

Greasing the steering head races

After vainly searching for grease nipples on the steering head, it eventually dawned on me that there aren't any. The handbook says simply "repack races with grease every 8000 miles", but doesn't explain how. In fact, it's not too difficult. The races are of the tapered type, so there's no fear of little steel balls bouncing around the garage floor.

Support the front of the engine to stop it from tipping forward.

Remove the front wheel.

Remove the oil filler cap, and plug the hole somehow. Otherwise the cap may get in the way when the top yoke comes up.

Unbolt the speedo and tacho from the top yoke. Getting at the fixing bolts is fiddly, but it can be done.

Remove the handlebar. If you have some way of suspending it while the work is done (I used aerolastics hooked under the mirrors and attached to nails in the roof beam above) it will save a lot of trouble.

Remove the central nut at the top of the steering head. This calls for a 27mm spanner, preferably a socket type. A long, thin tube or similar will be useful here, to keep the forks steady while the nut is removed.

Slacken the top yoke pinch bolts (there are three: left, right and centre), and lift off the top yoke. It will probably need tapping with a lump of wood to persuade it upwards.

Have a box or something, about nine inches high, ready under the forks. Then, while supporting the forks, unscrew the locking ring from the steering stem. When the ring is off, the forks can be allowed to drop. With the box in place, they should only fall a few inches, with the steering stem still in the steering head.

The top race can be removed for cleaning and greasing, and the bottom one should now be accessible for similar treatment without further dismantling. Unless the bearings need changing, that's all there is to it.

Basically, reverse the procedure for reassembly. Refit the top race, support the forks with one hand while screwing the locking ring with the other and adjust until all play is just taken up. Refit the top yoke (re-check and adjust further if required) but do not tighten the pinch bolts yet. Refit the central nut. Then, finally, tighten the pinch bolts.

After that, it's only necessary to put the handlebar back and re-fit the front wheel.

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