

YELLOW PERIL

**DISAPPOINTED
BY THE
TRIUMPH TRAIL'S
PERFORMANCE?**

**ANGLO-BIKE
HAVE A
CURE FOR
SLUGGARDLY
BEHAVIOUR.**

**THIS ONE'S
ANYTHING
BUT BORING.**

JUST STANDING A FEW yards back from Anglo-Bike's 'Pronto' version of the 750cc Triumph Trail parked in the yard of Hampshire farmer Will Budden and surveying the tall, bright yellow and rorty looking bike, we all came to the same conclusion: this was going to be one helluva interesting bike to ride on the mud-over-chalk trails we were about to set out and explore.

Words of warning came thick and fast: 'Watch your legs,' said Will eyeing the high level twin exhaust pipes swept up on the left side. 'If that falls on you, and you get your leg trapped under it, you could be in for a nasty injury and burns.' That was from the expert in our midst.

From Martin Christie came a more direct opinion: 'You've gotta be nuts.'

First thing you notice as you launch a leg skywards in an

attempt to mount it is that the seat height is two inches higher than standard. Actually that's not your first thought, even with my long legs I doubted if I'd be able to reach the ground with a foot. Anglo-Bike have modified both front and rear suspension to give more travel and more effective damping. The forks have longer tubes for an extra two inches of firmly damped and surprisingly good suspension while the standard rear shocks have been replaced by a set of Girling TT gassers.

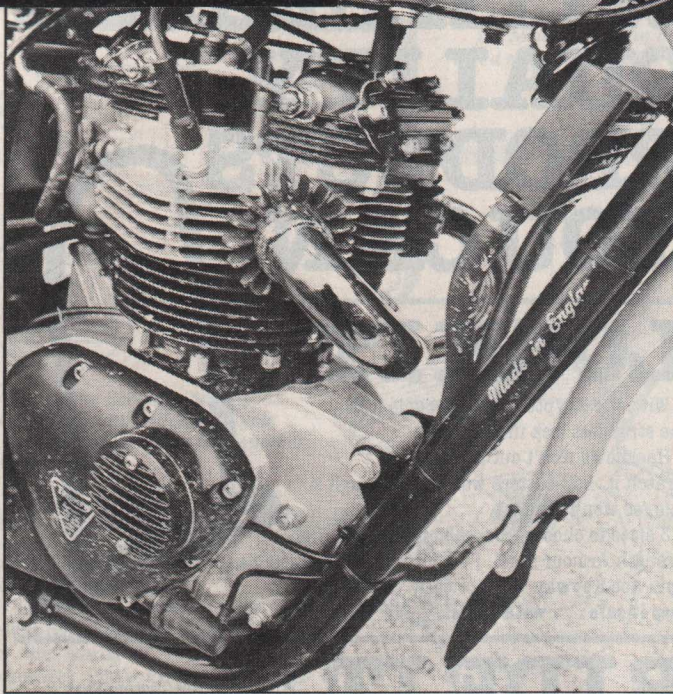
Look on the standard trail and you'll notice that the rear shock absorbers are bolt upright stretching between the swing arm ends and a bracket where the rear subframe meets the seat rail. On the Pronto, the units are 'laid-down' at an angle of approximately 45 degrees and bolted to an aluminium clamp

which goes around that sub-frame tube. The 'lay-down' effect is to allow the rear axle to travel through a greater arc — and thus gives more suspension — but also means the shock absorber units have to work harder. That's where the Pronto's system is likely to fail under any riding more energetic than on mild trails. Those road Girlings just haven't the capacity to get rid of the heat that's produced under bumps and jumps and will soon lose their damping force.

However, for the riding we did that day, which was through fairly open woodland with lots of mud plus some chalk based rails, the rear end behaved itself. I'm not too convinced about the clamp idea though since that frame tube will be taking an enormous pounding in a thrust direction that it was never designed to sustain. The clamp can be slid up and down the tube for different 'lay-down' angles: the further down the tube towards the swing arm pivot the further the wheel axle will be allowed to travel (but the harder the shock absorber will be worked).

Those longer front forks have modified damper rods but would also benefit from a strong brace between the stanchions. Under braking from the Lockheed front disc brake, the fork legs twisted noticeably and made the bike veer to the right. That disc brake, though it sounds totally wrong for off-road use, has been modified with a Lockheed racing caliper

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Above: 750cc twin is nice n' torquy for off-road use. Anglo-Bike mods include Lockhart oil cooler.

Right: Rear Girling TT gas shocks are secured at the top by an adjustable clamp to gain more axle travel. This works reasonably on easy trails but units soon overheat. Note re-routed brake rod, m-x rims and tyres.



the Meriden twin and practically any move you might wish to make, such as altering the cam profiles, can be checked as to its ultimate effect.

The difficult thing about tuning Triumph twins is making them stay together for a decent length of time *plus* you definitely end up with them making much more noise than before. The Pronto is incredibly noisy, so totally over-the-top noisy in fact that there's nowhere in England you could possibly go trail riding without disturbing non-biking people. And when countryfolk and rambles are disturbed by trail riders' noise then they seek to ban the riding.

The Pronto has two upswept parallel pipes going into individual Anglo meggas which are long, thin and almost completely devoid of baffles. When you're cruising along the trail, perhaps blipping the throttle occasionally to lift the front wheel out of a rut or whatever, you're aware of this throaty roar that just sounds

super-healthy. If you let someone else then ride the bike and you watch them do the same, you're astounded, reeling with horror, at the bellowing overwhelming increase in local air pressure that's smashing your eardrums.

Anglo-Bike say they're prototype items only and that they're not of merchandisable quality. Too right. Peter Frost, who's a very nice and reasonable guy, should take them off, place in a locked box at the back of the workshop and remove only in emergencies as wrench extensions.

A different exhaust is probably necessary to release the power tamed in a standard Trail and Anglo's sidewinder pipes do avoid the battering sustained by the Trail's down-and-under siamese system. But I'd opt to keep that original level of noise — which is the legal amount of noise, after all — and just hope the rest of Anglo-Bike's easier breathing exercises do the trick. For the motor is transformed from a sluggish, thoroughly underwhelming, flat and slow accelerating device into a balls-out hard-revver with smooth throttle response from right above tickover plus bags of the sort of low rev torque you need on a big, heavy dirt bike.

We're lucky in having access to an area of farmland with a small circuit etched out into the mud and chalk base. The Pronto would pull second quite happily all the way round this circuit which ranged in speed from a slow trickle over a hump before a sharp right turn around a tree to a fast climb and jump from which it'd land with nary a twitch. There was one really difficult turn for which only one line — a deep rut — existed and which had to be taken accurately at a fair speed to make the climbing arc which follows. The climb also threw a few tree roots, loose dry earth, flints and cross-ruts at the wheels to encourage breaking traction but the Pronto chugged up here in second with the motor pulling strongly and without a hint of threatening to stall.

You could tell that hot cams had been fitted though: from pulling smoothly up to about half-revs — there's no tachometer — it'd then kick off as the 'Thruyton Spitfire' cams began to work properly. The Pronto's motor was in 'half-race' trim according to Anglo-Bike. This includes a single 32mm Amal Concentric carb, 8.6:1 compression ratio pistons, heavy duty valve springs, the cams and a Lockhart oil cooler. Anglo have also opted for a straight SAE40 oil — Morris's Golden — which takes a few minutes to warm up and start flowing freely on a cold day. On the test bike, there was a worrying few seconds when first starting as a noisy rattle could be

heard above the exhaust note. This went away quickly, probably as the oil took up the clearances but it's obviously essential to keep the revs low during this initial warming-up period.

An extended bash plate between the bottom frame tubes helps protect the sump feed pipes (from the oil-in-frame) but leaves the oil pressure sensor on the timing chest still vulnerable to passing rocks, tree roots or other riders who you're using for added traction. Once you know the Pronto makes so much noise, you're tempted to scare the knobbies off other riders by suddenly accelerating up behind and enveloping them in a cocoon of thunder. Use this tactic just before a deep bog and you could induce them to fall off and provide the firm ground you need . . .

It was just as well the Pronto's motor had so much low rev torque since the gearbox was so tight that gearchanges were determined moves requiring full use of the clutch lever — a nice and light operation with no trace of slip or drag even when the motor got very hot — and positive movement of the left foot. No doubt this stiffness would ease once the bike had more miles on the clock.

Anglo-Bike's mods have made the Trail into a much more trail-worthy bike though it's still well short of being a full-blown enduro machine. There's still a lot that could be done to the Trail for serious off-roaders and anyone who doubts the suitability of a big inch Triumph twin for such use should just look back into recent history. Triumphs in various forms — many in Eric Cheney frames — used to be the mainstay of the ISDT during the sixties. Triumph produced the 500cc Adventurer in the early seventies which was a none-too-close replica of those ISDT bikes. It had 9:1 CR, 4-speed box, neat 'street scrambler' styling and an unusual exhaust system which siamesed into an underslung pipe and silencer which neatly avoided both traps created by the standard Trail and the Pronto. It was underrated at the time and they're now 'desirable collectors' bikes.

Above all, the Pronto was fun though the price of all these mods on top of a Trail's list price makes for an expensive green laner. Prices for individual components are listed at £32.50 for a pair of Powermax 8.6:1 pistons, £48 for the Thruyton Spitfire cams, £9.45 for heavy duty valve springs, though no doubt you could work out a deal with proprietor Peter Frost over a complete bike. Anglo-Bike are at Beenham Garage, Beenham, near Reading, Berks. Tel: Woolhampton 3382. ■

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tuned to give a very progressive feel. Anglo-Bike's own short dogleg levers help make the brake as good and as usable as the best drum brakes though I'd worry about the master cylinder's vulnerability stuck out on the right 'bar end.

The rear brake plate has had a bush inserted where the spindle pokes through plus the operating arm and rod have been swapped around to above the brake plate to avoid catching on rocks, etc. Completing the chassis mods are non-valanced (self-cleaning) moto cross type wheel rims finished in black chrome and shod with proper scrambles knobby tyres: Dunlop K88 rear and K290 front, plus a chain tensioner, cutaway chain guard and a Cibie halogen headlamp which fits straight into the Trail's six-inch diameter shell.

By far the most drastic mods have gone into the motor. Anglo-Bike will be well known to *Bike* readers for the two tuned Triumphs of theirs we've tested before: the Thruyton Bonneville (Mar '80) and Trident (Nov '80). The good thing about tuning Triumphs is that it's all been done before — many times. There's a wealth of knowledge about tuning