Seal tuning - an essential thing to do!

I have noticed during these last months that nearly all the bikes that pass my workshop have excessive friction in the forks. It is pretty easy to check this - push down on the front mudguard just in front of the number board. If the fork does not move and the mudguard bends and feels like it may break off then your fork needs attention.

Friction is a fork's worst enemy. No matter how perfect the internal and external settings are, if the fork has excessive friction then it will never provide comfort on the trail.
Friction in a fork comes from two main areas: dry seals or dirty fork bushes.

Dirt and modern day bike cleaners are the main culprits for dry and damaged seals and material worn off inside the fork causes dirty bushes.

THERE ARE 2 WAYS YOU CAN HELP THIS PROBLEM

1) Clean carefully around the edges of the fork dust seal.
2) Take a 0.2 mm feeler gauge blade. Make sure it is new and has no damaged or sharp edges.
3) Insert the feeler gauge under the tip of the dust seal and push it upwards past the oil seal until it stops when it touches the fork bush. This is best done with the bike off the centre stand so the fork is sagging under the bikes weight.
4) Turn the feeler gauge blade slightly so that a little fork oil can escape from the fork and pass the seals.
5) Wipe the oil off the chrome tube with a clean cloth.
6) Push the forks in and out so that the oil can lubricate the seals and inner tube.
Once you have done both forks try to push on the mudguard again to see if your forks move in and out more easily than before. If the forks still feel very stiff and do not want to move then a service is needed and new fork bushes must be fitted.

THE SECOND WAY TO ACHIEVE THE SAME RESULT

1) Pull down the dust seal so as to expose the oil seal beneath it.
2) Clean the inside of the dust seal and the outer exposed side of the oil seal.
3) Carefully lift the outer lip of the oil seal and spray DWF or Q20 (any oil spray except silicone based sprays) under the lip of the oil seal.
4) Now push the dust seal back into place.

If you have been riding in mud I recommend that you use the second method. Mud tends to get past the dust seal and cleaning it out can help future seal leaking problems.
I am sure if you do the above after each bike wash you will be very surprised how much better your fork will feel on the next ride - it may even solve all your comfort problems.

Hilton Hayward