

Ohlin's Shock – Test Ride on Ern's Honda 954 Blade

The shock came from Ben's 954 Fireblade and he estimates it's done about 400k km inc. an earlier stint on his 929. I had it rebuilt by club member Steve Mudford who is an Ohlins-trained suspension specialist.

How much better is it than the stock unit? Well that'd been worked on by Promecha with mods made in particular to stop the bike squatting when accelerating out of a bend, a standard problem with the factory unit.

The differences with the Ohlins? Riding home from Steve's workshop I discovered that I was unconsciously bracing while going over railway level crossings. Not needed now. Low speed turns feel more planted. At speed, in both straight line and through the sweepers the bike is more stable.

I tried one of my favourite roads that's both bumpy, twisty and hard to ride smoothly and fast: Seymour to Highlands. The Ohlins soaked up the bumps with much more aplomb than the old shock. Smooth rather than harsh.

I rode the high speed sweepers between Romsey and Wallan and there was a distinct improvement in comfort and ease.

At a guess the improvement is more noticeable at high damping speeds than slow. In short, it's approaching an order of magnitude better than the reworked factory shock. It instils distinctly more confidence. So now I know one reason why Ben's such a fast and smooth rider.

Is it worth the money? I'd say that if you feel you're reaching your limits on the road and the track, go for it. They're rebuildable of course and when you change sportsbike there's likely to be a ready market for a second hand one to subsidise the purchase of a new one.

Ern Reeders