from the top triple clamp. The switch comes straight off sideways after the two small screws that hold it on are removed. The lock must be in the "off," but not "locked" position because of the lock-to-switch blade. The switch was disassembled and the fixed contact plate was sanded on a flat surface until the contacts were all shiny and flat. I put it back together with a little heatsink grease and all is well. No problems anymore. The job took about 1.25 hours.

Tom Suter
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Great fix for the switch—the best way to fix a bad contact problem is always to try to clean the contacts first—well done.

On your question, our Vulcan has metal gears, and we have no reason to believe yours is any different.

VFR's Voracious Appetite For Filaments

I have a 1994 Honda VFR with about 60,000 miles on the clock. It's been great and has never given me any trouble except for its strange appetite for headlamp bulbs. I must have put a dozen into it over the life of the bike. I did switch to H4/9003 bulbs using the adapter from Sport Touring Accessories (the \$35 Honda replacements were driving me into bankruptcy). I doubt they're the problem since I was blowing the OEM bulbs just as frequently.

The bike is stock except for grip heaters. I added them after I was already in for several bulbs (the burnouts happen as often in summer as in winter). The charging system kept my original battery going for seven years (without a Battery Tender), and after one bad Yuasa replacement it has kept the current battery charged as well. I do run with high beams during the daylight hours which accounts for 99% of my riding. Anything come to mind that I might look for? Have any other VFR owners seen this problem? Thanks for your help.

Mark Wareham
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One of the first things we would look for is a bad ground in the headlight shell. If the connection is dirty, or making a bad contact, the bike's vibration may be causing high voltage spikes that will greatly decrease the life of your headlamps.

Odd Midrange Sputtering Only

I use my 2000 Yamaha XT 350 (now with 5500 miles on it) fairly regularly for commuting duty. Recently it has developed an annoying problem: In low gear, at part throttle (4000 rpm), the engine sputters as if there were an intermittent lack of fuel, resulting in a rough ride. This is barely noticeable in top gear, and the engine runs fine at full throttle/high rpm. When I come to a stop, the engine will either stall or idle very high, at 3000-4000 rpm. Chopping the throttle usually results in a stall, while very gently closing it produces the fast idle.

I drained the floatbowls, cleaned the air cleaner, checked the sparkplug, and lubed the throttle cable, all to no avail. I have also gone through two tanks of gas, even added carb cleaner, but it just got worse.

I dropped the bike off at a Yamaha dealer/shop for repair. It fired up fine when I picked it up but it would stall with the choke lever "off" (or in any other position) if I did not give it some throttle. I talked to

the mechanic right away and voiced my skepticism over the success of his repair job. He told me that he had adjusted the pilot jet, checked the fuel level in the float-bowls, found no evidence of any air leaks, and also lubed the throttle cable. He thought the bike would be running better now and I should just wait until the engine was hot to see for myself. Well, the problem is still here, cold or hot engine. Can you point me in the right direction?

Christian Eckhoff
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Since the problem manifests itself at idle and even more so at midrange speeds, we would look at a few things: The problem sounds like a fuel-feed situation and the circuit that feeds that rpm range is the jet needle and needle jet combination. It is possible that there has been some blockage in the jet, and at part throttle not enough fuel is going through. But as you increase the throttle, and more of the needle's taper is exposed, the system is supplying adequate fuel. It also sounds like you may have air flow problems, which is causing the bike's erratic running behavior. We suggest a full carb cleaning and rebuild (and by the way, all of this is assuming that you have stock exhaust pipes, cams and jetting).

Low Oil Pressure?

Recently, I purchased a 1980 Suzuki GS 1100 L with 3000 miles on it. The bike sat in a garage for 10 years, and I took a chance and bought the machine sight unseen, as I live in Portland, Ore., and the previous owner lives in Fresno, Calif.

I rode the bike home, and that is another story, but found that when first warming up the bike that the oil-pressure light would flicker on and off as soon as I started to ride. This would continue until I had traveled at least 6-7 miles and it was fully warmed up. The fellow that I bought it from had put fresh synthetic oil and a filter in it before I picked it up. Since then I replaced the oil with a standard 10W-40, as recommended, and checked the filter. Everything was clean and tight and didn't leak.

What might be the cause of this, and do I have to worry? I also own a 1980 GS 850 G and a 1982 GS 1100 GL and don't have that problem with either of them.

Vince Aszman
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There are several things that can be happening here: One possibility is that the oil pressure sensor is bad, and another is that the sensor/indicator circuit has developed an unreliable grounding condition that is

causing the light to go on when in fact there is no problem with the oil pressure.

But, we would not investigate either one of these until it is verified that the pressure is not, in fact, low. If an oil pressure test is failed (the procedure is in your service manual), the likely causes include worn oil pump internal parts, partially obstructed oil passages or a defective over-pressure bypass valve. Good luck.

Where'd It Go?

I have a 98 Honda Shadow ACE 1100. At any speed and in any gear, if I give throttle hard and quick the motor revs but I gain speed very slowly, but if I back off and roll on slowly, there is no problem and I gain speed quickly as the throttle is opened.

I know the clutch cable is correctly adjusted at the grip, but at highway speeds, it's the same problem. The bike has 36k on it. Is this normal, as in hitting the rev limiter, or is my clutch just slipping from the sudden increase of power?

Leland Byrd
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Your thought that it may be a slipping clutch is spot on. Since the engine is coming up to speed normally, the power must be getting lost between the primary drive and the transmission output, and the culprit would be the clutch.



Downtime Files

is a joint service of
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of Daytona Beach, Florida.

Please keep in mind that since the AMI staff has not seen your motorcycle, the answers given are best-guess assumptions based on prior experience and education, and may not necessarily be correct. When in doubt, take your motorcycle to a qualified shop.

Send your typewritten questions and photos if possible to:

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