

MAINTAINENCE & TUNING TIPS FOR HINKLEY BONNEVILLES

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Given the popularity of the 'new' Bonnie's in their various guises, I thought that it would be a good time to pass on some tips and hints from my eight years and 55,000 km's of ownership of these great machines. The 'tips' relate to all the variants unless specified, including the EFI models.

First we will look at basic maintenance and then at simple performance modifications.

Workshop Manuals:

There are currently two being published, the factory manual (around \$200) or the Haynes one (around \$60). Both are excellent publications; however the Haynes manual should be fine for general servicing.

Oil changes:

These should be done every 5000 km's, oil choice is a matter of preference however, Triumph recommends a semi or fully synthetic oil. As to oil filters there are the original factory filters (which I would recommend using during the warranty period) and after market ones such as K & N. You will need an oil filter removal tool as well, these can be picked-up from most motorcycle shops or you can get the '3 pronged universal type' from Autopro for about the same price. The plus factor with the universal type is that they have a variety of applications.

Air Box Drain,

If look you under the machine between the engine and the swingarm, you will notice a plastic hose with a 'bulb' arrangement on the end. This is the drain pipe for the air box that is also part of the engine breather system. You won't find this in any of the manuals, however Triumph recommend that the 'bulb' is squeezed to drain any water or oil ect out at every service. This is important as there have been reports of water and oil being trapped in the air box and causing problems.

The 'bulb' is also prone to becoming blocked with gunk off the road, such as tar etc. So a good option is to simply cut the 'bulb' section off the hose and just let it vent to the ground. I have done this with mine and have not observed any problems. If you are concerned about the possible 'pollution' aspect, another option would be to cut the tube and just put a plug of some sort in and pull it out to drain it.

Tuning:

Being a twin tuning is straight forward and as the engine is relatively under stressed the intervals as stated in the owners hand book seem fine. The valve clearances are adjusted by shims; however they can be checked easily. There are 4 allan head studs holding the rocker cover down with a rubber gasket underneath. Just follow the directions in your workshop manual. The valves on mine have only needed adjusting a couple of times in 55,000 kms, so rather than go to the expense of keeping a stock of shims, I just take it to the 'shop' to be adjusted.

The carbs are easily balanced with vacuum gauges; I have an electronic version called a Carb Mate which you can get from Motohanser in Sydney. With this instrument it takes about five minutes to do the job, however with the America and Speedmaster models you will need to remove the fuel tank and rig up a remote one to access the adjustment screw.

Spokes:

There have been incidents of loose/broken spokes on the back wheel. As such I check the tension at each service. This is easily done either by individually checking each spoke or holding a screw driver onto the spokes and spinning the wheel, whilst listening to the 'tone'. They should all give a 'twang' at the same pitch as the screw driver strikes them. This method is no good if you are tone deaf.

SIMPLE HOTUPS

Exhaust,

There are numerous replacement mufflers available for the various models, including the 'factory' ones which I have fitted as well as Staintune. The 'factory' mufflers come with replacement main jets, as do some of the others, however Staintune claim to not need any carb jetting.

Carb's,

I have changed the main and intermediate jets on mine and fitted idle mixture screws from Bonneville Performance.com. These make idle mixture adjustments a lot easier. As to jetting use the main that comes with the mufflers and the intermediate jet will vary from machine to machine.

Air Injection,

NOTE: this does not apply to the EFI models, their Air Injection should be left as is.

I have removed the complete unit from mine, all you need to do this is remove the tank and unbolt the 'pump' unit and blank off the connections on the intake manifolds with rubber plugs. There is also a hose that runs to the air box that will need a rubber plug as well. The A.I intake tubes that are located along side the spark plugs can be replaced with Nissan Pintara sump plugs, you will need to use the genuine part, however they are not particularly expensive and look like head 'studs' when fitted. Don't forget to put new copper washer under these as well. You can purchase kits to do this on line as well.

The reason behind removing the A.I system is that it makes the bike run cooler; the system is apparently fitted to pass U.S emission laws and is easily refitted.

Air Box,

This 'mod' works best when an after market air filter such as K&N or Unifilter is fitted.

First remove the left hand side cover and access the screws that allow the removal of the air filter element. On the outer cover you will see a rubber tube/ baffle that runs through the centre of the air box, cut this off with a knife or whatever and replace the filter and cover etc. I have found that this mod is one of the best that you can do, as it improves the bikes idle, throttle response and general performance for very little cost.

Suspension,

I found that the rear shocks started to 'expire' at around 15,000 kms, so I replaced them with IKONS. These are basically the 'old' Koni Dial-a-Rides now made in Australia. This is another simple and very effective mod you can make to the any of the Triumph 'classics' as it significantly improves the comfort and handling. You can also purchase front fork springs to match, which I have been told is a good move if you do a lot of pillion work.

Tyres,

I have gone up one size on the rear tyre, this does not make any noticeable difference to handling, but they give you a better choice of tyres and removes the 'gap' between the back wheel and the guard.

As to brands both the Metzeler and the Bridgestone's appear fine. At moment I am running Metzeler Marathon's front and back, the back is fine, however I don't think that the front has as much 'feel' as a Laser.

Handlebars,

If you want to change these there are a couple of different bends available on the 'net'. The bars fitted are 1in so a cheaper option is to have a look at you local 'Harley shop' as they are the same diameter. If you are after a flatter 'euro' style bar, then pre unit Triumph's also have 1in bars.

Useful contacts:

<http://www.bonnevilleperformance.com/>

<http://www.newbonneville.com/>

<http://www.normanhyde.co.uk/>

<http://www.jacklilley.com/>