



IN OUR SHED...
...and in our every waking thought

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARTIN WATKINS



NC30 radii better than new and for a couple of hundred quid less

Austin Smith 1989 Honda VFR400R NC30

PS's Art Editor is always in danger of boiling over – his NC30 was on the verge of overheating too

THE CHOICE WAS SIMPLE. Either spend many hours bending each and every fin back to vertical on the NC30's 23-year-old radiators, or get them filled with carbide recovers. The latter was the more appealing option as attempting to clean them myself would have been a waste of time, as I was to find out.

The mission to get my NC30 radiators back to looking new started with a web search for specific motorcycle radiator repairs as I was keen to keep the originals rather than fork out for brand new ones. This also meant I could keep to my original plan of restoring the bike back to its former glory. After an hour or so of searching I came across West Mercia Radiators in the West Midlands. Following a telephone conversation with the firm's proprietor, Andrew, I sent both of the NC30's radiators off. I left the fan on the lower radiator as Andrew was happy to take it off himself. That way, if the seized nuts broke he could make new brackets rather than let my clumsiness break everything.



Keen to see how the process worked I took a trip to Wednesbury, near Dudley to see Andrew and his operation in person. Walking in, there was a line of damaged motorcycle radiators, all waiting to be fixed. Some needed recovers, others simply required just a bit of fin attention. Andrew has been repairing radiators for many years, but recoring is an area he has added to his vehicle servicing and fabrication business in the last 12 months.

On receiving the radiator, Andrew measures up the centres so that the recovers can be made

to the exact specification required before being skillfully welded in place. A radiator to be sized of the NC's lower matrix requires a couple of hours of welding to put right.

Showing Andrew my lower rad, I told him that I had considered 'soaking' it and bending the fins back myself, but he was pretty blunt and told it me it was beyond that and I would have been wasting my time. It was so clogged up with crud that it would never be worth it. He was more concerned whether I had been running the bike with the rad in that condition,

and I had to 'ess up and admit that I had. He was quick to point out that I'd been risking damage through overheating the engine.

All the recovers that Andrew has made come back in silver but he paints them to match the original colour of the radiator. If any brackets need replacing he uses his years of experience to make some new ones and weld them back on. As far as cost goes, my NC's lower radiator cost £228 to fix and the upper was £300, due to the fact the radiator is curved. By way of comparison, a new, original Honda lower rad costs nearly £500. The upper is now discontinued and aftermarket ones cost just over £200. At just over £520 to have my originals restored, that's a considerable saving.

I asked Andrew about looking after my beautifully reconditioned radii. His suggestion was to keep jet washers and steam cleaners away from the bike, as these just bend the fins and cause loads of damage. A simple, gentle clean with warm water is all they need. ☑

THANKS TO:
West Mercia Radiators: 0121 556 4142 or www.westmerciaradiators.co.uk
EBC: www.bikesforless.co.uk
Westmoto: www.westmoto.com
Motopaint: www.motopaint.co.uk
Custom Creams: fatnugget@hotmail.co.uk

ALSO IN THE PS SHED



1982 Suzuki GSX100EX
Gary Hurd



1985 Yamaha RD125LC
Jim Moore



1982 Suzuki GSX100S Katana
Jim Moore



1988 Yamaha FZ750
Dixie Hedges



If the success of a project is in the planning, this one's a concourse winner

Jim Moore 1986 Yamaha FZ750

Jim has some big ideas for the FZ – in more ways than one

NEVER TAKE on more than one project at a time someone once told me. And they were right. Juggling two bikes isn't easy, never mind three, so, regrettably, I must hold my hands up and admit progress with my Yamaha FZ750 has been painfully slow of late. Instead my focus has been on my RD125LC and, more recently, the Katana – more of that soon.

But that's not to say that Project FZ has been a complete activity free zone. Although the 750 remains untouched by tools as yet, I have been stockpiling useful parts when I can.

I've acquired another EXUP swingarm to replace the existing one that sports a deep gouge from an ill-fitted silencer. I've also bought a set of YZF750 carbs for £30 which should come in handy way down the line when I get the 911cc engine built.



There's an FZ manual in the shed now too, which I'll doubtless need, courtesy of Clymer (www.clymer.com). Part of project building is thinking ahead and in my mind I see my FZ wearing an early RL front end. Our very own Gary Hurd recently acquired a nasty looking 600 Bandit streetfighter to break. Most of it was rubbish, but what caught my eye was the front end – off an early RL, luckily enough. So I'm in the process of negotiating a price with Grumpy for it, although I'm not yet sure if I can raise that amount of custard creams in time. ☑

YZF750 carbs bought for £30. Clymer manual untouched by human hand

