

THE BIKER

A person wearing a silver Simpson helmet with a black visor and a silver leather jacket. They are holding a large, detailed carburetor in their hands. The background is a dark, textured blue.

70p FEBRUARY 1981

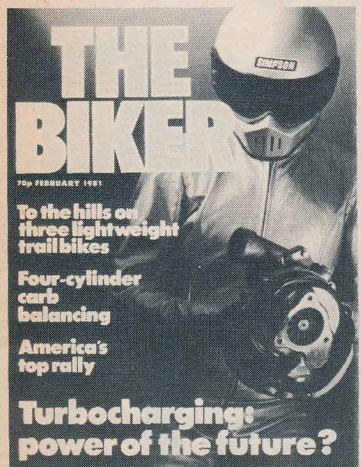
**To the hills on
three lightweight
trail bikes**

**Four-cylinder
carb
balancing**

**America's
top rally**

**Turbocharging:
power of the future?**

CONTENTS



THE BIKER
7th FEBRUARY 1981

To the hills on three lightweight trailbikes
Four-cylinder carb balancing
America's top rally

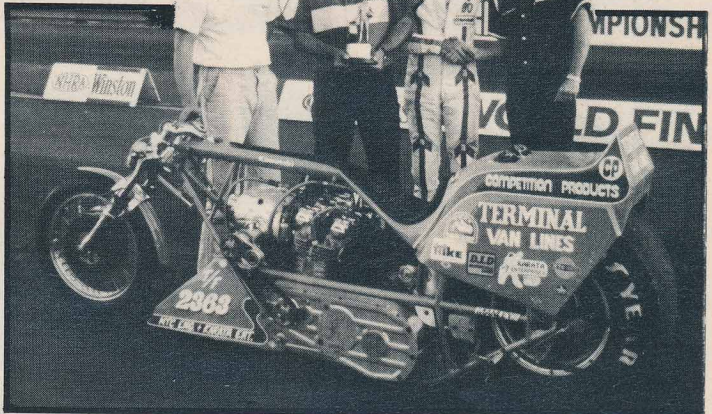
Turbocharging: power of the future?

Cover: For a look at the turbocharged world of tomorrow turn to page 23. Photo by Michael Bailie; leathers by ABC Clothing Centre, London SW5; Simpson Helmet from Cobra Road & Racing, London NW5

- 5** Editorial
- 7** Feedback
- 11** Up Front
- 12** Customs
- 14** Megamania Special
- 18** Small Talk
- 21** Down at the Club
- 23** Turbocharging
- 28** Suzuki GP100U test
- 30** Carburettor balancing
- 34** Three trail bikes tested on Welsh tracks
- 40** Problems . . . Problems
- 43** The Aspencade Rally, USA
- 47** Biker Buys
- 48** South by XS Eleven Part Three
- 54** Kawasaki Z1000ST test
- 56** Tank Touch-Up
- 58** Honda CB750FA test
- 62** Bear's Travels
- 64** The World Wheelie Record

14

This bike has completed a standing 1/4 mile in 7.084 seconds. See our Megamania Special for other earth-shakers from the Winston World Finals



34

Three bikes and a wet weekend in Wales. We take a trio of two-strokes to the Brecon Beacons

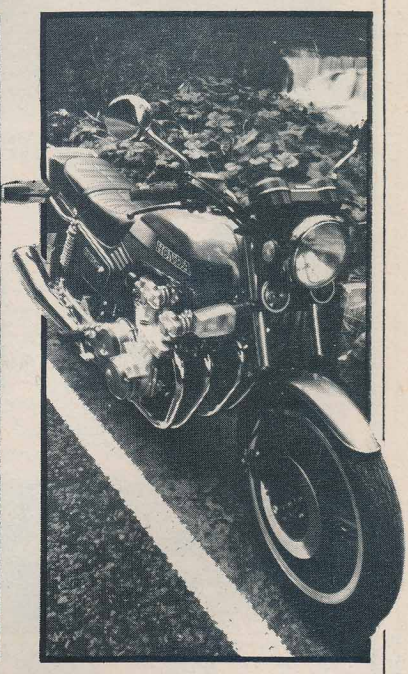
64

How the world wheelie record was set, in the words of the man who did it



58

The original superbike makes a comeback. Honda's 750-4 is back with a bang



The Biker,
109-119 Waterloo Road,
London SE1 8UL.
01-928 3388 Telex: 21977

© Business Publications Ltd 1981

Editor John McDermott
Assistant Editor Mike Winfield
Features Editor Julian Ryder
Road Test Editor Peter Watson
Art Editor Brian Joiner
Photographer Michael Bailie

Advertisement Director Alan Goodes
Assistant Ad Manager Dave Kitchener
Editorial Director Ian Wearing
Group Art Director Rex Benlow
Deputy Managing Director Larry O'Leary
Managing Director W A Cathles

Every effort is taken in compiling *The Biker* but the proprietors can take no responsibility for effects arising therefrom. Postal subscription rate for 12 copies: UK and Eire £11.70, all other countries, local currency equivalent.

Buzzing Through

Julian Ryder, Peter Watson and photographer Peter Robain took to a Roman road through the Welsh hills aboard a Suzuki TS185, Kawasaki KE125 and Yamaha DT125 to prove that Dirt Wimps on teeny two-strokes can make it. Wringing out his notebook, Watson recalls a weekend of disaster, excitement . . . and rain

A PEAL of manic laughter came rolling over my tonsils and was dragged up the hillside and into the mist, wrapped in a curtain of fine rain that was furling and unfurling on the damp air. On the other side of the Yamaha we were busily tearing apart Peter Robain smiled bleakly. Our situation looked pretty desperate.

Noon on the first day of our trail riding weekend in South Wales found us with a sparkless Suzuki a mile back down Sarn Helen, a Roman road that winds up through the Brecon Beacons towards Merthyr Tydfil. Julian Ryder was standing in the inadequate shelter of some trees, morosely examining the lifeless TS185 and a sodden cigarette packet. Up on the hills, sour-faced sheep with yellow eyes and stained teeth continued to grind grass remorselessly.

We had one bike that wouldn't go, and a Yamaha that wouldn't stop because its carburettor slide was stuck wide open. All of us were taking turns to pray over the Kawasaki. At times like this you have to laugh; tears shed into so much surface water would only add to our troubles.

The plan had been simple enough: take three lightweight two-stroke trail bikes to Wales to try and discover if it could result in the sort of fun that would encourage you to get out there too. I had decided on three 175cc machines, as this seems to be the optimum combination of power and weight for the trail. Kawasaki and Yamaha importers Mitsui could only supply 125s; Suzuki didn't have a TS125ER on their test fleet. Would I like a 185? In the end we went for this trio as the best available, and one that might provide some revealing comparisons. We were right, as you'll see.

We made our preparations carefully, packing a can of Finilec, four large tyre levers, a Mole wrench and selection of spanners, a 3.60 — 4.10 x 18in Avon inner tube that would fit all rear rims, some tape, a knife,



chain lube, all the waterproof clothing we possessed, two aerosols of water dispersant spray and two thousand quids' worth of cameras, lenses and a tripod.

Apart from the waterproofs, we were equipped with a motley assortment of clothing. I hate trail riding in high summer, as it's especially difficult to concentrate if a miniature Niagara of sweat is pouring into your eyes. Spring or autumn are better times of year, although we were lucky to find such mild weather in November. Clothing must provide protection without being too tight, heavy or hot. At last I'd cornered some good gear in the

shape of Nolan's superb RG Italian-made Vesterinen trials boots and their Martin Lampkin lightweight polycarbonate trials helmet.

The RGs meet all the requirements of a good trail boot. They go on and come off quickly via rubber straps and plastic hooks, have a thick rubber sole with deep cleats for good grip and are strong as well as waterproof. As a bonus they come in sexy red and blue. Last time I went trailing I removed the heel and half the sole from a heavyweight road boot; the RGs just laughed off rocks and river crossings. Mart's feather-light helmet allowed me to perspire

freely and was loaned to Peter Robain when it rained hard enough for me to have to hide my spectacles behind a wraparound face shield on my old Cromwell.

The two basics for trail riding are good boots and a comfy helmet. For the rest you can rely on jeans, sweatshirts, lightweight gloves and any old waterproofs that will allow you to move and sweat freely — waxed cotton is ideal. Poor Julian wore his old Kett motocross boots with slippery smooth soles and a Carrera MX helmet that helped to shield his glasses in the rain. Peter Robain's Ashman road boots stood up well to the hammering they took, but provided poor protection. He bent the Suzuki's gear lever on a rock that might just as easily have cracked an ankle.

Peter was our guide as he is a member of the All-Wheel Drive Club as well as *Hot Car's* staff photographer and a keen biker. With Michael Bailie on holiday in the States, he was going to show us where he normally takes his V8-powered Series 1 Land-Rover. So all we had to do was roll out of the Mountains Hotel at Libanus, three miles outside Brecon, on the Saturday morning behind Peter who guided us quickly and legally up into the hills. As we've said before, make sure of your right to ride a green road *before* you put a tyre off tarmac. Peter could tell us what the very latest was on the status of all the local trails via his AWDC contacts.

Meanwhile, back at the DT125 on that horribly exposed hillside, Peter and I had stripped out the twistgrip, the oil pump/throttle cable junction box and finally the carb's slide. Still the engine screamed straight up to its 8000rpm red line and beyond as soon as I fired it into life. In desperation, I decided to ride the bike on the kill switch, leaving Peter convulsed as the Yamaha wheeled away up the hill in first, second and then third gear, showering him in mud and stones. I made it back to Julian, pale with fear,

The Beacons



and gave him a lift back to the road that he will never forget.

The Suzuki would be simple to fix, I reasoned, because the problem was basically one of too cold a plug for slow, first - to - third gear trail riding, compounded by the damp. And so it proved to be: we got it bumped into life and discovered that it was equipped with a very hard (NGK B9ES) plug. In Brecon Julian bought a couple of hotter items and the Suzy ran perfectly thereafter. At the same time I asked him to get a length of fuel line for the DT as some twit had

routed it up against the Yamaha's expansion chamber. If the slide hadn't stuck we'd soon have come to a halt: the pipe was almost burned through. Carburettor removal ended the mysterious slide malfunction.

Some dry clothes, three bar snacks, four scotches and a double rum later, we left the car park of the Mountains Hotel once more. Its by now bemused clientele watched us disappear with disbelieving eyes. The rain redoubled its fury and the mists closed in as we hammered up the twisting roads and on to the trail, a couple of miles away.

With tyre pressures down to 10 - 12 psi all round, all the bikes bar the Suzuki seemed to handle and grip well. The Romans built a pretty good road - if they'd given the M1 contract to the Ninth Legion it wouldn't need resurfacing until 2010 - and we were running on a thin layer of grass or earth over a good solid basis of small stones. The 185's problem seems to be front end geometry, for it felt unpleasantly twitchy at the handlebar and threatened to wash out far too easily. It's interesting to note that the bike which handled best - the Yamaha - was shod with old-fashioned trials-type block tread

covers, as opposed to the Suzuki and Kawasaki's latest variable pitch block tyres. There may be a moral here for the Yam felt super-safe on tarmac too.

Soon the surface began to change as mountain streams, swollen into silver torrents, poured down from the heights and across or along the rutted track. At times it seemed as if we were riding up a river rather than a road, until we began to drop swiftly down into a beautiful valley with a bridge over the stream that wound along its floor. Up ahead lay an interesting and challenging climb over broken rock that would take us up on to the boggy moor.

With low cloud trailing across



the sky, distant hills would suddenly appear and disappear in a constantly changing landscape. The effect was rivetting: endless variations of light and cloud aroused almost primeval emotions of wonderment and awe. Nature was putting on quite a show.

Already the three machines were beginning to display their good points and failings, with the Yamaha — now capable of being tick-tocked along at low revs — proving a clear favourite. The most interesting thing was no apparent lack of power on the DT's part when you compared it

to the TS185's performance over identical ground. And on the road it felt much smoother and every bit as fast, if not faster. At the test strip our feeling was confirmed; a mere half a mile an hour separated the two bikes although the TS was quicker over a quarter mile. By no means outclassed, the little disc-valve Kawasaki was obviously down on power and showed a tendency to choke up at around 6000rpm.

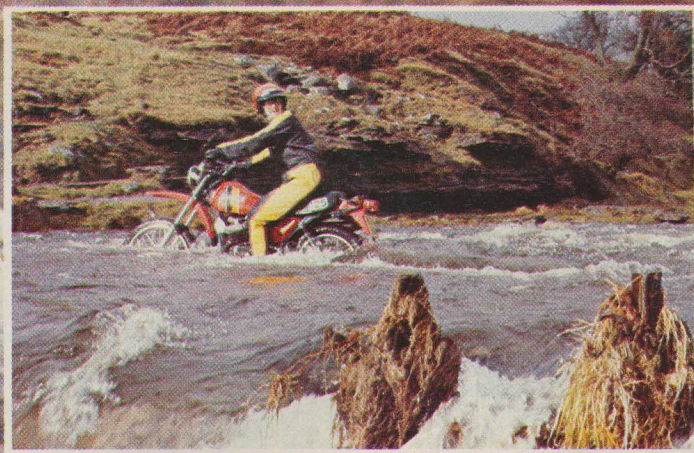
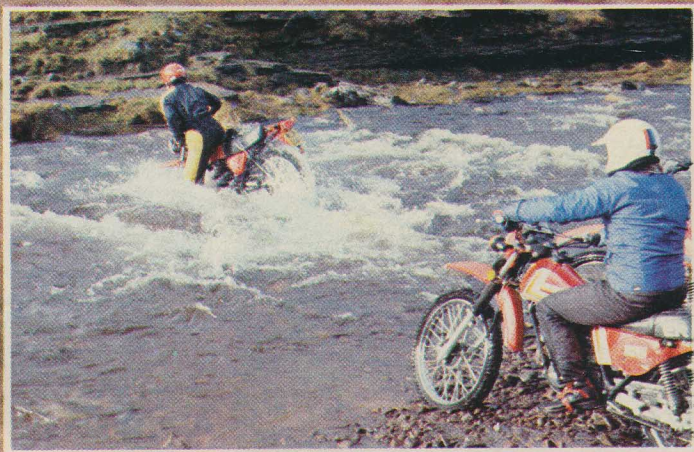
On the road, the Kawasaki exhibited three annoying characteristics. Even when perfectly tensioned, its chain tended to

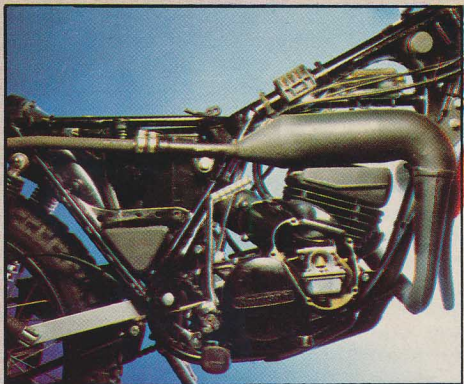
clatter on the plastic strip protecting its rear fork's cross-brace like a machine gun. And the KE's indicators went haywire from time to time, betraying the primitive nature of its electrical system. Finally, no matter what tyre pressure or suspension unit spring preload setting we selected, a weird rear wheel patter would set in at anything over 45mph.

The strange mixture of equipment on the bikes seems odd considering their many basic similarities. The Suzuki — like its SP400 stablemate — has no

crankcase bash plate, just some perforated sheet up between the chassis lower rails. Stranger yet, the Kawasaki has no fork gaiters (plus a not terribly satisfactory fork) and rubber-covered foot-pegs. These caused us no problems, but then we encountered no heavy mud. In stark contrast to this unsuitable equipment the mudguards are excellent and the speedometer features an enduro-type resettable odometer.

The Yamaha's rear suspension sets it clearly apart from the other two machines. When first

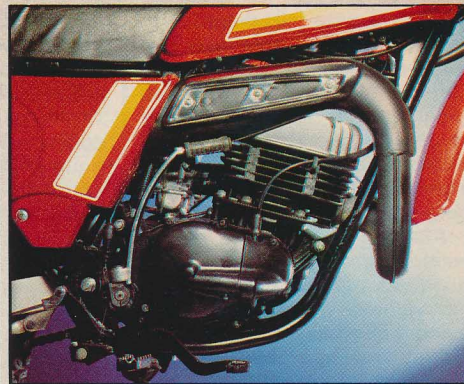




Disc-valve Kawasaki breathes through 24mm Mikuni, but chokes easily



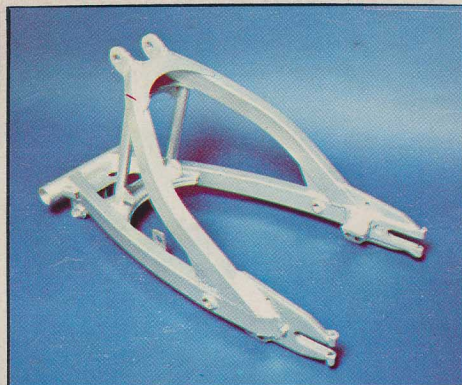
Reed-valve Yamaha 125 was as useful as Suzuki's 185 and smooth too



Suzuki 185 is minus bash plate, but pulls well in third. Frame is duplex



KE125 features painted box-section swinging arm and good guards



Yamaha's cantilever swing arm: expensive to produce but worth it



Suzuki headlamp cowl styling is very, very attractive



converted to monoshock, the DTs featured a tubular cantilever fork. This was probably no less rigid than the current box-section unit, which is obviously expensive to produce and spoiled by poor welding. Early monoshock problems were centred around chain tension. The chain would rattle and flap around alarmingly; now Yamaha have fitted a spring-loaded tensioner and all is well.

Other than fitting a larger fuel tank — it ran on to reserve after 56 miles of trailing — there is nothing we'd change on the DT125. It's superbly well equipped, very powerful, handles superbly and is a really serious off-road machine. Kawa-

saki need to decide if they want to produce a genuine off-road 125 or not and Suzuki could do to sort that front end out — and fit more waterproof brakes.

So, in and out of the puddles we sped until, on the second day, we reached the big river ford once more. It *looked* a lot shallower than it had, but it sure as hell wasn't. As the KE's front wheel went down, I looked around for the bathyscaphe.

On the opposite shore, Julian and I sat emptying our boots and squeezing our socks. Suddenly his face contorted with pain. 'What time is it?' he yelled. 'The pubs! The pubs'll be shut.'

We raced towards the bike. It was time to go home.



READOUT

Kawasaki KE125

Suzuki TS185ERX

Yamaha DT125MX

PERFORMANCE

Maximum speed
Standing ¼ mile

61.00mph
20.57sec/58.70mph

64.72mph
18.87sec/64.71mph

64.18mph
19.31/63.51mph

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Overall
Average full-tank range

57mpg
119 miles

56mpg
86 miles

51mpg
79 miles

SPEEDOMETER ACCURACY

At indicated 30mph
At indicated 50mph

28.44mph
47.99mph

29.69mph
49.47mph

30.62mph
50.31mph

ENGINE

Type
Capacity
Bore x stroke
Compression ratio
Carburation
Claimed bhp at rpm
Claimed torque at rpm
Transmission

Disc valve two-stroke single
124cc
56 x 50.6mm
7:1
24mm Mikuni
12.5 at 6500
10.3ft-lb (1.42kgm) at 6000
Gear primary drive, wet multiplate clutch, 6-speed gearbox, chain final drive

Two-stroke single
183cc
64 x 57mm
6.2:1
29mm Mikuni
16.5 at 5500
14ft-lb (1.94kgm) at 6000
Gear primary drive, wet multiplate clutch, 5-speed gearbox, chain final drive

Reed valve two-stroke single
123cc
56 x 50mm
7.2:1
22mm Mikuni
16.3 at 7000
12.3ft-lb (1.7kgm) at 6000
Gear primary drive, wet multiplate clutch, 6-speed gearbox, chain final drive

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

Flywheel magneto, 6V, 6Ah battery, electronic ignition, 35/35W headlight

Flywheel magneto, 6V, 6Ah battery, electronic ignition, 35/35W headlight

Flywheel magneto, 6V, 6Ah battery, electronic ignition, 35/35W headlight

CYCLE PARTS

Frame
Suspension

Semi duplex cradle
Telescopic front fork, pivoted steel box-section rear fork with adjustable dampers
Spoked chromed steel
2.75 x 21in Nitto Field & Sport front
3.50 x 18in rear
5.5in (140mm) drum front
6in (152mm) drum rear

Wheels
Tyres

Duplex cradle
Telescopic front fork, pivoted steel box-section rear fork with adjustable dampers
Spoked chromed steel
2.75 x 21in Bridgestone Trail Wing front
4.10 x 18in rear
5.75in (146mm) drum front
5.75 (146mm) drum rear

Brakes

Semi duplex cradle
Telescopic front fork, pivoted cantilever steel box-section rear fork
Spoked chromed steel
2.75 x 21in Yokohama front
3.50 x 18in Yokohama rear
6in (152mm) drum front
6in (152mm) drum rear

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase
Seat height
Overall width
Ground clearance
Weight (with 1 gal fuel)
Fuel capacity

52.6in (1335mm)
32.5in (825mm)
32.5in (825mm)
11.4in (290mm)
219lb (99.3kg)
2.1 gal

54.1in (1375mm)
32.5in (825mm)
32.75in (831mm)
11in (279mm)
220lb (99.8kg)
1.54gal

53.1in (1350mm)
33.5in (850mm)
33in (838mm)
11.5in (292mm)
221lb (100kg)
1.54gal

PRICE

Guarantee
Supplied by

£599 inc VAT
12 months/unlimited mileage
Kawasaki Motors (UK) Ltd, Deal Avenue, Trading Estate, Slough, Bucks

£645 inc VAT
12 months/unlimited mileage
Heron Suzuki GB Ltd, Beddington Lane, Croydon, Surrey

£590 inc VAT
12 months/unlimited mileage
Mitsui Machinery Sales Ltd, Oakcroft Road, Chessington, Surrey