

# australasian **DIRT BIKE**

JULY/AUGUST, 1981 \$2.00\*

(\$2.50 N.Z.)



## **SUZUKI'S THUMPERS**

**DR400 and DR500**

---

## **MUSCLE POWER**

**PE400X vs IT465H**

---

## **MOTOCROSS WARS**

**Honda's CR250RB and Yamaha's YZ250H**

---

## **ADB TALKS TO THE MAN IN THE DIRT**

**Feedback on Ten Bikes**



JULY/AUGUST 1981  
VOL. 5 NO. 6

## CONTENTS

### TESTS

- HONDA'S CR250RB vs YAMAHA'S YZ250H — Technology pitted against the tried and true improvement process in motocross warfare . . . . . 14  
SUZUKI'S DR400 and 500 — A look at the present through the past . . . . . 28  
SUZUKI's PE400X vs YAMAHA'S IT465H — Is the Suzuki still a worthwhile investment, or does the newest IT blast it away? . . . . . 38

### RANDOM SAMPLING: TEST FEEDBACK

- ADB TALKS TO THE MAN IN THE STREET — How have these dirt bikes stood the test of time with their owners? Is there life after testing? . . . . . 56

### TECHNICAL

- GETTING THE MAIL ON CHAINS — Save dollars on chain replacement by learning how to look after them . . . . . 70

### CULTURAL CARTOON FEATURE — PART 2

- AN UPDATE ON MORE OF OUR CARTOONISTS — Michael Torres and Murray Watt . . . . . 54

### HUMOUR

- BIRD BIKE . . . . . 8  
WARREN JACK ON THE ITALIAN ISDE — Getting ready early, from our man on the spot . . . . . 26  
PORKY PETROL HEAD . . . . . 36  
FORGOTTEN HEROES — ORV Hunter . . . . . 51  
BUY PRODUCTS . . . . . 34, 76

### REGULAR FEATURES

- REFLECTIONS . . . . . 6  
LETTERS FROM PEOPLE . . . . . 8  
ROTO ROOTIN' . . . . . 11  
WEEKENDS WEST . . . . . 12

### PEOPLE SLAVING TO GET THIS THING OUT ON TIME

EDITOR: Geoff Eldridge  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Ray Ryan, Chris Blethyn, Dave Ewins, Geoff Udy, Murray Watt, Terry Dodd, Ian Palmer M.I.A.M.E.  
PHOTOGRAPHY: Peter Fischmann, Terry Dodd, Geoff Eldridge, Alan Tomlinson  
ARTWORK: Iain Wilson and Geoff Eldridge  
Advertising: Alan Tomlinson (NSW, 699 7861), Walter Keating (Melbourne, 699 2851)



COVER: Geoff Udy idles the DR Suzuki along on the back wheel in an attempt to persuade the world into turning four-stroke. Photography by the everpresent lens of Peter Fischmann, who operates largely on Flex-itime.

Published by:  
**YAFFA PUBLISHING GROUP**  
(Page Publications Pty Ltd Division), Yaffa Building, 432 Elizabeth St., SURREY HILLS, N.S.W. 2010. Phone: (02) 699 7861. Address Mail to Box 606, GPO, Sydney, 2001. Telex 21887.

**MELBOURNE OFFICE:** Yaffa Publishing Group Pty Ltd, 63 Dundas Place, Albert Park, 3206. Phone (03) 699 1152.  
**BRISBANE:** D. Wood, Anday Agency, 11-15 Buchanan St., West End, 4101. Phone: 44 3485. **ADELAIDE:** Ray Cant & Associates, 99 Currie St., Adelaide, 5000. Phone: (08) 51 5007. **PERTH:** Cliff Thomas, Adrep Advertising Representatives, 62 Wickham St., East Perth, 6000. Phone: 325 6395. **NEW ZEALAND:** Yaffa Newspaper Service of New Zealand, 31-35 Dickson St., Wellington C1. Phone: 64 5505. **UNITED KINGDOM:** Robert Logan & Associates, 16 Waldemar Avenue, London, W13 9PY, United Kingdom. Phone: (01) 579 4836.

**BUSINESS PUBLICATIONS:** Advertising News; Australian Refrigeration, Air Conditioning & Heating; Australian Women's Wear/Clothing Industry News; Club Management in Australia; Food Manufacturing News; Furniture & Furnishings; Hospital Journal of Australia; Men's Wear; Modern Cleaning & Maintenance; Packaging News; Textile Journal; Travel Agency Magazine.

**SPECIAL INTEREST MAGAZINES:** Australasian Dirt Bike; Australian Angler's Fishing World; Australian Flying; Australian Hot Rod; Australian Powerboat; Guns Australia; Sporting Shooter.

**REFERENCE WORKS:** Australian Advertiser's Brand Names Index; Advertising Buying Guide; Advertising Guide to Clients & Agencies; Club Annual Buying Guide; Food Manufacturing Buying Guide; Hospital Annual Buying Guide; Men's Wear Annual Buying Guide; National List of Advertisers; National List of Advertising Agencies; Refrigeration Annual Buying Guide; Textile Annual Buying Guide.

**MARKETING SERVICES:** Character Licensing; Direct Mail Services; Exhibitions & Shows.

\*This is the recommended retail price for this magazine. It has been noted that in Eskimo currency, the price is considerably higher at three sea lion teeth and a hunting knife. And that's not even Air Whale.





# ADB talks to the man in

# the dirt

by Terry Dodd



**W**hen I'm in the market for a new bike I suppose, like most people I lean pretty heavily on test reports, gather together as much information as I can, and I make comparisons. I pore over specifications. I ponder weight, seat height and horsepower statistics, and I some-

times try to read between the lines. Would I have to be an ISDT expert to be able to ride a particular bike? What idiosyncracies might I have to overcome?

Test reports have come a long way, and these days they give a pretty accurate impression of a bike, and in most

cases that magazine report is the closest I'll come to a test ride, since I can't think of a single dealer who'd willingly let me take a \$2500 bike away for a few hours just to see if I like it.

But there are certain aspects that a test can't cover, and since most bikes would, I

suppose, be on loan for a limited time, it is not fair to expect a test report to tell me about year-long reliability; how often I have to skin my knuckles in the shed carrying out maintenance, and how many times I have to reach for my wallet.

It is not fair to expect a test

report to tell me that I might have to wait three months for a throttle cable, or that by the time I've had the bike six months I'll not only be an authority on carburetors, but I'll be taking welding classes at evening college as well.

In other words, a test sometimes can't tell me what a bike

will be like in REAL LIFE.

One way to find out about Real Life performance is to talk to someone who has the bike you're interested in. But you may have to bear in mind that your best friend might be reluctant to tell you he's bought a lemon — he might tell you the bike is incredibly

fast, but remain discreetly silent about its appetite for piston rings.

So we thought we'd carry out a "Man In The Dirt" type interview and ask some dedicated riders what their bikes have been like to live with in the long term. We recruited a group of regular enduro riders

from the Manly-Warringah Motorcycle Club, and asked them for their candid and unbiased opinions. None of the riders held back — they spoke the truth, warts and all.

So here it is



# HUSQVARNA WR 250 (1979) NEIL WATT

## Experience:

6 years  
Open Enduros, Club Enduros  
Club Short Circuit and Trailriding

**Previous Dirt Bikes:** TTDT250A Yamaha; IT250D Yamaha;  
PE175C Suzuki; IT250F Yamaha

"I bought the Husqvarna because I wanted to see what European 'class' was all about", said Neil. "I wanted something that handled better than the IT did. I suppose I brought it on reputation.

"When I first got it I thought it was too high — it felt top heavy and felt as if it was over-balancing. You got into all the trouble in the world in tight stuff and up hills, so I chopped an inch of foam out of the seat to lower it and I've had no trouble with it since. You sacrifice a bit of comfort, but it means you can ride the damn thing!"

Neil is six foot, but says seat height is very critical: "I like to sit so that my heels are on the ground without compressing the foam or suspension. Once I lowered the seat height it was easy to ride."

**ADB:** How does it handle?

**NEIL WATT:** "The Husqvarna handles really well. The rear 'Ohlins are fantastic, they just amaze me. They are really as good as everyone says, but you are supposed to rebuild them every 12 months and it costs \$80-\$90.

"It's geared a bit too high for hill climbs, but it's good unless the hills are really steep. It's quicker than average in the tight stuff, and it's good in sand and mud.

"Rock steps? ... er ... I don't think the rider is very good at rock steps!"

"It's not nearly as peaky as a lot of bikes — it has more power low down. You just roll the throttle and you've got it there.

"The gearbox is pretty good — although sometimes you get false neutrals."

**ADB:** Does it start easily?

**NW:** "That depends! Sometimes. All things being in your favour it's easy to start. Say if you've left the petrol tap on, or if it gets flooded in any way, then you have trouble. It has a left side kickstart so for cold starts you get off and use your right foot. It wouldn't start the second day at Orange last year, but you can't blame it: it had a quarter-inch of ice on the seat.

"It does have a Mikuni so it doesn't load up and it's got a

reed valve, but if you flood it, it's cranky to start.

"Petrol consumption is surprisingly good — it's outstanding, actually. It hasn't got a big tank, but it has a good range. I get 130-140 kilometres on a tank for normal riding, about 100 kilometres for an enduro." (Ed. Note: the WR does have a big tank — nearly 13½ litres. It just looks small.)

**ADB:** Where did you buy the bike?

**NW:** I bought it secondhand, privately, for \$1750, and I get all my spares from Motocross, Blacktown, which is an hour's drive. Frankly, they haven't got much needed parts like countershaft sprockets, cylinder base plate gaskets and piston rings, unfortunately. So far, I haven't broken anything weird, just normal replacement parts so I wouldn't like to try them on a gearbox part. They do seem to know what they're doing in the spares department though. Parts are extremely expensive: a piston kit for a PE is \$30, for the Husqvarna it is \$130. So I don't buy standard parts where I can. For instance, the rear sprocket is \$48, but I buy an accessory one for \$24. Brake linings for both wheels cost \$65, I think, but I get them done at Better Brakes for \$8 a wheel.

"You don't seem to have much trouble with running gear on the Husky. On the Japanese bikes you always seem to be putting in wheel bearings especially, and steering head bearings, and the PE's seem to have a big problem with swingarm bearings."

**ADB:** Have you got any gripes?

**NW:** "The engine is inadequately waterproofed. You have to duct tape the airbox air intake. Also, the exhaust is double lined, but the metal plates securing the fibreglass inner lining sometimes break off, so you have to split the exhaust pipe and pull all the plates out. It's not quite enough, either, and that's something the factory should pay more attention to.

"A bash plate is essential — I've got a made-up one on



mine now.

"The securing rod for the fully floating back brake is very vulnerable and you have to make up a guard.

"The headlight sticks out too much so I fitted a Preston Petty one.

"There are no toolbox amenities.

"And it's a bit silly on a dirt bike to have a painted metal tank; you just get a bit of mud on your leathers and the paint's gone.

"The rubber manifold between the carburettor and the barrel cracks, sucking in unfiltered air and making the bike run lean, and run hot. I've come close to seizing the motor twice. It's a design fault. You don't know it's cracked and it's a bit nasty, you back off the throttle and it just runs on because it's running hot. I tried to get a Yamaha manifold to fit: an old Yammie one comes close, but the Husqvarna has a 38 mm carb."

**ADB:** Does it need a lot of maintenance?

**NW:** "Yes! Regular maintenance, too. You're always fiddling round doing something on it — nothing in particular but everything in general. The brakes are a bit soft. I'm always putting new linings in. It's getting old now, but very rarely does anything come loose though. That's one thing I like about it: every nut and bolt is nylock so you don't have bits rattling off. I always wash it

pretty well and go over it with a fine tooth comb, but it is really a lot of mucking around.

"It will probably last longer than the Jap bikes though. It's 18 months old now and still goes pretty well. The Japanese bikes last 12 months and are absolutely falling to bits.

"It is reliable, but I bought it secondhand as I said, and the guy had put new rings in but he hadn't tightened the head down, so one day on the trail the head came away from the base about 1/8".

"The back brake is useless — it just doesn't work at all when it's wet ... it slows you down a little bit. The front brake is quite good, not as good as the IT, but acceptable.

"The handlebars are excellent, you can never bend them, you can crash it, but they never, never bend."

**ADB:** What are the bike's main virtues?

**NW:** "Reliability. The steering is good, and there's no better suspension around."

**ADB:** What is its biggest drawback?

**NW:** "An unskilled rider! Really, the main thing is the expense, and they don't keep their price. You lose so much on resale. The bike is cheap on petrol, expensive on everything else. It doesn't break expensive things all that much, so I think it's worth it."

**ADB:** If you had the money what would you buy?

**NW:** "I'd buy another Husqvarna."



## IT175G YAMAHA (1979) PAUL MANSON

### Experience:

7 years  
Open Enduros, Club Enduros  
and Trailriding

**Previous Dirt Bikes:** PE175C Suzuki; Montesa 250;  
XL175 Honda; SL125 Honda and  
A Victa Lawnmower R125GP (Grand Prix?)

"The trouble is", said Paul, "the IT is living in the shadow of my old PE175C. I think the PE was probably the best bike I've ever owned and if Suzuki brought out a brand new 'C' model I would buy it because I think I could ride a lot faster on my old 'C' model than I can on the IT. But the new PEs have grown such a lot in height.

"I bought the IT because I read a test in ADB about the YZ250G motocrossers, and noticed that their handling had improved a lot, and that the new IT used the same sort of frame. The other major fact was that the seat height was considerably lower than the new PE, which was just ridiculous. I'm 5' 6½" and could probably get used to the PE but in some situations when you need to put your feet down you go over.

"The IT cost me \$1550 (registered) in October 1979. I also got a better trade-in from Yamaha than from Suzuki dealers, and I went all around Parramatta and everywhere, so I bought the bike from Welbank Artarmon and was \$100 better off.

"I buy my spares locally at Spooner's Brookvale, not that I need that many, and the people in the shop don't know much about the bike, but I have been much more impressed with Yamaha than Suzuki parts as it once took me a couple of months for a Suzuki throttle cable to come in.

"When I picked up the Yamaha there were 5 lbs of air in one fork and no pressure in the other, but apart from that it was set up properly."

**ADB:** Have you any gripes?

**PAUL MANSON:** "I wasn't impressed with the IRC tyres. I put a Metzeler 4.50 on the back and a 3.50 6-ply Bridgestone on the front and it made a world of difference.

"I've also been having engine problems in that I haven't been able to get the IT to rev out as it should. I've fiddled around with the carburettor with bigger main jets; I took the side off the airbox and tried to give it more air; I ended up

cutting the guts out of the silencer but it didn't increase the power. With the PE I used to rev it until you thought it would blow up: it really screamed, and I clocked it at 130 kilometres once, but the IT is flat chat at 110 k's.

"Other people reckon their ITs don't have that problem, but I think it should do better."

**ADB:** Is it easy to start?

**PM:** "Put it this way: I once left it for two months and it started second kick. It has a double reed valve and I've never, ever been able to flood it. I've had it upside down, even. The IT — they don't flood!"

**ADB:** How does it handle?

**PM:** "It has very good suspension. I stiffened up the rear, and softened the front. It works well at motocross-type riding but I don't think it handles rocky hills too well.

"If you get thrown off the line the motor won't pull you out. If you come a cropper the motor won't forgive you and I've got stuck on hills I've never been

stuck on before — the powerband is too wild. There's not as much grunt as a PE, midrange is EXPLOSIVE, but the top end is lacking. You have a hell of a job on hills. I'm not too sure about downhills, either, as I had a bad crash at the Orange enduro that I'm not sure was my fault.

"In tight stuff the high centre of gravity from the monoshock makes it top heavy and it's not as quick steering as the PE. It takes a bit of getting used to. In mud the motor is lacking, the power delivery is not good — it just wheelspins, it's either one or the other, you're labouring the motor or wheelspinning. You don't get the power to the ground, but the IT handles sand better than the Suzuki, because it has that power so you can wheelie all the way through.

"On rock steps it's brilliant. It's pretty good on rock jumbles.

"If you could put a PE motor in an IT frame you'd be really set up."

**ADB:** Tell us about the brakes and clutch.

**PM:** "The front brake is very, very good, it's progressive and has nice feel. The back brake takes a bit of getting used to, but the brake lever sticks out and is large — there's no way you can miss it. The brakes

don't take too long to dry out if you get them wet, either.

"The IT clutch is light — but I had a Montesa once, remember, so I have biceps in my fingers!

"The IT gearlever is so short you cannot get your boot under the lever — ridiculous! So I got an IT250 gear lever and have been using that ever since. I also bought stubby brake and clutch handlebar levers because the Japanese levers are so brittle. Contrary to what everybody thinks, the stubby levers aren't better in woods — with the stubbies you don't hit the levers, you hit your fingers! They are WORSE than long levers in woods, but it saves you buying new ones all the time."

**ADB:** Tell us about maintenance.

**PM:** "As far as maintenance goes, I just oil the chain, clean the aircleaner, change the oil every now and then in the gearbox and I have to tighten the spokes fairly regularly. It's pretty minimal maintenance, and it's very easy to work on. I dribble the hose over it after each ride and that's it. It has never broken down.

"The toolkit is quite adequate. All I've added is a decent pair of pliers, an adjustable spanner and a pump.

"The manual is absolutely fantastic — it's like a service manual. It does say to put new rings in after every 200-300 miles, but I think they're exaggerating.

"And, I'm amazed, the Yamaha sticker is still on the tank: it hasn't even bubbled!

"I've got a couple of other criticisms: When you try to tighten up the bolt after adjusting the chain, the snail cam moves around and you have to do it all again. The quick removal wheel is a joke. You have to fiddle round with these minute little clips which are really hard to get out. I'd say the old slow removal on the PE is quicker!"

**ADB:** What are the bike's main virtues?

**PM:** "Good suspension with a low seat height."

**ADB:** What is its biggest drawback?

**PM:** "The powerband is a bit too wild."

**ADB:** If you had the money what would you buy?

**PM:** "I probably wouldn't buy another IT — if I had the money I'd buy an SWM175, but I'll probably get a KDX Kawasaki."





# BOMBARDIER 400 QUALIFIER (1980)

## JOHN DODD

### Experience:

14 years  
Open Trials, Club Enduros  
Club Short Circuit and Trailriding

### Previous Dirt Bikes:

Honda SL125; Montesa Cota 247;  
Two Montesa Cota 172s; Montesa  
Cota 348

"It's a class machine", says John, "and I can't see how a KTM or SWM could be worth \$800 more." It's a radical step from trials riding to enduros and by moving to a 400 John did it in an overwhelming way. He explains . . .

"I was looking for an enduro bike, and I read a lot of tests on Japanese bikes. I was thinking in terms of a 250 originally, but they didn't seem to have the torque I like, or was used to, having had so many trials bikes. I felt I still wanted plenty of torque in tight stuff and rocks. Besides, I didn't want to spend \$1800 on a Japanese bike when they didn't really turn me on. However, I couldn't afford the KTM, SWM, Husky type of machine and I didn't want a secondhand bike.

"Then the Bombardiers came on the scene.

"I'd read about their models over the years — they have always had a reputation for having reliable and unburstable engines and these later models handled as well. Bombardier seem to buy the best equipment they can get for their bikes and the things that influence me were that it had a Mikuni carburettor, CDI ignition, Sun rims, Marzocchi forks, Magura levers, this type of thing, but at \$2300 it was way, way cheaper than the KTM,

which was \$3100 approximately. It was not too much dearer than the PE400 and therefore it seemed the logical choice for me.

"I bought the bike from Top Rider, and although I haven't had to buy any spares yet, I will get them there and I expect them to be pricy. The service at the shop is pretty good, they're used to setting up KTMs and they probably know more about enduro bikes than most dealers.

"Getting the Bombardiers registered is a hassle, even with the Compliance Plate, and Top Rider is pretty well set up to do the job for you. They charge \$100, which includes blinkers and all electrics."

**ADB:** Did you have to do anything to the bike?

**JOHN DODD:** "As soon as I could I changed the front tyre to a Metzeler — it had a Japanese Dunlop originally, which didn't exactly inspire confidence. But I haven't needed to do much to the bike. I adjusted the shocks to a firmer setting and raised the forks about 1/2" in the triple clamps to make it slightly quicker handling, and I dropped the needle one notch as it was running a bit rich. That's all.

"I'll be buying a bash plate — it ought to have one, and because of the high fuel con-

sumption of a 400 it needs either a large tank or at least a speedo so I can see how far I've gone.

"It does 68 kilometres on a tank, which would give me a few problems in open enduros, but for club rides it seems to be adequate. I suppose I'd fill up once.

"The Allen headed bolts that hold the bottom triple clamp point backwards and on full lock they touch the tank. There's a possibility that in a crash they'd make a hole in the tank and I'm trying to rectify that. I've filed the corner off the bolts and I'm trying to figure out a way of moving the tank back. It only does it on the right side because the tank is shaped differently on the left. Also, the tank has discoloured from petrol splashing out of the filler cap and the tank decals have bubbled.

"It starts very easily. I must admit that I thought the left side kickstart would be more problem than it is. I get off to start it because you cannot afford to be half-hearted. I can't get a good strong kick with my left leg while I'm on it and although you don't have to be fifteen stone, anything short of a firm kick will make it kick back."

**ADB:** What's it like to ride?

**JD:** "It's tremendous on hills. It has a lot of torque and a gear for every situation. It's fairly hard work in the tight stuff because of its slow handling — you can't flick it from side to side easily.

"I'd say it's about average in sand, but it was poor when I had the original front tyre on.

"I surprised myself when I tried it on some trials rock ledges — I climbed some rock steps that I thought were only suitable for trials bikes and it has such good gearing that you don't have to change things, either.

"She's set up to be ridden fast, though, so if you go slow over rocky river beds, for example, she just doesn't handle so well — the best thing is to open the throttle and let the suspension do the rest. It has heaps of medium-range power and it does get that power to the ground very effectively.

"Like all enduro bikes now it's pretty high, although it's not as high as the current model PE. I'm 5' 10" and like everybody else I think I would like to see seat height lower.

"The front brake needs a fair bit of pressure — the back one tends to chatter, although it is fully floating.

"The clutch isn't as light as the Japanese bikes, but then it's not nearly as heavy as the Spanish. It's acceptable.

"The tool kit was good and it came with a set of allen keys. If the manual came with exploded drawings as well it would be excellent.

"Maintenance is minimal — I haven't even looked at the plug for the last five rides. I'm interested to see how long it lasts. On my Spanish bikes I was always cleaning plugs. All I do now is check the chain and occasionally do the air filter. I check the air pressure in the forks. I've changed the engine and fork oil a couple of times, but I certainly don't spend every Saturday night in the shed like I used to. You can't say it's an easy bike to work on, but the fact that you don't have to work on it much sort of compensates.

"It's very reliable, it really inspires confidence, nothing falls off it, it has nylock aircraft nuts and I've never had to tighten a nut on it. The spokes do need to be tightened regularly, though."

**ADB:** What are the bike's main virtues?

**JD:** "It's a very versatile machine. I got an enduro bike because I wanted to go in for club enduros, short circuit and motocross, and I think it will do any of those very well. And there's always the thought that I'll be able to master all that power!"

**ADB:** What is the biggest drawback?

**JD:** "It doesn't have a bashplate."

**ADB:** If you had the money what would you buy?

**JD:** "I'd buy another Can-Am."





## BULTACO 250 MKII (1980) ROB WALTERS

### Experience:

11 years  
Motocross, Club Enduros and  
Trailriding

### Previous Dirt Bikes:

Kawasaki F4; Hodaka 100;  
Hodaka Combat; Bultaco Mk6  
and Mk9 Pursangs; Suzuki PE175N

"I've always wanted a Frontera, but couldn't afford it," said Rob. "Then I saw a special deal from Bultaco Australia, who were selling them for \$1800 — well, that was only \$200 more than a PE at the time so I didn't hesitate.

"Quality control was bloody terrible — bits and pieces fell off in the bush, but I expected that, I've had Bultacos before. They were mainly fiddly accessory items. The air-cleaner fell to bits in my hand. The squeeze ball fuel tap rubber perished one day on the trail and posed a few problems, but I replaced it with a plastic Victa Motor Mower tap which slotted straight on, and what's more, looks a lot better!

"Then one day I turned the lights off and the switch knob broke off in my hand! But as I said, I've had Bultacos before and I'm used to their idiosyncrasies.

"If it's left out in the open the exhaust pipe rusts. The pipe paint's terrible — I'm going to respray it at the same time as I weld up the silencer, which is leaking. I'm also a bit wary of the plastic tank and its ability to withstand impacts.

"The thing is, European bikes do the important things well, but the fiddly things let them down. The Japanese do it the other way round. My old PE175N always felt funny to me. I could never get comfortable on it, and it crashed on me for no reason at all. It handled nowhere near as nice as the Bully. The Bully saved my life the other week at Tilba. It steers very quickly, but I'm used to that; it doesn't faint at the sight of rocks like the PE; it tracks straight and it will out-steer just about any bike around. It really feels good."

**ADB:** Tell us about the suspension and engine?

**ROB WALTERS:** "The air forks are excellent and I changed to 15 weight oil. The Betors on the rear feel a little soft on rebound, and they have a reputation for blowing seals and not lasting very long. I'll probably change to either Fox or S&W for economy.

"The engine needs a bit of work — it's geared like a road-racer!

"It has a six speed box which makes it very peaky, and it's got bugger-all bottom end. I geared it down on the countershaft, but it really begs for a reed valve and I'm waiting for that to come in — from previous experience it will respond perfectly with a reed valve, and that will improve petrol consumption by heaps.

"It's got a Bing carburettor which was jetted much too rich and I had to take lumps off the carb-slide. If the reed valve works I'll stay with the Bing, if not, I've got a Mikuni that'll fit right on."

**ADB:** Are you happy with the tyres?

**RW:** "The knobs are too close on the rear Pirelli, so I'm going to change to Metzeler."

**ADB:** Is it easy to start?

**RW:** "I start the bike from the saddle — even with the left side kickstarter — and the bike starts first kick everytime. It's got CDI — I wouldn't have bought it unless it had CDI.

"But when I bought the bike, Winston Stokes spent about three-quarters of an hour tell-

ing me how to set it up properly. When I bought the Suzuki they just tossed me the papers and said 'the bike's outside'. Winston was really good, and he assured me that if I needed any advice I only had to phone.

"He told me not to use plugs with very fine electrodes as they can cause problems because they were designed for Japanese bikes, so I threw away the Champion and fitted a KLG FE 100 with a very small gap and as I said, it starts every time.

"I was assured that parts not in stock take two days to come from Victoria but on past experience I won't need many spares. In fact, I expect to save all the money I would be spending on piston rings for the PE. I like the PE. It never broke down, but it was a matter of how long it would last and how much I would lose on it because in the time I had it, they had two new models, so I would lose money on resale and also the cost of rings.

"I had one rebore in the time I had it and a lot of other people had broken gearboxes. PEs never seized — they wore out. I've always liked Bultacos. They don't change the models that much, but they make them to last."

**ADB:** What are the brakes like?

**RW:** "Bultaco brakes were terrible once, but these are great — they dry out a lot quicker than my PE!"

**ADB:** Have you got any gripes?

**RW:** "It's noisy — the exhaust isn't noisy, but there's a loud resonance from the engine — it rings and echoes a fair bit."

**ADB:** Is there anything you would like to see the manufacturer put on?

**RW:** "I would like to see needle roller bearings in the swing arm — the bronze bushings are strong, but need lubricating quite a bit and it's a chore to do. It does have tapered bearings in the steering head though.

"I also put fork gaiters on mine and I replaced the throttle with a Magura quick action one."

**ADB:** What about the manual and tool-kit?

**RW:** "The manual is very basic, but it tells you what you want to know. The tools were really good stuff, but I've put an extra rubber band on the tank mounted toolbox for security reasons. And fortunately, the Bully isn't a plug-eater, as the plug is impossible to get at without lifting the tank off.

"A lot of people I know are changing from Japanese bikes. It's a kind of European Rebirth, and I think a lot more people would change, but the cost stops them."

**ADB:** What is the bike's biggest drawback?

**RW:** "At this stage, the lack of bottom end."

**ADB:** What is its main virtue?

**RW:** "The handling!"

**ADB:** If you had the money what would you buy?

**RW:** "I'd stick with Bultaco."





# KAWASAKI KX80B (1980) MARK PEDERSEN

On the day of our main photo session, Verner Pedersen brought along his eleven year old son Mark. The area we used had some pretty demanding terrain, and a few times Mark embarrassed a couple of the riders by not only conquering the difficult rock steps, but arriving there before them. Later, at our impromptu short circuit, Mark had the

Kawasaki flying and soon the bigger sized riders were queuing up to have a turn on it. So because it went so well, and because it is such a little gem we thought you'd be interested in some impressions of the littlest KX.

"I'd say Mark is riding it even harder than us adults," said Verner, "because we are thinking about our back pockets.

But the kid belts it, he flies that thing around! It has been reliable. I leaned it off one notch on the carburetor just for something to do, but I haven't touched it other than that. It's a beautiful bike. I'm rapt with the quality of it. It's superb, and the suspension is great — I ride it, and I'm eleven stone, but it's very comfortable."

**ADB:** What's it like power-wise?

**VERNER PEDERSEN:** "It seems to have a little bit of low down, it has instant power, but you have to keep it buzzing. It

runs really crisp and clean and it really goes. You can nearly scrape the handlebars in the corners!

"And it's such good fun, you could use it in enduros and if you came to a raging torrent of a river you could just pick it up. There are no oil leaks — there's just nothing wrong with it. But it wears tyres and chains like they are going out of date.

"From the experience I have had with this Kawasaki," said Verner, "if I could buy a 250 Kawasaki KX I would buy it tomorrow!"



## Learn Motorcycle Repair!

★ TRAIN AT HOME TO BE A

Like to ride your cycle? We can teach you how to fix it!

You'll have fun, save money and it could be your first step to becoming a certified motorcycle mechanic. Can you imagine a better way to earn your living.

Now, thanks to N.A.C. there's a fast, easy way to train at home in your spare time. No need to quit school or your job. Experts show you step-by-step everything from minor tune-ups to major overhauls.

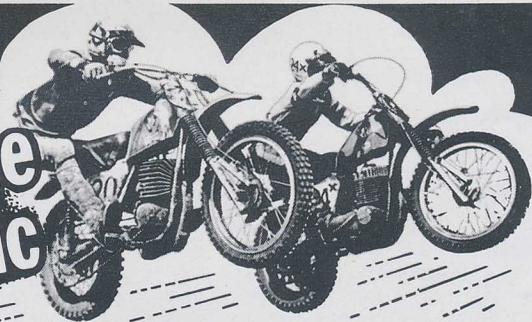
**CYCLES ARE BIG BUSINESS**

**... AND SO IS FIXING THEM!**

It is estimated that there are more than 400,000 bikes on Australian roads. And they all need maintenance.

Look around your area. Bike sales are booming, but not many new bike owners are qualified to carry out repairs. The N.A.C. Course gives you a great start toward an action-packed career.

# Motorcycle Mechanic



**You'll Be the Center of Attraction in Your Circle of Friends** Be the envy of friends and neighbors as they flock around to watch you tear down and tune-up all kinds of motorcycles. And just think of the satisfaction in knowing you've got the best performing bike in town.



**SEND FOR FREE INFORMATION**

Get all the facts now . . . without obligation. Be among the first in your neighborhood to cash in on motorcycle repair.

Careers by Home Study

**Mail Coupon Now!**

**N.A.C. SCHOOL OF MOTORCYCLE REPAIR**  
400 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, CROWS NEST, N.S.W. 2065.  
Presented in Australia by International Correspondence Schools.

**Rush free color brochure and full information on how I can learn motorcycle repair**

2065

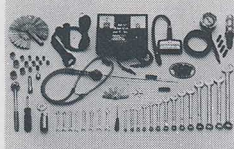
NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ POSTCODE \_\_\_\_\_



Bankcard



**Special Cycle Tools and Test Instruments included to start you fast!**

Professional tools plus your N.A.C. "know-how" help you become a skilled mechanic. We include wrenches, sockets, gauges, test instruments and more to get you started fast! Yours to use during training . . . yours to keep in your action-packed career as a motorcycle mechanic.

**ICS**

**N.A.C. SCHOOL OF MOTORCYCLE REPAIR**  
400 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, CROWS NEST, N.S.W. 2065.  
Presented in Australia by International Correspondence Schools.

262286



## MAICO 250GS (1980) STEPHEN KIDD

**Experience:** 7 years  
Open Enduros, Club Enduros,  
Club Motocross and Trailriding

**Previous Dirt Bikes:** YZ80 Yamaha; XL 125 Honda;  
DT250 Yamaha; YZ175 Yamaha;  
Husqvarna 250; PE175N Suzuki

"I never, ever want to try to tune another carburettor as long as I live!" says Stephen, who had an epic struggle with the carburettor on his Maico.

"When I got the Maico it was tuned for the Alps — I had lots of problems. I'd tossed the Bing away in the beginning and put an El carburettor on it, and had all sorts of problems. You just can't tune Els, they've got a 100 to 1 chance of being tuned right and I just wore out the motor. I seized a couple of times because it was running so badly, but I persevered with it for a few months trying different jetting. In the end I went back to the Bing.

"Chris Cater had been mucking around with the Bing on his Maico and he found a special solution, so I borrowed his carb, put it on my bike and turned it into a completely different bike! I used his solution and now the power is good and the bike starts every time like it should."

**ADB:** What made you buy a Maico?

**STEPHEN KIDD:** "I didn't have a clue what I wanted to buy. I wanted a bit more power and better suspension than I had with the PE175, and I don't like modifying bikes. Then I went into Maico Motorcycles, Gladesville, and had a talk to them about the 250 and they just convinced me.

"Ross King down there is so helpful, and they have all the parts to keep them running spot on. He's been over to Germany and he's got everything worked out. He's even spent a year working in the factory. I've never, ever had to wait for spares. Once something went wrong with the gearbox — he just pulled it apart in a day and I picked it up next day.

"The bike cost me \$2500 and considering the price of KTMs and Husqvarnas at the time it was definitely value for money. There were a few things wrong with it when I got it, though.

"You have to change the gearing — it came with incredible gearing. You can't even get it up the slightest of

hills, so I went down two teeth on the countershaft sprocket.

"I put a different air filter in as the standard one doesn't look as good as the ones you can buy.

"I had to do a bit of welding to strengthen the silencer bracket.

"I turned the whole front brake round, swapping fork legs and everything, as the cable routing was impossible, and that's made it 100% better.

"The back wheel takes about twenty years to take out; I got a flat tyre in the first race I went in and I was there for ages. So I rigged up a special hinge arrangement on the brake stay arm and that helps a bit.

"You have to strengthen the back mudguard, otherwise the first bump you hit the whole back mudguard grabs the tyre and folds under — but luckily I'd heard about that so I got a couple of bits of steel and braced it."

**ADB:** How does it handle?

**SK:** "It came with Corte Cosso shocks with springs on them that are useless and they just sack out after about a month. Ross King sent the shocks down to Keith Stacker in Victoria, who put some new valves and special oil in, and a gas valve so you can pump them up. It costs about \$100 to have that done. The I got some S&W springs and that made it so much better. I wasn't going to buy those \$300 things.

"The forks are not the best for comfort. You feel little rocks through them, but you could leap off the Harbour Bridge — they never bottom out. I like my suspension really hard, so the bike just sits absolutely firm. It is really good, because when you are going really fast it will just sit there straight, but it's not the best for comfort. That's the whole thing about Maicos: they are just so stable.

"The handling is just incredible and it stays like that. You can go around corners like you are on rails. It soaks up all the bumps all the way round and you know exactly what it's



going to do. And it comes with Metzlers as standard."

**ADB:** Tell us about the engine.

**SK:** "The Maico doesn't come with a reed valve so it has to be tuned spot-on. It has incredibly big ports — they are just gigantic.

"I destroyed the motor at the Orange two-day in 1980. It was running really lean, and it just died in the Special Test — I ended up going half a mile an hour, flat chat, and I just made it to the end, then it went bang, psst and I couldn't get it going again.

"There's not really anything low down because it hasn't got a reed valve. You can get it up hills as long as you don't open the throttle too much and choke the motor. It's incredible in the tight stuff, though, because it steers around anything. It's really fast steering. It's meant for tight motocross tracks, I think."

**ADB:** How does it go in mud?

**SK:** "It gets dirty, I guess! No, really, it flies through mud as if it's not even there. You could ride through snow, too! I've never ridden really deep sand, but in rocks it goes so well.

"Fuel range is about 160 kms to a tank when trailriding, and for flat out enduro riding it's about 110/120 kms.

"The seat height is really short compared to most bikes these days: I think it's a couple of inches shorter, but it's still too high for me. I'm 5' 10".

"The clutch is heavy — it works really well, but you have to work to pull it in. It never heats up, though, and I've been up hills where everybody else's clutch is burning out. Mine keeps going. It's got about a hundred plates in there.

"The brakes are really good as long as you cut grooves in them. They are very waterproof — they work about 50% for about a hundred feet and after that they're back."

**ADB:** Does it need a lot of maintenance?

**SK:** "Yep. But I think with any bike you have to work on it a fair bit. You have to keep an eye on spokes otherwise they break. It has a giant rear hub, but because you have short spokes on one side and long ones on the other it's hard to keep them balanced.

"I always make sure I clean the airfilter after every ride because at \$80 a piston I don't want to go through a lot of them.

"I change the gearbox oil a fair bit because you can change gears with the throttle wide open, so I thought if it's



going to do that I'll make sure it's got good oil in there all the time.

"It's easy to work on — about the best you can get as the motor is small and sits in this big frame so there's lots of room around everything."

**ADB:** Is there anything you have to watch particularly?

**SK:** "You have to keep an eye on chain rollers. And you have to keep an eye on steering bearings as they get a little bit loose."

"Once at an MX track I did a giant Dale Buggins leap and when I landed my jaw just about dropped off my face, and the forks came up through the triple clamps! When I took it to bits the tapered rollers had dented themselves into the outer rings. I didn't crash — I wouldn't have been alive if I had!

"But in the way of maintenance it is only a few things you have to look after: fork seals, chains, air filter, steering clamps, spokes."

"Spare parts prices are horrifying compared to Japanese prices. As I said, a Mahle piston is \$80 compared with \$20 for a Jap one. A sleeve is \$52. But the quality is really good."

**ADB:** What's the manual like?

**SK:** "You don't really need one — you just ring up Ross King. The manual is only a five page book — but it has two pages telling you how to set up the carbie!"

**ADB:** What is the bike's main virtue?

**SK:** "It goes so fast! I've ridden quite a few bikes and nothing handles so well — it makes you feel so confident, you can bounce off trees and use anything as a berm."

**ADB:** What's the biggest drawback?

**SK:** "The noise. It's a very noisy bike to ride. You're just trailriding it wears you out a bit. The airbox just GROWLS, the motor makes a very tinny, rattling sound like a lot of nuts and bolts, and all that combined with the exhaust which is really thin and goes bang! bang! bang! It's a very noisy bike — every dog in the whole neighbourhood comes out at you. Everyone stares."

"Yet at the 1980 Cessnock Four Day the Japanese bikes made 103 decibels and mine reads 99 decibels!"

**ADB:** If you had the money what would you buy?

**SK:** "For racing I'd buy a Maico — but for fun I'd buy a Kawasaki 250 four stroke."

## BULTACO 250 MKII (1978) VERNER PEDERSEN

### Experience:

7 years  
Open Enduros, Club Enduros,  
Club Sporting Trials, Short Circuit  
and Trailriding

**Previous Dirt Bikes:** SL125; MK10 Bultaco Frontera

On the face of it, it might seem an outrageous piece of preference to have TWO Bultaco reports, but it so happens that Verner Pedersen is the 1980 Manly-Warringah Motorcycle Club Enduro Champion — he's been competing against all these other riders all year and his skill, plus this Bultaco, earned him the Club title.

Verner has made the Bultaco work for him and we thought he should have the last word. Not only that, but Bultaco riders have so much to say!

tight stuff. It's predictable in sand and as for rocks... what rocks?

"But throttle response is dicey. I refuse to let anybody ride it because they will flip it. The front wheel wants to come up so I keep it at about 4000 revs, in the powerband, and then I don't get surprised. It's not very good at hills because of this. You have to ride it at a speed where you still have some power; if it's slippery and you can't use second gear, first gear tends to put the front wheel in the air. So I ride it flat out up hills and nine times out

valve — I think I'll wait and see what happens to Rob's one first. It has heaps of mid and top end power and this is where I ride. It's not a trailbike, it's an expert's enduro bike.

"It has only broken down on me once and that was a piston ring — but it was twelve months old at the time. A rebore and first oversize cost me \$65, but I have never in the five years that I have had Bultacos had to wait for spare parts and a lot of the parts are interchangeable with Maicos, 'Huskabanana's' and KTM.

"I get my spares from Winston Stokes in Newcastle. Frazers are hopeless — they haven't got a clue, they can't even sell you a front brake cable the right length. But it's easy to work on because there's only the necessary things to work on."

**ADB:** What is its biggest drawback?

**VP:** "The noise. The expansion



**ADB:** What is the secret of riding the Bultaco?

**VERNER PEDERSEN:**

"Speed. You have to go fast so you make the suspension work. I fall off on trail rides because you go so slow. It doesn't want to handle if you go slow, so I ride it wide open and it handles superbly. It loves the

of ten I get up.

"But it has no bottom end when you buy it — it has not one ounce of torque! And it has lousy tuning. I geared it down, one down on the countershaft and four up on the back and I rejettied on the advice of Winston Stokes. It doesn't load up.

"I'm not sure about the reed

chamber is very thin walled."

**ADB:** What is its main virtue?

**VP:** "It's a Bultaco! Its handling is so good. It doesn't bend and I trust it."

**ADB:** If you had the money what would you buy?

**VP:** "I'd buy a Kawasaki two-stroke enduro bike because of the experience I've had with Mark's KX80."



## HONDA XL250S (1978) FRANK HULL

**Experience:** 20 years  
Open Sporting Trials, Open Enduros,  
Club Enduros, Short Circuit and  
Trailriding.

**Previous Dirt Bikes:** Montesa Cota 247; Yamaha TY250;  
Suzuki RL250; Montesa Cota 348.



"I've won a club enduro on it", says Frank with a smile, "and I've got a 3rd or 4th in club short circuit, but it hasn't really got the speed or acceleration — all the little 125 motocrossers just pull away from you!

"I bought it because I wanted a ride-to-work and occasional bush riding bike. Open Trails take up a lot of my time and I wanted a bike I didn't have to fiddle with.

"The Honda cost me \$1600 when I bought it three years ago, and although it was set up properly from the dealer, Alan Hales, I made a few changes.

"For serious off-road riding it needs lower gearing. The 13 tooth sprocket that comes on the XR250s just wasn't available, so I got hold of a Suzuki 13 tooth one, cut the middle out of it and welded it to the Honda centrepiece.

"I put rubber fork gaiters on immediately to protect the seals, and then I threw away the nylon rear suspension bushes and fitted proper bronze ones."

**ADD:** Have you got any gripes?

**FRANK HULL:** "A couple of things happened when I first got it. The first time I rode it in the bush the chain guide fell off, so I had to fabricate a new one.

"The rear sprocket is too big and it keeps catching on

rocks.

"The toolbox isn't exactly brilliant, either — during my first enduro on it, the lid flew open and aborted all my tools, which I never saw again, so the toolbox needs some work.

"The standard tyres are fine on the road, but I swapped them for a Pirelli rear knobby and a 23" Yokohama knobby up front. The front still feels washy, but it's better with the knobby.

"The rear wheel tends to chatter when you apply the brakes hard off-road, and the bash plate is marginal."

**ADD:** Does it start easily?

**FH:** "Of course it does!"

**ADD:** Is it easy to ride?

**FH:** "Yep."

"It's been very reliable, and has never broken down, although a puncture did put me out of the Orange enduro. Maintenance is quite good, there's nothing to do except oil it and grease it, and it's easy to work on. The tools supplied were the same old bendy Japanese spanners.

I've never had to buy much in the way of spares, but when I've needed them I've had good service from Alan Hales in Brookvale.

"I'd say quality control is the usual Japanese shiny standard, which lasts about six months and then starts to look daggy, and the chrome rusts. The exhaust tailpiece has a

number of rust holes in it. But it's a pretty economical bike — it runs 100 kilometres before going on reserve."

**ADD:** What do you do to it to get it ready for enduros?

**FH:** "I swap to trials handlebars because I'm used to them, and it takes me a couple of hours to take the lights off and change it all round. If the XR250 had been available here I'd have bought that and fitted quick detach lights and indicators which I need because I ride it to work."

**ADD:** What's it like on various types of terrain?

**FH:** "It slugs along up hills, and has plenty of mid-range torque. It feels good in sand, but it's hopeless in mud unless you have decent tyres. Then it's OK.

It goes up rock steps okay, but the ground clearance is a bit lacking, so you have to pick your rock steps. It's a bit hard to say what it's like in the tight stuff as I'm used to the Montesa trails bike, but I suppose it's reasonable for a trailbike. It seems to zip along okay — it's pretty stable at speed, it doesn't wobble. Top speed is about 110/115 km/h."

**ADD:** What's the suspension like?

**FH:** "Again, it has reasonable suspension for a production bike. You could improve it with popper shocks and a fork kit, but to get it into tip-top competition form you'd have to start again! You'd go on and on and on putting so many bits on it that it wouldn't look like a Honda anymore.

"I ride it to work every day — it keeps up with the traffic — it's comfortable, it's reliable and the lights and indicators are better than a lot of trailbikes. If I bought a proper enduro bike I wouldn't use it on the road, I don't want to fiddle with premix, inadequate lights or knobby tyres for work.

"For the purpose I wanted it, which was a ride to work, play round in the bush and occasional enduro, it was just right."

**ADD:** What is its biggest drawback?

**FH:** "Probably the chain guide and sprocket being a bit big on the back and catching on rocks. That's what gives me the most trouble."

**ADD:** What is its main virtue?

**FH:** "Good, solid reliability and bulletproofness."

**ADD:** If you had the money what would you buy?

**FH:** "I'd buy a 360H Montesa Enduro."

## PE175N SUZUKI (1979)

### ROGER KEENE

**Experience:**

10 years  
Open Enduros, Club Enduros and  
Trailriding

**Previous Dirt Bikes:**

Bridgestone 175 Twin Scrambler  
Triumph Trophy Trailbike!  
SL125 Honda; KS125 Kawasaki.

"If my Kawasaki hadn't been stolen I would have kept it — the Suzuki was really a cheap replacement bike for that. I bought the PE really for economic reasons, and because of the reputation it had at the time", says Roger. "It was the be-all and end-all of enduros — it was even placing well in Opens, not only in its class, but in overall statistics, and it was advertised as a stock standard enduro bike you could buy straight off the shop floor and you had a potential winner.

"But after a few rides it was quite obvious that it had its drawbacks, and the suspension wasn't as plush as you would have expected on this 'all conquering' superbike. At the time there was very little alternative — you couldn't register the ITs and I wanted a ride-to-work proposition.

"The front suspension sags badly", says Roger "and within six months you have to put spacers in there. I bent one of my rear shocks my first or second time out on the bike. I wasn't used to the height, and went to foot, but there was nothing there. I managed to straighten the rod out, but the damping on both shocks faded, and the springs sagged so I bought a second-hand pair of Fox shocks and obviously they are better than standard.

"When I bought the bike I really expected something fantastic to happen in the handling department, but it didn't."

**ADD:** What's it like on different types of terrain?

**ROGER KEENE:** "I have difficulty on really steep graded hills, but for its capacity the hillclimbing ability is good. I like playing around in mud and I haven't had any difficulty in negotiating bog-holes. It's great. But it bogs down very early in sand, again because of the capacity.

"The PE seems to like climbing short, relatively steep rock



steps, but I think powerwise it might have difficulty in an extended series. Rocky riverbeds are no problem.

"At speed the steering is a bit wobbly, but it might be the tyres. I used the standard IRCs for 12 months and they were unpredictable in sand. I switched to a rear Metzeler and got good traction, but it wore out too quickly.

"I also had a sidewall fracture with the Metzeler. Now I have a Bridgestone, which gives good wear, but it wheelspins!"

**ADB:** What's it like in the engine department?

**RK:** "Initially, the bike didn't come up to my expectations powerwise, and it didn't seem to have the grunt at low revs, even with the reed valve. Then I was advised to modify by switching from metal reed petals to fibreglass petals which were supposed to be more responsive at low revs; but I think that was a placebo — you just **think** it's better.

"I did go to a smaller countershaft sprocket, but then the ratios were right out ... it was just like a trials bike with a motocross powerband.

"I 'blueprinted' the barrel, cleaned up all the rough edges, also the reed valve assembly and inlet port; I smoothed out all the rough casting and so forth. And a common modification, which I did, was to remove the restrictor plate in the silencer and I knocked out the baffles and removed the spark arrestor."

**ADB:** Did you do any other modifications?

**RK:** "I changed to a K & N

filter and I read an article which advised you to open up the top of the airbox as it was a bit restrictive, so I did that."

**ADB:** Where did you buy the bike, and did you have any teething problems?

**RK:** "I bought it from Top Rider because they were selling them cheaper than the local dealer at the time. It was set up right, but it had a problem of cutting out on very rough roads and it wasn't until I dismantled the killswitch that I found a nut which just didn't belong there, and on very rough roads the nut was joggling around and making contact between the bar and the terminal and cutting out the motor!"

"The spokes were loose from new and I had to tighten them all the time, and every time I rode it at least one or two spokes were breaking. Maybe I was overtightening the spokes as a precautionary measure, but someone else I know has the same problem. I had to replace the whole rear set in the end because it was ridiculous. It think it's because it's not reinforced where the actual spokes meet the hub. The new models are coming out with heavy duty spokes — so whether or not it was a common problem I don't know."

**ADB:** Do you have to do much maintenance?

**RK:** "No. I can ride weekend after weekend with the same plug. I've never broken down. It is a high performance, light alloy piston, so you should replace the rings occasionally. The manual advises replacing

rings at 200 kilometres, and piston at 500 kilometres, but I can ride that bike probably a 1000 ks without even thinking about it.

"And then when I do replace them the power increase is marginal, certainly not to the extent where you have unleashed something that is going to dig trenches.

"There's only one all-purpose tool, but the actual tool mounting bracket fractured within two or three months, and luckily I happened to see the spanner careering down the road.

"The manual is more like a workshop manual: it provides information for basic repairs as well as major engine rebuilds."

**ADB:** Where do you get your spares?

**RK:** "Anywhere I can get them. The local dealer has a priority ordering system, and he will tell you something is virtually impossible to get, whereas you can go to City Suzuki and they will have them the following day. I've never been in the situation where I couldn't get a part, but I know people that have."

**ADB:** What is the bike's biggest drawback?

**RK:** "The model has been superseded in a very short period of time. In the latest eighteen months there have been three models — and it's a drawback, the fact that your bike is outdated within a short time."

**ADB:** What's its main virtue?

**RK:** "Versatility and price. It's not exceptional at anything, but for what it is I think it does

the job pretty adequately. It is value for money — you can't go past them."

**ADB:** If you had the money what would you buy?

**RK:** "A KTM — I don't care which one!"

#### FOOTNOTE:

All our hawk-eyed readers will no doubt spot that the nice clean Suzuki in the photographs is not an "N" model, but the fact is that Roger had to work on the day of our photo session. Jasper Pedersen obligingly brought along his January 1981 model so that "Team Banana" would be represented. We thought we'd ask him for some initial impressions of the bike.

**ADB:** How was the Suzuki set up when you got it?

**JP:** "It was up the creek ... it had one fork leg half an inch higher in the triple clamp than the other one, then the sidestand fell off, and we had to fabricate a new chain guide as the ex-factory one pushes on the sprocket and chain. The Suzuki stickers came off after two rides.

"Suspensionwise, the Suzuki is much too hard — the bike doesn't move when you sit on it, although it is loosening up a bit now. But there's a lack of front end, it wants to go straight ahead — although a new tyre might cure that. Also, it's very top heavy. It's big and it feels clumsy. It's not an agile bike to ride.

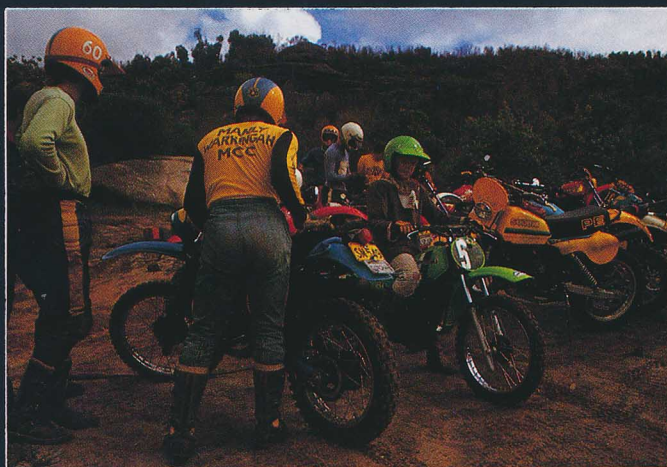
"But there's a lot of power and a definite powerband.

"We'll see."





# WE PICK A WINNER



## WE PICK A WINNER...

Although this project didn't start out as a "critical expose" type of report, it does catalogue an appalling mess of fiddly, irritating, problems, some basic design flaws and a couple of almost stone-age idiosyncrasies. Some otherwise classy machines were handicapped with inferior quality accessories; a few had to be pampered mechanically, were expensive to maintain, but "paid back" in terms of handling and performance. A couple of machines were relatively cheap but didn't excel in either their suspension or engine, and all, with the exception of the Maico and the Husqvarna, came with questionable, unpredictable tyres.

High seat height was an issue with all the riders except Frank Hull and his Honda, which paradoxically suffered from a ground clearance problem. Paul Manson went so far as to choose a Yamaha BECAUSE it was shorter than a Suzuki. Neil Watt solved the problem on the Huskie by hacking foam out of his saddle.

A lot of things fell off. Chainguides, sidestands, toolkits. Tool brackets fractured, air cleaners fell to bits and rubber perished. Stephen Kidd almost took those welding classes I told you about. And he certainly knows more than any of us would care to know about the mysterious workings of the carburettor.

There were a couple of sloppily prepared motorcycles that

should not have been allowed off the shop floor, i.e., fork legs unevenly aligned in their clamps. Verner Pedersen said, "The sooner you are able to buy an enduro bike in the crate the better, because when you get a new bike home you automatically pull it down to see if it's been put together right."

Maico and Bultaco uphold the European Legend by being finicky machines to live with, but their owners did have enviable back-up help from both Winston Stokes and Ross King, who should get honourable mentions in the service department.

Another honourable mention should go to Suzuki for introducing enduro riding to the masses in the same way that the TY Yamaha injected life into sporting trials. Five of the riders interviewed had owned a PE, and it has earned its place in history as the first mass-produced, **registerable** People's Enduro bike, and as a springboard for the beginning rider.

Tank decals peeled, bubbled and disappeared on the PE and the Can-Am, detracting from their appearance.

Quite a few people played the "numbers" game with gearing sprockets — Frank Hull made his own (another welding class candidate).

Those manufacturers who produced noisy bikes should hang their heads in shame. If the **riders** find the noise offensive, Mr George Forestry-official and Mrs Beryl Bush-walker will find it doubly so. A sport that dangles on the edge of acceptance doesn't need

that sort of obvious anti-social element.

A lot of money was spent, or is earmarked to be spent, on aftermarket shocks.

And overall, two major points arose:

One is that you should take the time to inspect any new bike thoroughly before you swing a Vendramini over it.

The other: some bikes persist with serious structural defects that should have been rectified by the factories. This leads us to conclude that there is no feedback from the customer to the dealer, and from the dealer to the factory. Maybe the next time you find something seriously wrong with your bike, before you fix it yourself, you should write a letter to the dealer telling him why your bike doesn't function. If the dealer gets enough letters he's duty bound to pass that criticism on.

As we stated at the beginning, there were a lot of niggly problems. Some riders were plagued by them — but two riders were virtually trouble free. I suppose we should state that this report doesn't aspire to be a **comparison** test as such, since the human element comes into play when assessing things like suspension, handling and feel. One man's ideal may not be another's. What we were aiming for was to discover what these bikes had been like to live with "IN REAL LIFE". To paraphrase Charles Aznavour ... were they "a heaven or a hell?" What we **can** take into account when picking the win-

ner is the amount of **time** wasted making the bike work as it should.

Two bikes stood out simply because time **was not** wasted on them.

The first was the Clockwork Orange Can-Am — the same bike featured in our March/April 1980 issue. It needed a bash-plate and a new front tyre.

One bike came through completely unscathed.

It was thrashed by an aggressive, competitive rider but it was reliable, it was efficient, it was quiet, it handled superbly and it was fun. That bike was the KAWASAKI KX80!

If at first sight that sounds laughable to you, maybe you'd care to take the time to re-read the KX80 report. Then read what Verner Pedersen had to say when I asked him which bike he'd buy if he had the money.

It seems to me, from the riders I spoke to, that being an enduro rider automatically makes you become a very resourceful person. By the time you've had the bike a while you're fabricating this, welding that, twiddling with something else. In their own right, each of the riders interviewed was his own development engineer!

Is this what enduro riding is all about? Is the Saturday night rendezvous in the shed acceptable in 1981?

Kawasaki apparently didn't think so, judging by the KX80.

