

## **“Triple Crazy” by David Patterson**

“Tridents are too complex.” You’ve heard it forever. But, do you know that quite a few maintenance tasks are actually easier to perform on a Trident than even a late-model twin (ever try adjusting the primary chain on a twin?) Fact is, Tridents can be as simple as the twins to maintain, if you know a few tricks.

First and foremost, install an electronic ignition on any triple. I prefer the Lucas Rita; with its single pick-up and ignition coils included in the kit, it’s worth the extra cost. The Boyer ignition might seem to be a bargain, but you must add the cost of three six-volt coils to the price of the unit. In any case, electronic ignition simplifies timing and eliminates a flat mid-range by providing a real advance curve. Timing the beast takes all of ten minutes, and it stays put. I installed a Rita in 1982 and have had no trouble since.

If you have an early engine apart, blank off the oil feed to the cams. This follows the instructions of a Triumph Service Bulletin. The cams don’t need the extra oil, and this feed robs pressure from the rod bearings. If your engine is not apart, this mod will be needed as soon as the left rod goes (trust me).

I’ve found that mine runs better with a plug gap of 0.023” instead of 0.025” as specified by the manual.

The clutch on triples is a different beast altogether. I recommend an unlined cable as the tension of this clutch rapidly cuts through the nylon liners. The cable housing must be stiff enough to avoid extra flex that can make the clutch nearly impossible to adjust. The original Clarks cable works well. The adjustment in the manual says (sic); 0.003” clearance is closer to the mark. Tighten the pull rod, and then back off the large nut about 30 degrees. Tighten the lock nut while holding the rod and large nut stationary. Re-check with the engine at operating temperature; the large nut and rod should turn freely. Any time that the clutch is apart for any reason, renew the thrust bearing. I believe the number is 6302. Just take the old one to Dixie Bearings and they can match it for about half the cost of the Triumph part. A lighter clutch pull can be had by substituting slightly larger balls (up to 5/16”) for the balls in the actuating mechanism.

Except for racing, there is no advantage to 3-into-1 header systems. You might gain some bottom end and perhaps a little bit up top, but you’ll be rewarded with a mid-range flat spot. The stock exhaust manifold will last longer if the inside is liberally coated with high temperature paint to prevent burning through at the welds.

Any sort of after-market air filters will ease carburetor removal. The stock air box is quite adequate, but must be removed to allow carburetor maintenance.

Another thing to check for, especially on late models with ball-type valve adjusters, is clearance under the rocker covers. Many of these have too little clearance between the pins and the cover, which will keep the valves from closing fully. Next valve adjustment, look for

scoring on the inside of the covers. This problem can be solved by adding two gaskets on each rocker cover.

All in all, I believe that much of the bad reputation given to Tridents is due to the reluctance of old Triumph mechanics to learn the quirks of a different machine and due to the T-160 Trident. The T-160 has been Jap-ified by hiding all the cables and linkages in the name of styling. One must remove the exhaust to drain the sump: ridiculous!

I also recommend membership in the Trident/Rocket3 Owners Club. The newsletter contains valuable information, some of which appears in this article.

David Patterson