Lodola Fork tube removal.

I recently bought this bike and am preparing it for the East Coast Motogiro. The forks were sticky and the patina on the bike indicated that very little preventive maintenance had ever been done, so time to take a look.

The first hurdle in removing the fork tubes is making a tool to remove the large internal hex cap that holds the tubes in place. The internal dimensions of the hex is 29+mm, but that's complicated by a 17mm nut and shoulder in the center. There's a special tool, but in lieu of that, we machined a 3/4inch heavy nut which measures 31.75mm down to 29mm and then bored out the threads for a 20mm center diameter.

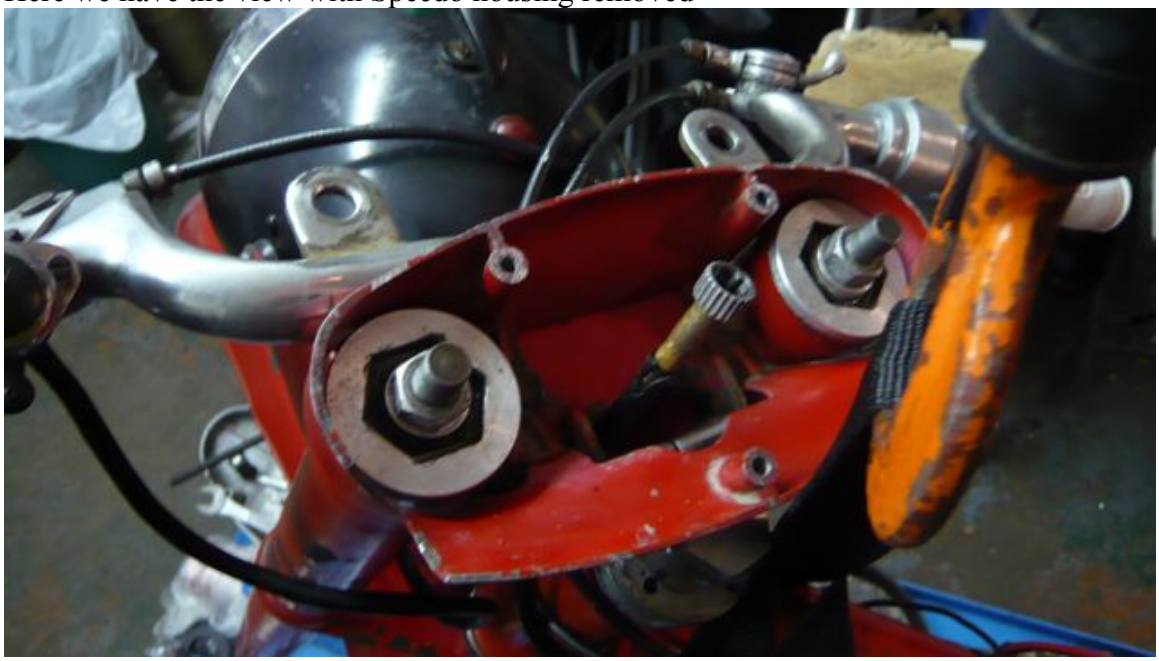
Next I could not for the life of me get the cap to budge with a wrench or breaker bar, so I had a 1 1/8 socket and after grinding a little additional off the upper portion of the (now) 29mm nut/special tool, I put an impact wrench to it and with one short burp, that was all it needed.

After this, the whole deal is pretty anticlimactic and just plain common sense maintenance.

Next you simply withdraw the whole fork tube. At that point, you're looking at a pretty simple unit, which includes the fork tube, the damper rod and rubber dampers, spring and cap. From what I could see, all the grease that had ever been injected had wound up in the spring/damper assembly, where as far as I can tell, it does nothing, certainly nothing with regard to lubricating the bushings. It looks like the grease fitting would be much more useful further down the leg lubing the forktube/forkleg bushings. Maybe a zerk fitting in each bushing?

Except for a wear ring where the tubes contacted the lower bushing, both of them looked okay, the wear ring might be an issue, but what are the chances of finding another leg? maybe someday….. So, I disassembled everything and cleaned both tubes, I did take the springs off, but it was a complete pain and of no benefit. I'd recommend against doing it unless you have an urge to do it, or you've got a really good reason. The fork legs themselves were still on the bike, so using liberal amounts of degreaser and a dowel with cloth on it, I thoroughly cleaned out the inside of the legs really well. The threaded scraper at the bottom of the legs, each have two felt rings to keep the ingress of moister etc. out. Both of mine were impregnated in old grease, so I soaked them in degreaser and hung them out to dry and reused them….I'll be on the lookout for replacements.
I then greased everything liberally, tubes and bushings, and reassembled. Things seem much better now……we shall see.

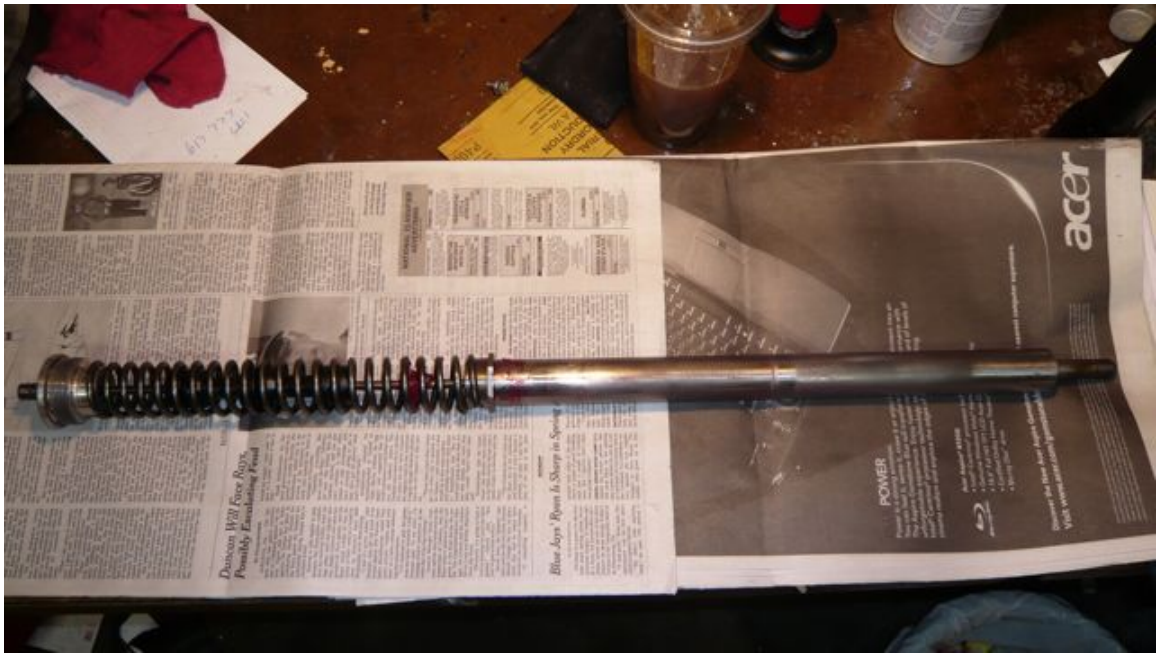
Here we have the view with Speedo housing removed



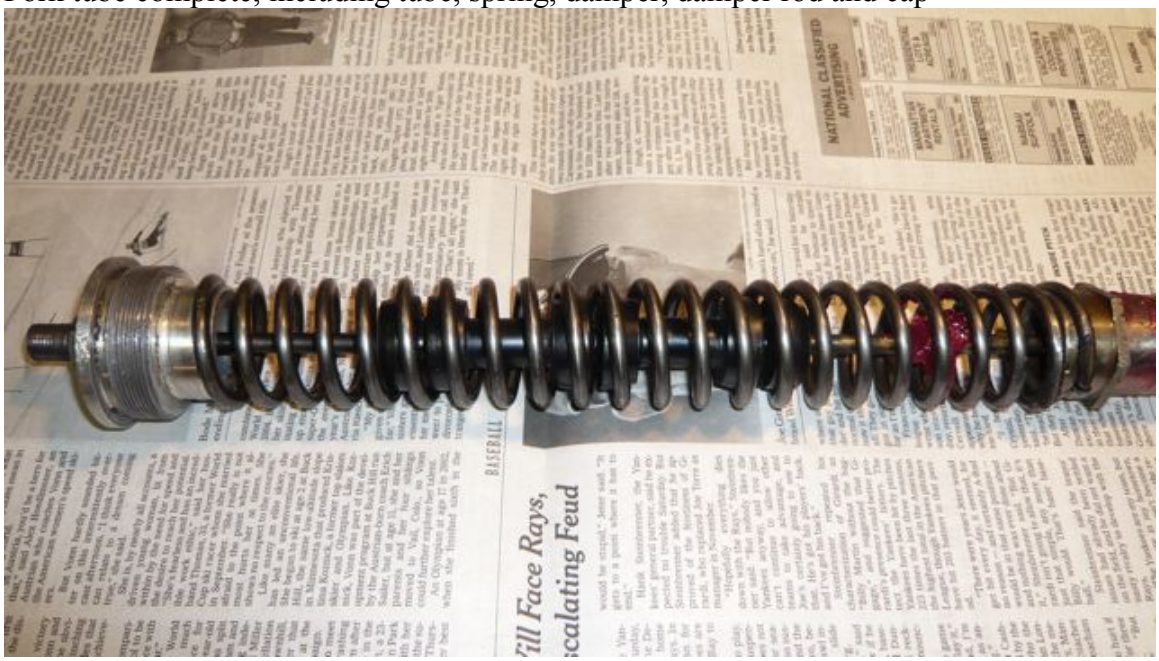
Handlebars are removed exposing the 29mm internal hex caps

The “Special tool” 29mm flat to flat with a 20mm hole. Machined from a 3/4” heavy nut.


Ready for use



Fork tube complete, including tube, spring, damper, damper rod and cap



Close up of the damper and rod inside the spring. The blob of red grease is where the grease winds up when injected through the zerk fitting. I installed the tube, put some grease through the fitting and removed it see the results.. I'd say the grease does very little, unless you plan to shoot about two cartridges in.

Top of the fork leg, showing some corrosion.